

With Music its Star, Whole of ‘August Rush’ Greater Than Sum of Parts

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CHICAGO – When you look at films critically, you sometimes spend too much time examining the pieces of the whole without stepping back from the picture and taking it as a complete work.



Keri Russell in “August Rush”.

Photo credit: IMDb

“August Rush” is the perfect case of studying the trees and completely forgetting about the forest. The film follows the orphaned Evan Taylor (Freddie Highmore) as he searches for his parents against seemingly insurmountable odds using music as his guide.

After escaping from an orphanage, he makes his way to New York City.

Evan falls in with a group of outlawed child musicians led by Maxwell “Wizard” Wallace (portrayed by Robin Williams). Evan is soon discovered as a musical prodigy and uses his music to continue his search for his mother and father.



Freddie Highmore in “August Rush”.

Photo credit: IMDb

The film only starts firing up after the first 30 minutes. The backstory of Evan’s parents (Keri Russell and Jonathan Rhys Meyers) seems to be

thrown together and so quickly escalated that you don't have time to care about either one's situation.

In "August Rush," director Kirsten Sheridan lacks a clear voice. The direction cuts between so many stories, characters and periods of time that you can't fully appreciate what you're seeing when you're seeing it.

At times, you're left wanting more from a particular storyline. The acting in this film is up and down. Kerri Russell and Robin Williams both give performances that were neither exceptional nor terrible.



Robin Williams in "August Rush".

Photo credit: IMDb

Jonathan Rhys Meyers is at the same level in this film that he has been in every other movie he has made: terrible. His acting's so awful that even his native Irish dialect seems forced and clichéd. The highlight of this film is Freddy Highmore.

Even at such a young age, he's able to capture his character's center better than any two people in this movie combined. He plays his role with a level of truthfulness and innocence that hasn't been matched by a child actor in some time.

As with every film like this, the music is the ultimate star. The score by Mark Mancina is uplifting and fun and the guitar playing of the characters is almost worth the price of admission alone.



Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Keri Russell in "August Rush".

Photo credit: IMDb

If you're going in with desires of realism, you may want to skip it. If you're a fan of the musical fantasy genre, you may be pleased.

The film certainly has several faults. If you just sit down, watch and let it wash over you like a perfectly scored concerto, you won't leave the theater disappointed. The whole of "August Rush" is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

"August Rush" opened on Nov. 21, 2007.

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