

DVD Review: 'O'Horten' Tells of One Odd Fellow

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 28, 2009 - 4:27pm

- [Bard Owe](#) [2]
- [Bent Hamer](#) [3]
- [David Styburski](#) [4]
- [DVD Review](#) [5]
- [Espen Skjoberg](#) [6]
- [Ghita Norby](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [O'Horten](#) [9]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [10]

CHICAGO – The problem with defining yourself by your job, as anyone in this god-awful economy might tell you, is that you probably won't work forever. Odd Horten, the kind yet unexcitable title character in a strange, little Norwegian comedy by Bent Hamer, has steered locomotives for 40 years, and if you were to take the trains out of this simple fellow's life, there wouldn't be much left.



DVD Rating: **2.5/5.0**

How devoted is Odd to his occupation? Well, he shuns driving cars and traveling by plane, and he loves wearing his uniform even while off duty. Heck, the guy lives in a house where railroad tracks are literally outside his living room window.

Of course, most of Odd's friends work on trains too, and they love their jobs as much as he does. For kicks, they'll get together, listen to recordings of locomotives and quiz one another about the number of bridges on a particular route.



O'Horten was released on DVD on September 22nd, 2009.

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Video

But Odd's career has come to its final stop. At 67, he's reached mandatory retirement age, and his colleagues have bought him a nice honorary plaque and saluted him with one final group chant of "Choo! Choo!"

Now with no obligations, no hobbies, no wife and no kids, Odd seems destined to spend the rest of his days not unlike how his elderly mother

spends hers, staring unresponsively out the window for hours and eating the occasional grape.

Then again, maybe not. The newfound free time has to be filled somehow, so we follow Odd as he attempts some simple chores and becomes steadily more adventurous. Odd buys a new pipe. Odd sells his boat. Odd goes to the airport. Odd rides in a car with a driver whose eyes are closed.

It's all gentle and quirky, and Bard Owe's ready smile and graying mustache give Odd a grandfatherly appeal that keeps this solitary man from appearing the least bit icy. But upon considering the importance of work to the main character, it seems inappropriate for the film to be so lacking in dramatic heft. There are no stumbles along the way, no unexpected barriers put in place to prevent Odd from loosening up, no moment when the audience is asked to provide any strength for him. Just some sweet episodes that, for all we know, could've been concocted by Hamer long before he ever dreamed up this reserved retiree.

Contrast that, if you will, with Alexander Payne's "About Schmidt," a film that addressed a similar story in a comedic vein yet somehow managed to be so much richer in emotional content. After Warren Schmidt bid farewell to the daily grind, the family problems that he had ignored during his career started tearing his life apart. His journey was alternately depressing and uplifting and unexpectedly worthy of a good cry. And if that doesn't sound quirky enough for you, you've never seen Kathy Bates in a nude scene with Jack Nicholson.

The special features on the DVD of "O'Horten" are a trailer and a 10-minute interview that's split between Hamer and composer John Erik Kaada. Whoop de doo.

'O'Horten' is released by Sony Pictures Home Video and stars Bard Owe, Espen Skjoberg, and Ghita Norby. It was written and directed by Bent Hamer. The film was released on DVD on September 22nd, 2009. It is rated PG-13.

By DAVID STYBURSKI
Staff Writer
[HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com)

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 11:10am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/8804/dvd-review-o-horten-tells-of-one-odd-fellow>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bard-owe>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bent-hamer>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/david-styburski>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-review>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/espen-skjoberg>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ghita-norby>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ohorten>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>