

DEAR READER,

TOLKIEN'S MASTERPIECES ON MOTION PICTURE — THE EXTENDED EDITIONS

In November this year the Extended Edition of the concluding part of The Hobbit film trilogy — *The Battle of the Five Armies* — was released on DVD, Blue-ray and Blue-ray 3D, almost one year after its theatrical release. With this release the two major masterpieces of J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, are available on motion picture, produced at such a great artistic and technical level that in my view these represent the ultimate human capacity in this area at the beginning of the 21st century.

The format was already well developed and tested. Between 2001 and 2003 under the directorship of Peter Jackson of New Zealand three films were shot to cover Tolkien's ultimate masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*. The three films really form a trilogy, although Tolkien himself insisted that the novel was not a trilogy, rather one consisting of three parts. Using a state-of-the-art technology, a vast cast, New Zealand's breathtaking locations three films were created came very close to the ultimate limits of this artistic form. Especially the Extended Editions are of great value because in them a significant amount of additional cuts were included plus a wealth of background information like commentaries, insights into the making of the movies, etc.

This format was then reused for the three *The Hobbit* films, which were produced between 2012 and 2014, and with even better results if we consider that the novel *The Hobbit* is about one third the length of that of *The Lord of the Rings*. It led to a greater granularity and everything superlative said about *The Lord of the Rings* just needs to be further increased. Next to that, the producers re-used many motifs of the first series to maintain the same atmosphere.

All in all, the 15 Blue-ray discs of the Extended Edition of *The Lord of the Rings* series and the other 15 ones of *The Hobbit* series constitute a real gem that even Tolkien would have appreciated a lot.

Maybe it is much to ask but if a similar project would be executed for Tolkien's third major masterpiece, *The Silmarillion*, then we could be really much enriched and the core of Tolkien's oeuvre would be available in motion picture format, too.

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