

## Film Review: Woody Allen’s ‘To Rome with Love’ is Episodic, Choppy

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 29, 2012 - 4:55pm

- [Alec Baldwin](#) [2]
- [Ellen Page](#) [3]
- [Fabio Armiliato](#) [4]
- [Greta Gerwig](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jesse Eisenberg](#) [7]
- [Movie Review](#) [8]
- [Opera](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Penelope Cruz](#) [11]
- [Roberto Benigni](#) [12]
- [Sony Pictures Classics](#) [13]
- [To Rome with Love](#) [14]
- [Woody Allen](#) [15]

CHICAGO – Writer/director Woody Allen continues his film travelogues in “To Rome with Love,” touring The Eternal City with four separate vignettes. An all-star cast – including Jesse Eisenberg, Ellen Page, Alec Baldwin, Penélope Cruz and Woody himself – hit and miss with this varying blend of stories.



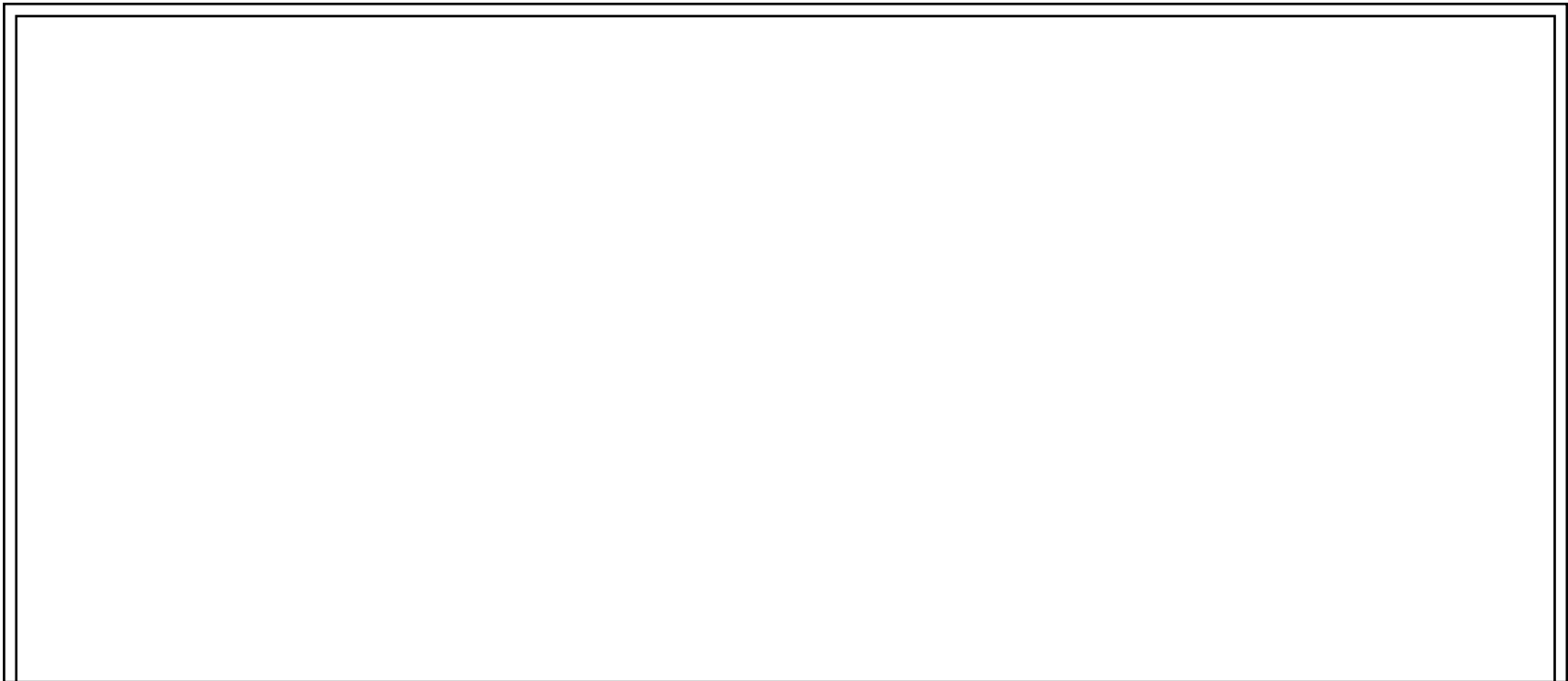
The four stories have Rome as their backdrop, and the city looks gorgeous under the cinematography of Darius Khondji. Gazing at such a film and its locations make up for the lesser story situations, and overall makes it worth seeing. Allen also mixes Italian actors with the familiar American cast, which gives it a credibility and yes, a touch of Federico Fellini, although he had explored that more overtly in “Stardust Memories” (1980). When this film works, it is familiar and funny Woody, and even when it’s not as good it generates some laughs that are worth experiencing.

There are four stories happening simultaneously during a period in the modern city of Rome. One involves native city dweller Leopoldo (Roberto Benigni), as a bureaucrat who finds his life disrupted by sudden and inexplicable celebrity. Another follows an American named Jerry (Woody Allen), a retired opera director who is visiting his daughter in Rome and discovers a once-in-a-lifetime opera sensation with Giancarlo (Fabio Armiliato, a real-life Italian singer), the father of his potential son-in-law.

Another vignette features Jack (Jesse Eisenberg), an American architect who is living with Sally (Greta Gerwig), a student from the U.S. She invites her friend Monica (Ellen Page) to stay with them, and the feelings Jack develops for Monica is peppered with advice by an American stranger named John (Alec Baldwin). Finally, a story features Italian newlyweds (Allesandro Tiberi and Alessandra Mastronardi) who discover unfamiliar marital territory when a prostitute named Anna (Penélope Cruz) is mistook for the new groom’s wife.

*“To Rome with Love” continues its limited release in Chicago on June 29th. Featuring Jesse Eisenberg, Greta Gerwig, Ellen Page, Judy Davis, Alec Baldwin, Woody Allen, Roberto Benigni and Penélope Cruz. Written and directed by Woody Allen. Rated “R”*

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The Mentor: Alec Baldwin (John) and Jesse Eisenberg (Jack) in 'To Rome with Love'  
*Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics*

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- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/opera>
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- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/roberto-benigni>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sony-pictures-classics>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/to-rome-with-love>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/woody-allen>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/19129/woody-allen-s-to-rome-with-love-is-episodic-choppy>