



38th SEASON

ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2017/18

Chiasso, Cinema Excelsior

18.15

Friday, 6 October 2017

La La Land **2016**

128 minutes

Directed by **Damien Chazelle**

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone and Rosemarie DeWitt Ryan

During the opening credits, the movie we are viewing is said to have been filmed in CINEMASCOPE (like the old-time musicals) and then the screen expands from box format to wide. We find ourselves on the 105/110 interchange in Los Angeles. People listen to various forms of music in their cars. Then one woman gets out of her vehicle and starts singing ANOTHER DAY OF SUN to camera (à la a musical), a song about how great it is being in sunny California. Someone else exits his car and joins her. Pretty soon, everyone has left their car and is singing the song while dancing in the street or on the cars that are parked via the traffic jam, everything synchronized for the full-length musical number.

The song ends and everyone gets back in their cars. We are told it is WINTER. Traffic finally begins to move. Inside her Toyota Prius, Mia (Emma Stone) appears to be talking to someone on the phone. In his classic car, Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) honks at her to move. We realize she isn't talking to anyone but is practicing for an upcoming audition. Sebastian goes around her, glaring, while she flips him off. She then murmurs that she should probably move as she's obstructing the traffic flow.

Mia works at a coffee shop on the Warner Bros lot, serving the employees of the studio. When a movie star comes in for coffee, the manager tells her it's on the house so she puts her money in the tip jar instead. Mia watches in awe as the movie star gets on a golf cart, being escorted to set. Then Mia's phone goes off, reminding her that she has an audition to get to. Mia rushes off so she won't be late and collides with a customer, spilling coffee all over her shirt. When Mia gets to the audition, she is wearing a jacket over her blouse. She does her reading, giving a really honest performance where she breaks into tears. But it goes unnoticed as someone appears in the window with a message. The casting directors interrupt Mia's audition while they talk to an assistant who tells them someone has called for them, to which they say to relay that they'll return the call shortly. Mia is thanked even though they have neglected to watch her performance. She leaves the casting office and goes into the waiting area where everyone looks like her. Then she gets into the elevator ...

Critics' comments:

"La La Land" is writer/director Damien Chazelle's musical love letter to Old Hollywood and it's a resounding success on all fronts. There's a strong critical consensus of its quality, for its modest budget it was a huge financial success, and looked as though it was an award winner with "Titanic" level award momentum. Unfortunately, like "Titanic", an iceberg was floating dead ahead to sink this behemoth. Yes, Bonnie and Clyde themselves (Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty) took a Tommy gun to their well deserving team's dream of Oscar gold and the all class producer Jordan Horowitz had to intervene and right the wrong of one of the biggest public mix ups of all time. (Blake Howard, *Rotten Tomatoes*)