



Happy
Valentine's
Day

The Main Feature

Season 39 - Issue 10 screening 14.2.19

UK
110 minutes

2016
cert PG

Director Stephen Frears
Writer Nicholas Martin
Cinematography Danny Cohen
Editor Valerio Bonelli

Cast

Meryl Streep as Florence Foster Jenkins
Hugh Grant as St. Clair Bayfield
Simon Helberg as Cosmé McMoon
Nina Arianda as Agnes Stark
Stanley Townsend as Phineas Stark
Allan Corduner as John Totten
Christian McKay as Earl Wilson
David Haig as Carlo Edwards
Brid Brennan as Kitty
Rebecca Ferguson as Kathleen Weatherley
John Kavanagh as Arturo Toscanini
Maggie Steed as Mrs. James O'Flaherty



John Sessions as Dr. Hermann
Pat Starr as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney
Thelma Barlow as Mrs. Oscar Garmunder

This is the first of what could be considered a two part Meryl Streep special, as in a month we show "The Post".

When asked about his leading star, director Stephen Frears starts spouting the usual adjectives—"She's such a brilliant actor, very informed and very hardworking...very attentive"—but adds that what makes Streep so wonderful is her ability to find new meaning in each take. "She does subtly different things," he explains. "She'll put the emphasis on one place rather than the other.... She seems to have her talent in her fingertips."

He has the same praise for the rest of his cast, especially Hugh Grant, who plays Florence's partner and manager, St. Clair Bayfield. Grant hits all the beats of a man torn between sheltering the woman he dotes on and living a second, less performative life. "I've always known he was a brilliant actor," Frears says. "It came as a surprise to other people! To me, I've always thought he was a highly intelligent man—and that he could do light comedy."

Prior to reading the Nicholas Martin penned script, director Frears did not have much knowledge about Jenkins beyond the portrayal of her by Maureen Lipman in the West End play *Glorious!* by Peter Quilter, but on the strength of the script, he became interested and did research by watching YouTube videos of her. Upon watching the videos Frears noted that "You're laughing and she touches you. It's inherently ridiculous and courageous at the same time. It's a terribly tragic story, but there's a lot of laughter," he says. "It's so funny and so touching at the same time, in some mysterious ways."

Both he and Streep were determined that the audience side with Florence, and that she not be ridiculed. "My greatest ally was Meryl; she was adamant that shouldn't happen," he says.

Frears himself did not initially envisage Streep in the role but after her name was brought up agreed, noting that he thought it would be something fresh for her.

Streep showed up fully prepared on the London set after working with a singing coach in New York, said Frears. “You can only sing badly if you are good singer, and Meryl is a very good singer, she has a head start. When she came to London she knew how to do it, we did not have hours of discussion.”

(Those who've seen Mamma Mia will recall how good a singer she is and that not all actors are as good – step forward Pierce Brosnan!)

All Frears had to say to her was: “You know who you're playing? Margaret Dumont.”

“Absolutely,” Streep replied. Battleaxe Dumont, as Marx Brothers fans know, was a great foil for Groucho.

Streep did not expect to be singing live, she admitted, but decided that matching up her shots was the director's problem. Throwing five Red cameras at her Carnegie Hall performances was a cinch, he said: “The actors knew what they were doing, they just did it.”



When Frears sent Grant the script, he wrote back, “I hate everything, but this is wonderful.”

“He wasn't hard to persuade,” said Frears. “He's a wonderful man. He drives you mad — because he's very very neurotic — he was having a baby a week at

the time. He's very clever and conscientious and has spent his life trying to pretend he isn't.”

Grant and Ferguson were spotted filming in a resort in New Brighton, Merseyside. Filming also took place in Hoylake and Liverpool, with the city was transformed into 1940s New York City, with Liverpool's Drury Lane being turned into Central Park West.

Frears directs with his ears “John Huston used to turn his back, Alan Bennett used to lie under the table. You can hear when it's right. A film like this is dominated by dialogue, and the dialogue is very good. It's unfashionable making films doing dialogue. It's like swimming against the tide.”

Nicholas Martin's screenplay could have been given the standard Hollywood biopic treatment, but in the hands of Frears, cinematographer Danny Cohen, composer Alexandre Desplat, production designer Alan MacDonald, and costume designer Consolata Boyle, the film presents 1940s New York in all its flashy glory, a heightened world suited to serve as backdrop to such an extraordinary—and sometimes painfully funny—story.

Refreshingly, gender roles are reversed in this movie, as Streep plays a woman of certain age who is married to a husband younger by a decade

Though people may say she could not sing, no one can say she *did not* sing.

Iain McGlashan



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Kate Winslet has revealed she has "bitter regrets" about working with certain unnamed film-makers.

She was speaking at the London Critics' Circle film awards on Sunday, where she was presented by Jude Law with a special award for excellence in film.

Here is a transcript of her comments, which she made after a few initial words of thanks.

"It almost feels uncomfortable to receive an award at such a time. But being up here does give me the opportunity to say some things that matter to me. There are directors, producers and men of power who have for decades been awarded and applauded for their highly regarded work by both this industry and moviegoers alike. Indeed, many actors have had flourishing careers, due in part to roles played in their films. The message we received for years was that it was the highest

compliment to be offered roles by these men.

"As women around the world and from all walks of life marched last weekend, once again joining together to speak out against harassment, exploitation and abuse, I realised that I wouldn't be able to stand here this evening and keep to myself some bitter regrets that I have about poor decisions to work with individuals with whom I wish I had not.

"It has become clear to me that by not saying anything, I might be adding to the anguish of many courageous women and men. Sexual abuse is a crime. While it rests with the rule of law to pass judgement, it lies with all of us to listen to the smallest of voices and to never stop listening. Also those who do have a voice are becoming afraid to say anything, because of intense scrutiny and criticism.

"Nobody should be exempt from having a right to speak in support of vulnerable people. There are those who can speak so powerfully for those who are not able to do so themselves, and let us please not make this about which people express public regret and those who choose not to, but instead keep the focus on the terrible, secret crimes of abuse against vulnerable children, girls, women and indeed boys and men too.

"The real headline here is that a Hollywood commission on sexual harassment and advancing equality in the workplace now exists, led by Kathy Kennedy. The Time's Up movement that will enable anyone to get professional support to fight back against predators and all forms of abuse and to address the complex problems of inequality and abuse of power in the workplace also now exists. I know we all stand together in hoping that this moment in history paves the way for a transformed future for generation upon generation upon generation to come.

"I think again of the Women's Marches. There was one banner scrawled on cardboard that particularly resonated with me. 'The older I get the more I see women described as having gone mad. What they've actually become is knowledgeable and powerful and [expletive] furious.' Years ago that woman would likely have been locked away. How times have changed. Let's keep them changing. Thank you very much."

Comments and reactions to: **Piccadilly**

Score **0** **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
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No of reaction slips received = 27

Average Score = 6.41

Remarkable – well done WNCC for showing it *A real gem from the silent movie era*
“Read all about it - mystery murder in Limehouse!” **“Strictly” delightful**

Excellent acting, story and especially music. Well done. *The music was too insistent*
Very enjoyable. Nicely paced, excellent music but a bit too repetitive.

Very odd musical score – the old car was wonderful

So much said and not a word spoken! Great music.

Better than some but silent films seem to take so long to say so little.

A delightful film – all the early 20th century glamorous sets and clothes, all set to lovely music

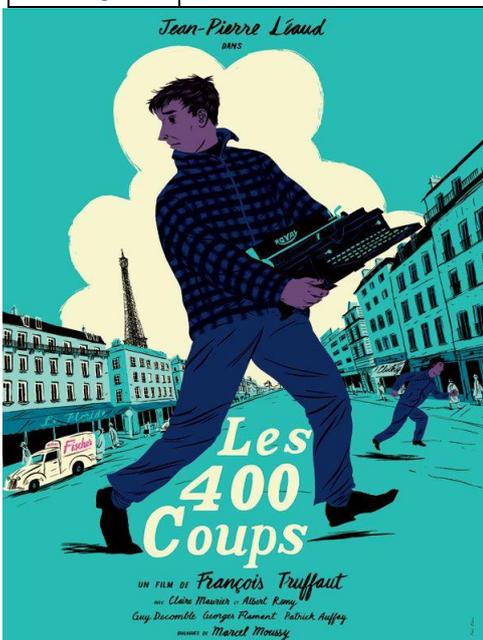
The plot moved apace with wonderful details and touches here and there. Amazing cinematography for its time.

Great choice for the club, and a great film. I had never heard of Anna May Wong before.

Luminous performance from AMW. Fascinating slice of 1920’s life. Photography excellent. A Gem!

Anna May Wong is quite a unique actor – made the film a very different and enjoyable experience.

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Darkest Hour	8.08
2 nd	Guildford in the Great War	7.56
3 rd	Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri	7.4
4 th	The Violin Teacher	7.2
5 th	L’homme du train	6.71
6 th	Piccadilly	6.41
=7 th	Bar Bahar (In Between)	6.26
=7 th	Death of Stalin	6.26
9 th	The Levelling	5.6
10 th	Phantom Thread	5.16



Next on 28 February:

60 years from its initial release we present a landmark in modern cinema.

This is a seminal French New Wave film that offers an honest, sympathetic, and wholly heartbreaking observation of adolescence without trite nostalgia.

“One of the best movies about childhood ever made because it's really a movie for adults. Without sentiment, it looks at the fears, doubts, and anxieties of childhood.”