

Locarno, Cinema Kursaal**18:15****Friday, 10 December 2021****JULIET, NAKED****2018**

97 minutes

Directed by **Jesse Peretz**

Starring: Rose Byrne, Ethan Hawke, Chris O'Dowd

Annie, a curator in a local community museum, is in an unhappy relationship with Duncan, a college teacher who is obsessed with Tucker Crowe, an obscure musician whose last work was released 25 years ago. Duncan operates a fan site dedicated to Crowe. One day, a package arrives in the mail containing an album, titled 'Juliet, Naked', of acoustic demos of the songs on Crowe's hit album 'Juliet'. Annie and Duncan listen to it separately, and have an argument over its quality. Annie writes a negative review of it on Duncan's fan site. Crowe comes upon the review and writes to Annie by email, thanking her for her honesty. The two quickly form a rapport. Crowe writes to Annie of his regrets as being a poor father to five children with four different mothers. Likewise, Annie discloses her disappointment with not having had any children. Crowe lives on the property of his ex, Cat, to be near Jackson, his youngest son, in America. Crowe is visited by a pregnant Lizzie, a daughter he has never met, and it's awkward. Before she leaves, Lizzie offers Crowe the phone number of Grace, another one of his children, the only one he has purposely had absolutely no contact with.

Meanwhile, Duncan meets Gina, a new teacher at his college. Gina, who is obviously interested in Duncan, tells him she looked up Tucker Crowe and is curious about his music. Duncan invites Gina over to hear Crowe's album, and they sleep together. Duncan immediately confesses this to Annie, who breaks up with him and she then asks him to move out.

Crowe soon journeys to London with Jackson for the birth of Lizzie's baby, his first grandchild. He asks if Annie would like to meet up with him in person while he is relatively near her, and she agrees. However, Crowe suffers a heart attack as he enters the hospital where Lizzie is and Annie thinks he's stood her up. He calls her to tell her what happened, and Annie ends up visiting him in the hospital. There, Annie meets Jackson, Lizzie and most of Crowe's exes and other children, who have flown to his bedside when they heard he'd had a heart attack. Later, after Crowe has recovered and everyone else, besides Jackson, has left, Crowe invites himself to see Annie's hometown, and she accepts. Later, Crowe tells Annie the reason why he suddenly stopped playing music.

Crowe accompanies Annie to the exhibition she organized and Annie bluntly confesses her romantic interest in him, which he reciprocates. Crowe asks Annie to come back to the US with him and his son, but Annie says that she cannot. She adds that Crowe cannot leave his child for her either, because this is his last chance to do right by his kids.

Flash forward to a year later. Annie has moved to London and works at a gallery. She emails Crowe and when she finds out he will be in England to visit Lizzie, Annie invites Crowe to meet up with her for coffee, and he agrees.

Critics' comments:

Unlike mainstream romantic comedies, this one comes with weightier issues and doesn't fill up its screen time with inane tangents and dumb jokes. There are laughs but most focus on the absurdity of a character or situation. The romance between Annie and Tucker works because these both feel like lived-in characters who are getting a second chance. There's isn't a perfect storybook ending but it feels *right* and there's a genuine sense of longing in one of Byrne's last shots. (from *Reelviews*)

