



38th SEASON

ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2017/18

Locarno, Cinema Kursaal

18.15

Friday, 16 March 2018

Café Society 2016

85 minutes

Directed by **Woody Allen**

Starring: Jesse Eisenberg, Kristen Stewart and Steve Carell

Set in 1930s Hollywood, Phil Stern (Steve Carell) is one of the most successful agents in the business. In the opening scene, he's at a party when he receives an important phone call, believing it to be Ginger Rogers seeking new representation. It's really Phil's sister Rose Dorfman (Jeannie Berlin), telling Phil that her son is going to move over to Los Angeles to find a job working with him.

Bobby Dorfman (Jesse Eisenberg) lives with his mother Rose and father Marty (Ken Stott), a jeweller. He has two other siblings; schoolteacher Evelyn (Sari Lennick), who is married to Leonard (Stephen Kunken) with a daughter, and gangster Ben (Corey Stoll). Ben is infamous for murdering numerous people around town with whom he's got into dirty business.

Bobby makes his move to Hollywood and tries to meet with Phil at his office, but is told to wait for hours until his secretary says Phil is too busy, and for Bobby to try again on Friday. Bobby goes back, only to find out that Phil took his wife to Mexico.

At night, Bobby calls for a woman to be sent to his apartment. The woman, Candy (Anna Camp), is on her first job, and she got Bobby's room number wrong. He chastises her for screwing up and doesn't even want to have sex with her anymore because he is too tired. Bobby hands Candy the money and tells her to leave, but she starts crying. Bobby reluctantly says he'll have sex with her until he gets fed up with the argument and just sends her out the door.

Bobby finally gets to sit down and meet with Phil to discuss having a job. Phil agrees, then has another secretary of his, Vonnie (Kristen Stewart), take Bobby around town and show him the area. Vonnie drives Bobby around to see the homes of some celebrities, including Joan Crawford's house. Bobby is smitten with Vonnie for her down-to-earth personality as he gets to know her during their time together. When he asks her out on a proper date, she tells him she is seeing a journalist named Doug.

Bobby gets promoted to look over scripts. He gets to attend parties with Phil and meets other people in the business. Bobby still tries to get close to Vonnie, despite her relationship.

It turns out that "Doug" is really Phil, and he is having an affair with Vonnie behind his wife's back. Although she doesn't want to be the cause of a failed marriage, she is also in love with Phil. Eventually, however, Phil says he can't continue the affair and he calls it quits with Vonnie. She tearfully goes to Bobby's apartment later on for comfort ...

Critics' comments:

-A reflection on how the human being seeks new opportunities to hide the failures of the past, although dissatisfactions and disappointments are forever pursuing. (Luis Fernandez Galvan, *En Filme*)

-It's an unimpressively mediocre romantic comedy that has enough little things to save it from being boring, but the clear lack of effort can be frustrating for those who expect more from a film by Woody Allen. (Michael O`Sullivan, *Film Ireland Magazine*)