

MADRES PARALELAS

Spain/France | 2021 | 120' | Drama | Rated R

Written and directed by

Pedro Almodóvar

With

Penelope Cruz

Milena Smit

Original Music by

Alberto Iglesias



Première:

01/09/2021 (Venice FF)

World release:

08/10/2021

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REVIEW

Janis and Ana couldn't be more different: they are in a different stage in life, they have a different age, a different sentimental situation, their family background is almost opposite.

An unexpected pregnancy got them together but life has much deeper connection in store.

The movie that opens the 78th Venice Film Festival is a movie that difficultly could have represented Almodovar's narrative and visual style; the empathy created by some odd close-ups, where the characters feel almost out of their context, is in deep conflict with the unfortunate yield of the two stories throughout the movie, that never feel completely intertwined.

Past and future, ancestors and descendants, should represent a complex but flowing ecosystem through time, both the story time (almost three years) and time as an entity. Births and deaths don't actually feel like the two sides of the coin of life... and that's pretty much it.

As the single storylines go, anyway, they both are interesting in their own way; the past, connected to ancestors - lost physically or just on a relationship level - is narrated in an original way, where the absence of strings with parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, though difficult to cope with for the characters, is not judged; the future, on the other hand, goes on a very delicate matter that the characters face as humanly as possible: this is the true dividing judgment left to the viewer.

In this movie, completely based on women and their struggles with single motherhoods, what truly catches the eye is the incredible empathy created by both Penelope Cruz and Milena Smit. In playing some intense portraits (even for Almodovar's standards) they both get to the bottom of the profound emotional crisis the characters face: the relationships with each other and with their daughters is something difficult to understand, even for an experienced actress like Cruz (who, by the way, seems to get better and better as the years pass, especially while partnered with Almodovar - this is the 6th collaboration for them).

I couldn't understand some music choices: while acknowledging the emotional impact of the story, the strongest moments are scored with a

useless emphasis; a more delicate approach, sometimes, is best - a recurrent mistake for Alberto Iglesias, not only while working on Almodovar's stories.

Judgment suspended, in the end... one cannot completely criticize the movie, since its more than enjoyable and gives a couple of interesting things to think about. On the other hand, this jump over the hurdle was a bit rough in the landing and, most of all, less elegant than the director - obviously - would have wanted.

ASSESSMENT	
POSTER	75%
TAGLINE	-%
TRAILER	55%
SATISFACTION	85%
DIRECTING	88%
SCREENPLAY	75%
PRODUCTION DESIGN	88%
CINEMATOGRAPHY	86%
CAST	89%
MUSIC	65%
TOTAL	81% = B-