

Film Review: Love, Truth & Dignity in Emotional ‘The Farewell Party’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 16, 2015 - 11:53am

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CHICAGO – As the last cells in our carbon based forms decide to perish, how can our consciousness bear the stigma of that demise? This question is the theme of “The Farewell Party,” a Israeli/German production that combines the mix of feelings that come with old age...and the sorrowful truth that there are more goodbyes than anything else, with a burden that is brought to bear when a person is dying around family, friends and spouses.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

This is a classy and important production, and it sneaks in some mordant and sharp humor, enough almost to categorize it as a dark comedy, if it wasn't for the heavy decisions that the characters had to manage. The performances are superb, you realize that all the older actors are living their parts as they play them. The film makes a case for death with dignity – think of the work of Jack Kevorkian – and does it with the flood of emotions that would be expectant in such a circumstance. The film also celebrates and honors our humanity, the ability to rationalize and control certain destinies – it feels for all the characters, and it feels for us.

The retirement village of Yehezkel (Ze've Ravach) and his wife Levana (Levana Finkelstein) is rocked when their best friend Yana (Aliza Rosen) pleads for a solution to her terminally ill husband's suffering. Yana knows that Yehezkel is a tinkerer, and together with Dr. Daniel (Ilan Dar) and Rafi (Raffi Tavor) they devise a “Death with Dignity” machine that the dying soul activates themselves.

The technique is to videotape the subjects expressing their wishes, and allow them to press a button which starts the machine. It works with Yana's husband, but word spreads throughout the village that the machine exists, and others start to beg for its use on behalf of their ill family members, or themselves. The whole situation comes home for Yehezkel when Levana realizes her Alzheimer's Disease is advancing rapidly, and a decision must be made.

“The Farewell Party” has a limited release, including Chicago, and is in theaters now. See local listings for those theaters and show times. Featuring Ze've Revach, Levana Finkelstein, Aliza Rosen, Ilan Dar and Raffi Tavor. Written and directed by Tal Granit and Sharon Maymon. Not Rated.



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A Mount Rushmore of Morality in 'The Farewell Party'

Photo credit: Samuel Goldwyn Films



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