

X-Men First Class/ Days of Future Past (2011/2014)

After the sour taste left by 2006's *X-Men: The Last Stand* and 2009's standalone *Wolverine* movie, many filmgoers were rightfully cynical about Fox's decision to reboot the franchise with 2011's *X-Men: First Class*, an origin story that sent filmgoers back in time to the superpowered team's early '60s beginnings. But whatever the original *X-Men* trilogy's problems might have been, casting was rarely one of them, and with *First Class*, director Matthew Vaughn found himself wielding an impressive collection of top-shelf talent that included Fassbender as Erik "Magneto" Lehnsherr and James McAvoy as his lifelong frenemy, Charles "Professor X" Xavier. Following the warm critical and commercial reception afforded *First Class*, the team stepped up its game with 2014's *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, which managed to take an impossibly convoluted time-travel story and use it as an effective means of bringing back original cast members while definitively rebooting the canon established with *The Last Stand* and still offering the new trilogy's stars plenty of time to shine.



Shame (2011)

He received plenty of prurient interest for his full frontal nudity in the film, but it was Fassbender's nakedly emotional performance in *Shame* that truly mattered - and landed the movie on a stack of critics' year-end Top 10 lists while earning him another British Independent Film Award. While definitely not a movie for everyone, *Shame* was 100 percent for Fassbender; in fact, director/co-writer Steve McQueen considered no one else for the

part of the protagonist, the emotionally twisted sex addict Brandon Sullivan, after working with Fassbender on *Shame*. Paired with Carey Mulligan in a decidedly dark drama about secrets, lies and addiction with overtones of implied incest, Fassbender let it all hang out in more ways than one, and was rewarded with some of the best reviews of his career

Slow West (2015)



He's made indie favorites, superhero blockbusters, award-winning prestige pictures - and with 2015's *Slow West*, Michael Fassbender even got to make a well-reviewed Western. Starring alongside Kodi Smit-McPhee as a mysterious bounty hunter who aids a young man (for a price) on his quest across the 19th-century American frontier, Fassbender got to saddle

up as the strong, silent type while sharing screen time with a talented posse of supporting actors that included future *Star Wars* spinoff headliner Ben Mendelsohn - all in service of a strong script and confidently mounted picture from debuting writer-director John Maclean. — (www.rottentomatoes.com)

Jane Eyre (2011)

In between blockbusting with *X-Men: First Class* and reaping critical acclaim for *Shame*, Fassbender also visited cineplexes in 2011 as Edward Rochester in Cary Fukunaga's critically acclaimed adaptation of the Charlotte Brontë classic *Jane Eyre*. A perennial filmmaker favorite dating back to the silent era, *Eyre* wasn't exactly

crying out for another trip to the big screen, but Fukunaga's version managed to set itself apart with loads of dark, artfully composed atmosphere that emphasized the darker elements of the story and draped a layer of gloom over a story often treated as a gauzy period romance.



12 Years A Slave (2013)

Fassbender reunited with his *Hunger* and *Shame* director Steve McQueen for 2013's *12 Years a Slave*, a harrowing adaptation of memoirs written by former slave Solomon Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor). Playing Edwin Epps, the brutal and none-too-bright master of the plantation where Northup ends up, Fassbender could easily have slipped into horrific caricature, but he

instead strove to locate the humanity buried beneath Epps' depraved actions; in the process, he helped elevate one of the year's most important films into even more of a gripping, well-rounded drama than it otherwise might have been - and earned himself a Best Supporting Actor Oscar nomination along the way.

