

## DVD Review: Emma Thompson, Dustin Hoffman Shine in 'Last Chance Harvey'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 6, 2009 - 3:11pm

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CHICAGO – Most audiences missed one of the most charming romantic comedies of the last year during the holiday rush and the start of the new year. Joel Hopkins' "Last Chance Harvey" isn't perfect but it's a surprisingly effective heart-tugger, anchored by fantastic performances from its Oscar-winning stars, Dustin Hoffman and Emma Thompson. Catch up on DVD.



DVD Rating: **3.5/5.0**

"Last Chance Harvey" is a simple, gentle movie that doesn't really do anything remarkable but features two performances so good that they will justify at least a rental for nearly any viewer and get them over the relatively generic screenplay. It's an old-fashioned crowd-pleaser, a totally satisfying rental on a Saturday night.



Last Chance Harvey was released on DVD on May 5th, 2009.

*Photo credit: Overture Films*

Featuring Dustin Hoffman's best work in at least a decade and a delightful turn from the always-great Emma Thompson, "Last Chance Harvey" doesn't break the mold or even stretch it at all but it is completely satisfying in a familiarly romantic way. Not everything needs to be new. There's something to be said about doing an old-fashioned genre like the romantic comedy well. It's almost refreshing.

Harvey Shine (Hoffman) is a composer for commercials who is caught in a life-changing few days as his career could be at an end and his daughter (Liane Balaban) is about to get married. He's running out of chances in every way - professionally and personally. Harvey is a quiet, sad man coming to terms with some regretful decisions, including the distance between him and his daughter, a young lady closer to not just her birth mother (Kathy Baker) but her stepfather (James Brolin).



Harvey is in London for his daughter's wedding when he stumbles across Kate (Emma Thompson). Their first encounter is unremarkable but the second, as Harvey drowns his sorrows in an airport bar, produces instant chemistry and instant entertainment. Watching these two great actors play a gentle, old-fashioned game of cinematic romance is delightful, especially when one considers the typically unlikable cads who make up supposedly romantic comedies of today. It's easy to root for Kate and Harvey.

To be fair, there's so little to the screenplay for "Harvey" that one has to wonder if it would have worked at all without two Oscar winners in the lead roles. The characters outside of the lead duo also feel a bit too much like plot devices. But Thompson and Hoffman alone make "Last Chance Harvey" worth seeing. We may have seen this kind of film before but it's still great to see it done this well.

"Last Chance Harvey" is presented in both anamorphic widescreen with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio and in its full-frame presentation on a two-disc set. It's rare to see two discs for the widescreen and full-frame version in one box, but Anchor Bay is not a traditional company. They do things a bit different. Please watch the widescreen. Even for a movie like this one. The audio is service-able in Dolby Surround 5.1.

Special features on "Last Chance Harvey" include a commentary by writer/director Joel Hopkins, Dustin Hoffman, and Emma Thompson, the trailer, and "An Unconventional Love Story: The Making of Last Chance Harvey". Any time you can get two Oscar winners on a commentary track, you should take a chance to listen to it. These are talented people with something to say and their involvement in a DVD commentary is rare.

*'Last Chance Harvey' is released by Anchor Bay Home Video and stars Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, Eileen Atkins, Kathy Baker, James Brolin, and Richard Schiff. It was written and directed by Joel Hopkins. The film was released on May 5th, 2009. It is rated PG-13.*



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