

Film Review: ‘Office Christmas Party’ is Just Ho-Hum Humbug

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CHICAGO – “Office Christmas Party” summons up a few jolly ho-ho-ho’s, but can’t quite deliver even one decent belly laugh you’d expect, considering the talented cast chock full of funny folks. It’s halfway decent premise is drowned in a sea of unfulfilled potential and weak material that the ensemble can only do so much to save.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Jason Bateman is stuck playing another variation on his nice guy persona. He’s a recently divorced middle manager at a corporate data server company in Chicago, working for the party boy son (T.J. Miller) of the company’s deceased founder. Bateman is too good for the material he’s given but he is consistently able to wring some humor and even warmth out of moments in the middle of the predictable run of the mill mayhem. The other highlight is “SNL’s” Kate McKinnon, generating the highest joke-to-laugh batting average of the bunch. Portraying the office HR manager, she scoldingly enforces official office rules and warns against corporate ethics violations, while decked out in a multicultural holiday sweater.

The plot involves Miller throwing a kick ass Christmas party to land a well heeled client (Courtney B. Vance) and save his failing branch from being shut down by the company CEO, who is also his sister (Jennifer Aniston). That’s not a bad premise, but its attempts at raunch and ribaldry feel like first drafts of something Seth Rogen and company might of dreamed up and then tossed away. And the film wears out its welcome with an absurd third act where it inexplicably abandons the Christmas Party premise to engage in garden variety car chases, involving a pimp with psychotic mood swings.

“Office Christmas Party” opens everywhere on December 9th. Featuring T.J. Miller, Jason Bateman, Olivia Munn, Jennifer Aniston, Kate McKinnon, Courtney B. Vance, Rob Corddry and Vanessa Bayer. Screenplay by Justin Malen, Laura Solon and Dan Mazer. Directed by Josh Gordon and Will Speck. Rated “R”



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Kate McKinnon, Jason Bateman, T.J. Miller and Olivia Munn in ‘Office Christmas Party’
Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

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