

Film Review: Emotionally Animated ‘My Life as a Zucchini’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 11, 2017 - 9:43am

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CHICAGO – Leave it to the Europeans to inject some realistic drama into the art of animation. The recently Oscar nominated “My Life as a Zucchini” is opening in Chicago this weekend, and tells the story of parental abandonment, orphanages and finding family. Co-produced by France and Switzerland, it uses a familiar claymation stop-motion style for more emotional resonance.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The English dubbed version is cast with familiar names – Nick Offerman, Ellen Page, Will Forte and Amy Sedaris – and that adds even more connection to the material. The film is an adaption of a novel by Gilles Paris, and pulls no punches in its presentation of a group of orphans, telling the back stories of their circumstances with substance abuse parents, drunken parents, abusive parents and deported parents. The kids are all misfits, and need to rally to each other to get through their challenges. The story suffers a bit through a tipped off ending, but still has value when combining the unique animation with the stark and authentic journeys of the orphans.

A young boy, nicknamed Zucchini (English voiced by Erick Abbate), lives with his mother in a French village. He dreams of his father – who abandoned him long ago – and worries about his mother, who remains in a state of drunken stupor. In that stupor, she dies in an accident (which Zucchini misinterprets as his fault), and the boy is taken to an orphanage by a sympathetic cop named Raymond (Nick Offerman).

There is a hierarchy in the orphanage, led by tough-guy Simon (Romy Beckman), and is filled with emotionally stunted children, based on their past parental distress. At first, Zucchini is shunned, but after a fight with Simon he becomes accepted into the fold. When a young girl named Camille (Ness Krell) is brought into the group, Zucchini’s heart starts to melt, and his cop friend Raymond is also providing some comfort in his difficult life.

“My Life as a Zucchini” opens in Chicago on March 10th, at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport, Chicago. See local listings for other theaters and show times nationwide. Featuring the voices (English dubbing) of Nick Offerman, Will Forte, Amy Sedaris, Ellen Page, Erick Abbate, Romy Beckman and Ness Krell. Screenplay adapted by Céline Sciamma, from a novel by Gilles Paris. Directed by Claude Barras. Rated “PG-13”



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Zucchini (front) and the Gang at the Orphanage in ‘My Life as a Zucchini’

Photo credit: Gkids



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