

= X2 ( film ) =

X2 ( sometimes promoted as X2 : X @-@ Men United , or internationally as X @-@ Men 2 ) is a 2003 American superhero film , based on the X @-@ Men superhero team appearing in Marvel Comics , distributed by 20th Century Fox . It is the sequel to 2000 's X @-@ Men and the second installment in the X @-@ Men film series . The film was directed by Bryan Singer , written by Michael Dougherty , Dan Harris , and David Hayter , and features an ensemble cast including Patrick Stewart , Hugh Jackman , Ian McKellen , Halle Berry , Famke Janssen , James Marsden , Rebecca Romijn @-@ Stamos , Brian Cox , Alan Cumming , Bruce Davison , and Anna Paquin . The plot , inspired by the graphic novel God Loves , Man Kills , pits the X @-@ Men and their enemies , the Brotherhood , against the genocidal Colonel William Stryker ( Brian Cox ) . He leads an assault on Professor Xavier 's school to build his own version of Xavier 's mutant @-@ tracking computer Cerebro , in order to destroy every mutant on Earth and to save the human race from them .

Development began shortly after X @-@ Men ( 2000 ) . David Hayter and Zak Penn wrote separate scripts , combining what they felt to be the best elements of both scripts into one screenplay . Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris were eventually hired to rewrite the work , and changed the characterizations of Beast , Angel , and Lady Deathstrike . Sentinels and the Danger Room were set to appear before being deleted because of budget concerns . The film 's premise was influenced by the Marvel Comics storylines Weapon X and God Loves , Man Kills . Filming began in June 2002 and ended that November . Most of the filming took place at Vancouver Film Studios , the largest North American production facility outside of Los Angeles . Production designer Guy Hendrix Dyas adapted similar designs by John Myhre from the previous film .

X2 was released in the United States on May 2 , 2003 . It received positive reviews from critics , who mostly praised the storyline and acting of the film . The film received eight nominations at the Saturn Awards and grossed approximately \$ 407 million worldwide . It is the sixth highest @-@ grossing film in the series .

= = Plot = =

At the White House , brainwashed teleporting mutant Nightcrawler attempts to assassinate the President of the United States but fails and escapes . Meanwhile , Wolverine returns to Professor Xavier 's school for mutants , while fellow X @-@ Men Storm and Jean Grey find Nightcrawler with the help of the mutant @-@ tracking machine Cerebro .

Xavier and Cyclops visit Magneto in his plastic prison cell , inquiring about the assassination attempt , and Xavier discovers that military scientist Colonel William Stryker has been extracting information about Cerebro from a brainwashed Magneto using an injectable drug . Stryker and his assistant Yuriko Oyama capture Cyclops and Xavier and raid Xavier 's school . Wolverine kills many of Stryker 's men , while Colossus helps most of the students escape through hidden tunnels . Rogue , Iceman , Pyro , and Wolverine attempt to escape until Wolverine is confronted by Stryker , who fails to shed light on Wolverine 's past . Iceman helps Wolverine escape , but Stryker 's soldiers succeed in sedating six students and breaking into Cerebro . During a confrontation with the mutant @-@ hating Stryker , Xavier learns Stryker is behind the plot to assassinate the president .

Impersonating Senator Robert Kelly and Yuriko , the shape @-@ shifting Mystique gains information about Magneto 's prison and helps him escape while also discovering schematics for another Cerebro . Wolverine , Rogue , Iceman , and Pyro visit Iceman 's parents in Boston . Responding to a 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 call from Bobby 's brother Ronny , the police arrive just as the group is leaving . Pyro uses his fire @-@ projection power to fend off the police .

The X @-@ Jet arrives to pick them up , and is targeted by two Air Force F @-@ 16 fighter jets . They are hit by a missile , but Magneto saves their jet from crashing . Magneto informs them that Stryker orchestrated the attack on the president to provide rationale to raid Xavier 's school in order to steal Cerebro 's parts , and plans to connect Xavier to another Cerebro rebuilt at a secret base . The X @-@ Men decide to team up with Magneto and Mystique to stop Stryker . Jean reads

Nightcrawler 's mind and determines that Stryker 's base is inside the dam at Alkali Lake .

Through his son , Jason , Stryker gains control over Xavier , who is brainwashed to use the second Cerebro to find and kill all mutants . Mystique infiltrates Stryker 's base by impersonating Wolverine , and Storm and Nightcrawler search for the students . Jean , Magneto , and Mystique are attacked by a brainwashed Cyclops while trying to rescue Xavier , and cause damage to the generators that keep the dam from collapsing in the process . The force of Jean 's telekinetic blast clashing with Cyclops ' optic blast awakens him from his brainwashing , but cracks the dam . Wolverine finds Stryker in an adamantium smelting room , where he recovers some of his memory . Wolverine fights and kills Yuriko , and finds Stryker on a landing pad , where Stryker bargains for his life by offering to reveal Wolverine 's past . Wolverine refuses , and binds Stryker in chains .

Storm and Nightcrawler find the students , while Magneto and Mystique kill the rest of Stryker 's men . Magneto stops Jason and Xavier from using Cerebro to kill mutants . Disguised as Stryker , Mystique uses Jason to convince Xavier to kill all humans instead ; she and Magneto , along with new initiate Pyro , use Stryker 's helicopter to escape Alkali Lake , after chaining Stryker to concrete rubble . Nightcrawler teleports Storm inside Cerebro , where she creates a snowstorm to break Jason 's concentration and free Xavier from his control .

The X @-@ Men flee the base as water engulfs it , and discover that Magneto , Mystique , and Pyro have escaped on the helicopter . Iceman and Rogue arrive with the X @-@ Jet and get everyone on board . The dam bursts , flooding the landscape and killing Stryker . A malfunction aboard the X @-@ Jet prevents it from taking off ; Jean ultimately sacrifices herself and uses a telekinetic wall to shield them from the flood . She uses her leftover power to activate the X @-@ Jet 's primary engines and drops the torrent of water down on herself , which presumably drowns her .

The X @-@ Men give the President Stryker 's files , and Xavier warns him that humans and mutants must work together to build peace . Back at the school , Xavier , Cyclops , and Wolverine remember Jean , and Wolverine tells Cyclops that Jean chose Cyclops over him . As the film ends , Xavier states he believes everything will be alright , while a Phoenix @-@ like shape forms beneath Alkali Lake .

= = Cast = =

Patrick Stewart as Charles Xavier / Professor X

A powerful , telepathic and paralyzed mutant who uses a wheelchair . He founded a School for " gifted youngsters " ; Xavier is a pacifist who believes humans and mutants can live together in harmony . He uses the Cerebro device , built by Magneto and himself , to track and locate mutants across the world . Xavier is regarded as an expert on genetic mutation .

Hugh Jackman as Logan / Wolverine

A Canadian mutant who has no memory of his life before he was grafted with an indestructible adamantium skeleton . A gruff loner , Wolverine is also a father @-@ figure to Rogue and feels love toward Jean . He wields three blades that come out of each of his fists , has keen animal @-@ like senses and the ability to heal rapidly , and is a ruthless and aggressive fighter .

Ian McKellen as Erik Lehnsherr / Magneto

A Mutant who was once Xavier 's ally and close @-@ friend , Magneto now believes mutants are superior to humans . Magneto wields the ability to manipulate metal magnetically , as well as the ability to create magnetic fields . He wears a helmet that renders him immune to Xavier 's and all telepathic @-@ based abilities . Imprisoned after his scheme in the first film , he is drugged by William Stryker for information on Cerebro , before making his escape and forming an alliance with the X @-@ Men to stop Stryker . He has demonstrated sophisticated knowledge in matters of genetic manipulation and engineering .

Halle Berry as Ororo Munroe / Storm

A mutant teacher at Xavier 's school who can control the weather . Storm befriends Nightcrawler .

Famke Janssen as Jean Grey

A mutant teacher at Xavier 's school and the X @-@ Mansion 's doctor , Jean has begun to experience vast and at times uncontrollable growth in her telepathic and telekinetic abilities since

Magneto 's machine was destroyed in the first film . She is Cyclops ' fiancée . The final scene of the film initiates her transformation into Phoenix .

James Marsden as Scott Summers / Cyclops

A mutant who is the field leader of the X @-@ Men and a teacher at Xavier 's Institute , he shoots uncontrollable beams of concussive force from his eyes and wears a visor to control them . Cyclops is captured and brainwashed by Stryker . He is engaged to Jean .

Rebecca Romijn @-@ Stamos as Raven Darkhölme / Mystique

Magneto 's mutant henchwoman , who is a shapeshifter . Mystique is blue , naked and covered in scales , and she acts as a spy . She injects a prison guard with metal , with which Magneto makes his escape , and also sexually tempts Wolverine . Romijn 's full @-@ body makeup previously took nine hours to apply ; however , the make @-@ up department was able to bring it down to six hours for X2 .

Brian Cox as Col. William Stryker

A human military scientist who plans a worldwide genocide of mutants using Xavier and Cerebro . Stryker has experimented on mutants in the past , including Wolverine , and uses a serum to control them . Brad Loree plays a younger William Stryker in flashback scenes . Singer opted to cast Cox in the role as he was a fan of his performance as Hannibal Lecter in Manhunter .

Alan Cumming as Kurt Wagner / Nightcrawler

A German mutant with a strong Catholic faith and the appearance of a blue demon . Nightcrawler was used by Stryker in an assassination attempt on the President of the United States and gives help to the X @-@ Men . He is capable of teleporting himself ( and others ) instantly from one location to another . Nightcrawler can teleport through walls , but prefers to only teleport when he can see his landing site . On his body are many scarification marks , one for every sin . Cumming had always been Singer 's choice for the role , but at first he was not available due to scheduling conflicts . At some point , Ethan Embry had been reported to be in contention for the role . Ultimately , the film remained in development long enough for Cumming to accept the part . Singer also felt comfortable in casting him since he speaks German fluently . The drawings of Adam Kubert were used as inspiration for Nightcrawler 's makeup design , which took four hours to apply . For the scene where Nightcrawler has his shirt off , Cumming went through nine hours of makeup . To best pose as Nightcrawler , Cumming studied comic books and illustrations of the character .

Bruce Davison as Sen. Robert Kelly

An anti @-@ mutant politician who supports a Mutant Registration Act and wishes to ban mutant children from schools . Although his character was killed in the first film , Davison reprised the role for scenes where Mystique uses his persona to infiltrate the government .

Anna Paquin as Marie D 'Ancanto / Rogue

A mutant girl who can absorb any person 's memories and abilities by touching them . As she cannot control this absorbing ability , Rogue can easily kill anyone and thus is unable to be close to people . Her love interest is Iceman .

Shawn Ashmore as Bobby Drake / Iceman

A mutant who can freeze objects and create ice . His family is unaware that he is a mutant and simply believes he is at a boarding school . After returning home , Bobby reveals to them what he actually is , much to his brother 's derision . He is also Rogue 's boyfriend .

Aaron Stanford as John Allerdyce / Pyro

A mutant who is friends with Bobby and Rogue , Pyro has anti @-@ social tendencies because he is very angry at the general public for how they treat the mutant community . He has the ability to control ( although not create ) fire . He later joins Magneto and Mystique . The filmmakers cast Stanford in the role after they were impressed with his performance in Tadpole .

Kelly Hu as Yuriko Oyama / Lady Deathstrike

A mutant who has a healing ability like Wolverine 's , and is controlled by Stryker . She wields long retractable adamantium fingernails . Only her first name is mentioned in dialogue .

Also , Katie Stuart appeared as Kitty Pryde , a mutant girl who can walk through walls ; Kea Wong as Jubilee , Bryce Hodgson as Artie , a mutant boy with a blue tongue ; Shauna Kain as Siryn , a mutant who is able to emit loud screams that alert the students to Stryker 's attack ; and Michael

Reid McKay as Jason Stryker / Mutant 143 , William Stryker 's mutant son who has the ability to cast illusions . Also in the final scene with Xavier , a girl is seen dressed in a Native American style jacket , as well as a blond haired boy dressed in blue , played by Layke Anderson . These were later confirmed to be Danielle Moonstar and Douglas Ramsey / Cypher . Daniel Cudmore appeared as Piotr " Peter " Rasputin / Colossus , introduced in this film as a young mutant with the ability to turn his body into organic steel , and possesses superhuman strength while in that form . Cudmore was set to use a Russian accent , but Singer dropped the idea of accents despite characters of different nationalities .

Jubilee , Psylocke and Multiple Man were to have cameos in the scene where Stryker and his troops storm the X @-@ Mansion . Beast , Gambit and Marrow were to have appearances during a sequence with Cerebro . Gambit 's cameo was actually shot , but the footage was not used in the final cut . Beast 's scene was to show him in his human form as Dr. Hank McCoy , while his skin morphed into blue fur , and Marrow was to be seen lying on a ground in New York City . Hank McCoy appears on a television during the scene where Mystique drugs Magneto 's prison guard . Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris , the film 's writers , cameo in scenes of Wolverine 's Weapon X flashbacks as surgeons . Bryan Singer , the film 's director , cameos as a security guard in a scene where Professor X and Cyclops go to see Magneto . Shaquille O 'Neal wanted a role in the film but was ignored by the filmmakers .

One scene depicts Mystique going through files on Stryker 's computer . Singer purposely included various names of characters and hints of storylines from X @-@ Men lore on several computer screens . Singer " [ found ] great difficulty in adapting all this stuff into a two and a half hour long movie . "

= = Development = =

= = = Writing = = =

The financial and critical success of X @-@ Men persuaded 20th Century Fox to immediately commission a sequel . Starting in November 2000 , Bryan Singer researched various storylines ( one of them being the Legacy Virus ) of the X @-@ Men comic book series . Singer wanted to study , " the human perspective , the kind of blind rage that feeds into warmongering and terrorism , " citing a need for a " human villain " . Bryan and producer Tom DeSanto envisioned X2 as the film series ' The Empire Strikes Back , in that the characters are " all split apart , and then dissected , and revelations occur that are significant ... the romance comes to fruition and a lot of things happen . " Producer Avi Arad announced a planned November 2002 theatrical release date , while David Hayter and Zak Penn were hired to write separate scripts . Hayter and Penn combined what they felt to be the best elements of both scripts into one screenplay . Singer and Hayter worked on another script , finishing in October 2001 .

Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris were hired to rewrite Hayter and Penn 's script in February 2002 , turning down the opportunity to write Urban Legends : Bloody Mary . Angel and Beast appeared in early drafts , but were deleted because there were too many characters . Dr. Hank McCoy , however , can be seen on a television interview in one scene . Beast 's appearance was to resemble Jim Lee 's 1991 artwork of the character in the series X @-@ Men : Legacy . Angel was to have been a mutant experiment by William Stryker , transforming into Archangel . A reference to Dougherty 's and Harris ' efforts to include Angel remains in the form of an X @-@ ray on display in one of Stryker 's labs . Tyler Mane was to reprise as Sabretooth before the character was deleted . In Hayter 's script , the role eventually filled by Lady Deathstrike was Anne Reynolds , a character who appeared in God Loves , Man Kills as Stryker 's personal assistant / assassin . Singer changed her to Deathstrike , citing a need for " another kick @-@ ass mutant " . There was to be more development on Cyclops and Professor X being brainwashed by Stryker . The scenes were shot , but Fox cut them out because of time length and story complications . Hayter was disappointed , feeling that James Marsden deserved more screentime .

Rewrites were commissioned once more , specifically to give Halle Berry more screen time . This was because of her recent popularity in *Monster 's Ball* , earning her the Academy Award for Best Actress . A budget cut meant that the Sentinels and the Danger Room were dropped . Guy Hendrix Dyas and a production crew had already constructed the Danger Room set . In the words of Dyas , " The control room [ of the danger room ] was a large propeller that actually rotated around the room so that you can sit up [ in that control room ] and travel around the subject who is in the middle of the control room . The idea for the traveling is that if it 's a mutant has some kind of mind control powers they can 't connect . "

= = = Production = = =

Producer Lauren Shuler Donner had hoped to start filming in March 2002 , but production did not begin until June 17 , 2002 in Vancouver and ended by November . Over sixty @-@ four sets were used in thirty @-@ eight different locations . The film crew encountered problems when there was insufficient snow in Kananaskis , Alberta for them to use for some scenes . A large amount of fake snow was then applied . The idea to have Jean Grey sacrifice herself at the end and to be resurrected in a third installment was highly secretive . Singer did not tell Famke Janssen until midway through filming . Cinematographer Newton Thomas Sigel and two stunt drivers nearly died when filming the scene in which Pyro has a dispute with police officers .

John Ottman composed the score . Ottman established a new title theme , as well as themes specifically for Magneto , Jean Grey , Nightcrawler , Mystique , and Pyro .

= = = Design and effects = = =

Singer and Sigel credited *Road to Perdition* as a visual influence . Though Sigel shot the first X @-@ Men in anamorphic format , he opted to shoot X2 in Super 35 . Sigel felt the recent improvements in film stocks and optics increased the advantages of using spherical lenses , even if the blowup to anamorphic must be accomplished optically instead of digitally . Sigel noted , " If you think about it , every anamorphic lens is simply a spherical lens with an anamorphizer on it . They 'll never be as good as the spherical lenses that they emulate . " Cameras that were used during filming included two Panaflex Millenniums and a Millennium XL , as well as an Aaton 35mm . Singer also used zoom lenses more often than he did in his previous films , while Sigel used a Frazier lens specifically for dramatic moments .

The Blackbird was redesigned and increased in virtual size from 60 feet to 85 feet . John Myhre served as the production designer on the first film , but Singer hired Guy Hendrix Dyas for X2 , which was his first film as a production designer . For scenes involving Stryker 's Alkali Base , Vancouver Film Studios , the largest sound stage in North America , was reserved .

Visual effects supervisor Mike Fink was not satisfied with his work on the previous film , despite the fact it nearly received an Academy Award nomination . Up to 520 shots were created for X @-@ Men , while X2 commissioned roughly 800 . A new computer program was created by Rhythm and Hues for the dogfight tornado scene . Cinesite was in charge of scenes concerning Cerebro , enlisting a 20 @-@ man crew . The Alkali Lake Dam miniature was 25 ft ( 7 @. @ 6 m ) high and 28 ft ( 8 @. @ 5 m ) wide . Cinesite created 300 visual effects shots , focusing on character animation , while Rhythm and Hues created over 100 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

X2 opened in North America on May 2 , 2003 , accumulating \$ 85 @, @ 558 @, @ 731 on its opening weekend in 3 @, @ 749 theaters . The film grossed \$ 214 @, @ 949 @, @ 694 in North America , earning \$ 192 @, @ 761 @, @ 855 worldwide , for a total of \$ 407 @, @ 711 @, @ 549 .

X2 was a financial success as it recouped its production budget three times . X2 debuted simultaneously in 93 countries , the largest North American and international opening ever at the time . In addition , the film is the sixth highest grossing film based on a Marvel Comic book , and was the sixth highest @-@ grossing film of 2003 , also earning \$ 107 million in its first five days of DVD release .

= = = Critical response = = =

The first cut of X2 was rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America , due to violent shots with Wolverine when Stryker 's army storms the X @-@ Mansion . A few seconds were cut to secure a PG @-@ 13 rating .

X2 had a video game tie @-@ in , X2 : Wolverine 's Revenge , which is unrelated to the events of the film , although Patrick Stewart voiced Professor X and Hugh Jackman appears as Wolverine on the cover . The game received mixed reviews . X @-@ Men : The Official Game bridges the storyline between X2 and X @-@ Men : The Last Stand . Specifically , it explains Nightcrawler 's absence from The Last Stand . Chris Claremont wrote a novelization of the film , which left out its secretive cliffhanger .

The review @-@ aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes reports that 86 % of critics viewed the film favorably , based on 222 reviews . The sites consensus states : " Tightly scripted , solidly acted , and impressively ambitious , X2 : X @-@ Men United is bigger and better than its predecessor ? and a benchmark for comic sequels in general . " Metacritic calculated an average score of 68 / 100 from 37 reviews .

Roger Ebert was impressed by how Singer was able to handle so many characters in one film , but felt " the storyline did not live up to its potential " . In addition , Ebert wrote that the film 's closing was perfect for a future installment , giving X2 three out of four stars . Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times wrote that it was rare for a sequel to be better than its predecessor . Turan observed that the film carried emotional themes that are present in the world today and commented that " the acting was better than usual [ for a superhero film ] " . Peter Travers of Rolling Stone wrote that Hugh Jackman heavily improved his performance , concluding " X2 is a summer firecracker . It 's also a tribute to outcasts , teens , gays , minorities , even Dixie Chicks . " Empire called X2 the best comic book movie of all time in 2006 , while Wizard named the film 's ending as the 22nd greatest cliffhanger of all time . In May 2007 , Rotten Tomatoes listed X2 as the fifth greatest comic book film of all time .

The film won the Saturn Award for Best Science Fiction Film . In addition , Bryan Singer ( Direction ) , Dan Harris and Michael Dougherty ( Writing ) , and John Ottman ( Music ) all received nominations . It also received nominations for its costumes , makeup , special effects and DVD release , amounting to a total of eight nominations . The Political Film Society honored X2 in the categories of Human Rights and Peace , while the film was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation ( Long Form ) .

Mick LaSalle of the San Francisco Chronicle was critical of the storyline , special effects and action scenes . Joe Morgenstern of The Wall Street Journal specifically referred to the film as " fast @-@ paced , slow @-@ witted " . Stephen Hunter of The Washington Post wrote " Of the many comic book superhero movies , this is by far the lamest , the loudest , the longest " . Richard Corliss of Time argued that Singer depended too much on seriousness and that he did not have enough sensibilities to communicate to an audience .

= = Music = =

The film 's score was composed by John Ottman , a regular collaborator with film director Bryan Singer . The soundtrack album X2 : Original Motion Picture Score was released on April 29 , 2003 . Ottman used a sample of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 's Requiem as the basis for the music in scenes featuring Nightcrawler . As well as the music on the album , tracks by Conjure One and ' N Sync also featured in the film .

On July 19 , 2012 , La @-@ La Land Records issued an expanded version of Ottman 's score , including the specially recorded version of Alfred Newman 's Twentieth Century Fox fanfare incorporating Ottman 's film theme .

2003 album track listing

2012 album track listing

Tracks in bold are previously unreleased material .

= = Home media = =

X2 was released on DVD in widescreen and full frame formats in 2003 . The two @-@ disc DVD includes over three hours of special features .

X2 was also released on Blu @-@ ray , and additionally as a Blu @-@ ray , DVD and digital @-@ copy combination in 2011 with special features .

= = Sequel = =

After the success of the second film in the franchise , a sequel titled , X @-@ Men : The Last Stand was released in 2006 albeit not directed by Singer .