

LA LA LAND

USA | 2016 | 128' | Comedy, Drama, Musical | Rated PG-13

Written and directed by
Damien Chazelle

With
Ryan Gosling
Emma Stone

Original Music by
Justin Hurwitz



Première:
31/08/2016 (Venezia)

World release:
07/12/2016

Here's to the fool who dream.

Budget: \$30.000.000

Gross: \$228.000.000 ca

REVIEW

Mia works at a Warner Studios cafeteria, dreaming to become an actress; Sebastian is a jazz piano player and longs to open his own place someday. Their stories get tangled together, in unexpected ways, while both try to achieve their life goals; life, though, can be tough and make one lose his or her dream to reality...

The most acclaimed movie of the season, covered with appreciation and awards anywhere it goes. Can't really say that I didn't like it. Actually, I loved it. As a whole. Though I have to say that there is something that doesn't seem to fit in a movie with such high expectations, and I have to spell it out.

First things first. Director Damien Chazelle, in his immensely talented style also appreciated in "Whiplash", takes the audience into a dream-like world where tough aspects of reality are overcome with music and passion: of course, it's a musical and a comedy, but little drama sparks give a nice pattern to the screenplay, which would be flat otherwise. At the same time, the second and central act of the movie gives the impression of something 'already seen', maybe even banal, so that as the rhythm of the story keeps going on its way the engaging level diminishes a little too much before rising again to the wonderful ending. Without spoiler, I also have to say something about the long retrace of the whole movie, which comes right before the very end: an exercise of wonderful style, no doubt, but I found it excessively long, clashing with the nice pattern of the rest of the storytelling.

Apart from these moments (and a meaningless and brief handy-cam sequence which destabilizes more than a bit), the movie builds the most wonderful and powerful images, with a spectacular choice of locations and color shifting atmospheres, incredibly dream-like. Diving into the movie feels like living inside the characters' dream, and maybe that's why the central downfall left me so disappointed.

And for the cast: maybe not the most difficult roles for both Emma Stone/Mia and Ryan Gosling/Seb. Emma is lucky enough to give

some wonderful auditions, showing us (with a bit of exaggerated expressivity) that she's one of the most talented young actresses on the rise; on the other hand, Ryan has some ups and downs, but is far from some of his most intense performances, such as "Drive", so that Sebastian seems always a bit duller than his female counterpart. Just a note on what an immense talent waste was to cast J.K. Simmons to play no more than two minutes with a totally bland character.

Music. Ok, here's the most important fragment of this review, as it is obvious when speaking of a musical. The choice of casting two non-singers as main characters, and leaving them almost all of the most beautiful original songs, paid off completely: the bit of roughness behind the recordings gives that span touch of realism so important for the whole identification process of the audience. At the same time, beside the catchy songs, the most musically coherent score is not as perfect, leaving to the instrumental reprises the creation of nice atmospheres while undermining some other scenes with abrupt editing.

Even if I criticized a lot of features, I have to underline again how much I loved this movie. Even so, I do not think of it as the best movie of the year, an acknowledgement which I think should be given to a 'perfect' movie. Which, as much as I loved it as a whole, this one isn't.

ASSESSMENT

POSTER **78%**

TAGLINE **82%**

TRAILER **89%**

SATISFACTION **79%**

DIRECTING **90%**

SCREENPLAY **89%**

PRODUCTION DESIGN **97%**

CINEMATOGRAPHY **98%**

CAST **91%**

MUSIC **89%**

TOTAL 91% - A-