

Film Review: Flawless ‘Beauty and the Beast’ is a New Classic

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 16, 2017 - 3:41pm

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CHICAGO – Do not doubt the power of live action to create a new atmosphere of joy and...dare I say it...beauty. The re-imagining of the animated classic “Beauty and the Beast” is everything that the previous was and much more. It packs a true and emotional wallop that follows through to the end.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Basically the same narrative/song formula is used, but a live action Broadway feel is given to this film version – directed by Bill Condon (“Dreamgirls,” “Chicago”) – that adds more soul and more resonance to the staging, story and iconic songs. It may feel that you’ve seen it before – especially if you’re in the generation that wore out the videotape/DVD – but to me this version reaches for something beyond the cartoon. It’s narrative and motivations are richer, and the arc of the connection between Belle and the Beast is more mature and rises to the very happiness of the conclusion. The unlikely coming together of the couple has implications for all the characters in this version of story, and the magic does come from their endgame. The structure and power of the 2017 BandtheB stands up with the best musicals in cinema, which is not an overstatement, considering its depth and feeling.

The funny girl named Belle (Emma Watson) lives in a provincial European town in the Middle Age past. She is an outsider who loves books, and has been raised by an eccentric father (Kevin Kline), after her mother died when she was young. Despite being shunned by the general townsfolk, she is a Beauty, and is pursued by the most handsome-yet-vain suitor, Gaston (Luke Evans), who is accompanied by his sidekick LeFou (Josh Gad).

Her father, during a trip to the market, is forced to trespass within a eerie castle. He is kidnapped there, by the horrid Beast (Dan Stevens). Belle comes to his rescue, exchanging his imprisonment for her own. While confined, she meets a staff of animated household objects, including Lumière (Ewan McGregor), Cogsworth (Ian McKellan), Mrs. Potts (Emma Thompson), Garderobe (Audra McDonald) and Cadenza (Stanley Tucci). How can the castle’s spell be broken, and all human forms returned? If Belle and the Beast can somehow love each other.

“Beauty and the Beast” opens everywhere on March 17th, in 3D, IMAX and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D/IMAX theaters and show times. Featuring Emma Watson, Dan Stevens, Luke Evans, Kevin Kline, Ewan McGregor, Ian McKellen, Emma Thompson, Audra McDonald and Stanley Tucci. Screenplay adapted by Stephen Chbosky and Evan Spiliotopoulos, from the tale by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. Directed by Bill Condon. Rated “PG”



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Tale as Old as Time: Belle (Emma Watson) and Beast (Dan Stevens) in ‘Beauty and the Beast’
Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

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