

# CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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## Audience feedback: If Beale Street Could Talk

24 people responded. The breakdown and comments are listed below.

### 'Excellent': 12 votes

- Second viewing – just as powerful as the first. The chemistry between the two leads really made you feel for them. Depressingly, although the book was written in the 60s, the story is just as relevant today as then.
- A film that provides an insight to a society we can only imagine. Brilliant film making.
- Beautifully shot. A difficult story, well told, without 'Hollywood-ing' it.
- Why does justice never change in the USA?
- These stories have to be told in school.
- Great choice – thank you!
- Two worlds, two stories. One an elegiac love story, where the colour of your skin doesn't matter; the other where that is all that matters. The world as it is; and the world that it might be one day.
- In my opinion better than the director's previous film "Moonlight"
- Brilliant, courageously slow. Superb photography & sound. Ironic words to UK's National Anthem at the end. Very angry-making
- As a white person, I really have no idea what it is like to be black & feel quite unqualified to comment. Just tremendously powerful. Hopeful? Probably not at all.
- Simply superb!

### 'Very Good': 9 votes

- Very powerful portrayal of injustice – and how to cope.
- Powerful and arresting blend of the visceral and tender; a brilliant musical score
- Young + Black + American = Rough Justice!

### 'Good': 3 votes

- Would have been very good with subtitles!
- Some v. good acting performances. Perhaps some of the directing was a little heavy-handed.

### 'Satisfactory': 0 votes

### 'Poor': 0 votes

Based on the above, the film had an overall score of 84.4%.

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### 1 Comment posted on the website:

I found 'If Beale Street Could Talk' extraordinarily average in many ways. The direction lacked imagination with far too many close-up shot reaction shot conversations and cringingly awful, and in some places repetitive, 'on-the-nose' script eg: 'I love you.' 'I know you do'. zzzzzz.

The director seemed to me to assume audience approval for the hitting of Fonny's mother - 'serve you right'. Ouch.

The 'sex scenes' were from male point of view, as usual, and incongruously glossy: pure old-school and indeed contemporary Hollywood style. So often we look over the shoulder of the man in film representations of sexual activity, (or little activity).

There was very little character development of the protagonists. For example, how did Fonny handle being in prison? We need to see rather than merely be fed with one sentence expositions or a facial bruise. How did Tish cope as a one-parent mother? Minor characters, introduced as of significance, were cast aside when narrative convenience no longer required them eg: Daniel Carty.

The film had good intentions but on this occasion I think Mr. Kermode, and a chorus of other critics, have been far too ready to lavish praise based on this criterion, (and to show their capacity to empathise, reach for their hankies), while not providing perceptive analysis of the film's merits, or lack of them, per se.

I'm moved to write this as the vast majority of films shown at the Film Club are, to my mind, superb (apart from the ghastly Elle- what did the wonderful Isabelle Huppert think she was doing working with Verhoeven knowing his CV?), thanks to the judgement, magnificent efforts and competence of the committee members.