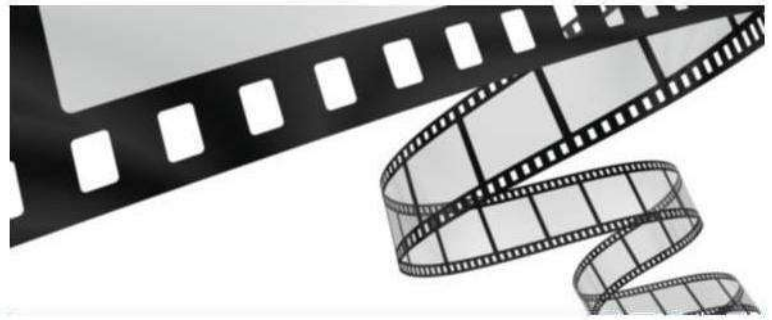


CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Paris-Manhattan 2012

France 77mins

Director: Sophie Lellouche

Writer: Sophie Lellouche

Cinematography: Laurent Machuel

Cast:

Alice Taglioni (Alice)

Patrick Bruel (Victor)

Marine Delterme (Hélène)

Louis-Do de Lenequesaing (Pierre)



The premise of Paris-Manhattan is simple enough; unfortunately, so is everything else about writer-director Sophie Lellouche's debut feature film.

Alice (Alice Taglioni) is obsessed with Woody Allen movies, but can't find a flesh and blood man to fall in love with. Her father sets her up with everyone he meets, and each night she returns home from bad dates to talk to a giant poster of Allen on her wall, with the famous auteur talking back in snippets of dialogue from his movies.

One night, Alice meets a security expert named Victor, played by the charming Patrick Bruel, a French singer and actor. Victor says the kinds of things that only French men can pull off — that no matter who we are with, we are all alone, and other such things that would come off as pretentious dreck if they weren't bathed in that accent.

It's obvious from their first encounter that Alice and Victor are meant for each other, although Lellouche and Alice pretend that it's not a forgone conclusion. The fact that the movie is only 77 minutes long is a good indication that Lellouche knows that you can hide from the inevitable for only so long.

While they trade light barbs and existentialist musings, Alice and Victor have to deal with a handful of conflicts that feel forced: Alice's brother-in-law's suspected cheating, a handsome suitor who woos Alice by playing Cole Porter songs on the piano and plenty of generic quibbles about family dysfunction.

And this being an homage to Allen, there are also a few attempts at his trademark witticisms, such as when Alice tells a woman at the pharmacy she runs that specialists have a diagnosis for feeling guilty and like you're dying all the time: "You're Jewish." Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it's also boring.

Lellouche's other stabs at humour often feel silly or scripted, like the cameo by Allen or when Victor is unintentionally chloroformed by his own security system at the pharmacy during a robbery. Rather than apprehend the would-be thief, Alice hands him a few Allen movies — a favourite prescription for what ails her customers — and lets him flee. Of course, she runs in to him later and he's a changed man.

Even at its worst, Paris-Manhattan can be charming. And there's nothing necessarily wrong with simplicity. But from its title sequence to the final credits, it's begging to be compared to Woody Allen's movies. And just like we know from the start what's going to happen to Alice, we know who wins that comparison.

(Dave McClinn)

Club notices:

Our previous presentation:

Based on the feedback slips returned on the night, you rated **The Hunt**, screened on 18th November, 4.67 stars out of 5. Please visit the current season page at <http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk> to read all the feedback comments.

You can still provide feedback on this, or any other film, by visiting the Discussions page (<http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk/discussion/>).

Our next presentation:

No will be shown on Tuesday, 07 January, starting at 8:00pm.