

## Film Review: 'A Late Quartet' is Passionate Symphony of the Human Condition

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 3, 2012 - 8:55pm

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CHICAGO – Those who know the language of music at its highest levels seemingly know the secret of the world. But as “A Late Quartet” demonstrates, they also possess the same human foibles as the rest of us. Philip Seymour Hoffman, Catherine Keener and Christopher Walken portray maestros at an emotional crossroads.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The film is magnificently passionate, with a literal script that debates the finer points of a successfully routine ritual, long relationships and the decision to face the end of a career. It focuses on four people who are intertwined by a business relationship – that of a high level symphony string quartet – but hiding the emotional context of that interaction, leading to inappropriate expressions of their truth once it all comes to the surface. The acting is superb, especially the old lion in winter Christopher Walken, gratefully pulling away from his stereotypical persona and delivering a nuanced and subtle performance.

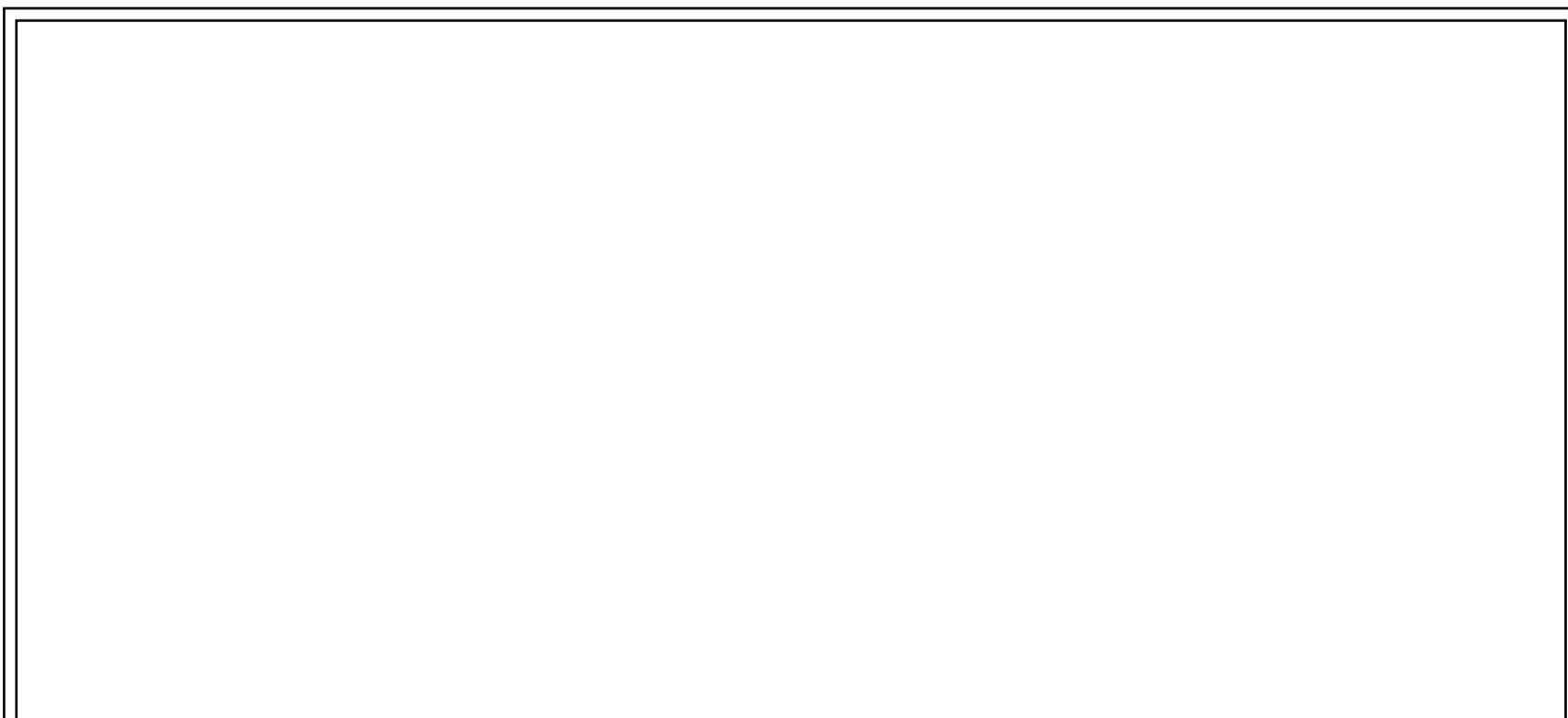
The film opens with the quartet taking the stage. There is a hesitation between them that indicates some unspoken conflict. It then divulges the story of the four – the lead violinist Daniel (Mark Ivanir), second violin Robert (Philip Seymour Hoffman), viola player Juliette (Catherine Keener) and cellist Peter (Christopher Walken). It is revealed that they are one of the world's finest quartets, that Robert and Juliette are married and that Peter is about to announce that after 25 years that he may be retiring from the group.

Peter's announcement opens up years of repressed opinions, especially from Robert. These rocky pronouncements begin to have an effect on the dynamic of the quartet, which also begins to involve Alexandra (Imogen Poots), the daughter of Robert and Juliette. Every member of the long-time symphony companions are about to go through their greatest career and emotional challenges, as long simmering consequences are about to boil over.

*“A Late Quartet” had a limited release, including Chicago, on November 2nd. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christopher Walken, Catherine Keener, Mark Ivanir, Wallace Shawn and Imogen Poots,. Written by Seth Grossman and Yaron Ziberman. Directed by Yaron Ziberman. Rated “R”*



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The Foursome: Daniel (Mark Ivanir), Robert (Philip Seymour Hoffman), Peter (Christopher Walken) and Juliette (Catherine Keener) in 'A Late Quartet'

Photo credit: RKO Pictures

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