

Kristen Wiig Carries Charming Comedy of 'Bridesmaids'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 13, 2011 - 11:22am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – With an incredibly talented ensemble, heartfelt script, and honest characterizations, “Bridesmaids” has been touted as a revolutionary re-examination of what one should expect from the phrase “chick flick.” Having never been much of a fan of genre labels, the idea that this film should be judged differently because it has female stars irks me a bit, but if that gets more people into theatre seats and away from the junk that typically qualifies as “entertainment for women,” I’ll happily embrace it. For whatever reason you see it, the most important thing to know is this simple – “Bridesmaids” is funny. Damn funny.

At its best, Paul Feig’s film is more than just funny. Star Kristen Wiig (and she really should be a Star with a capital S after this breakthrough performance) finds the humanity usually missing from not just the chick flick but the modern comedy in general. With Feig’s gentle touch, the film reminds one of producer Judd Apatow’s best work, films in which he refused to turn his characters into plot devices, allowing them to become three-dimensional while being endearingly goofy at the same time.



Bridesmaids

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Now, I do think that some critics are going overboard in their praise of the film (probably because they’ve been beaten down by a genre that

has given them such horrendous fare as "Bride Wars" and "Something Borrowed"). "Bridesmaids" is a good comedy but it also suffers from that Apatow-verse problem with pacing, running twenty minutes longer than it needs to be. The film can be frustratingly inconsistent, working in fits and starts instead of finding a comic groove. And that holds it back from greatness even if it's still well-worth seeing.

Annie (Wiig) is kind of a bitter soul. She's been unlucky in love and unlucky in business and one of the few things she has left to hold on to is the friendship she has with Lillian (Maya Rudolph). Her bosom buddy has been running down to Chicago to hang with her boyfriend while Annie sulks in Milwaukee. One day, Lillian announces that she's getting married and she'd like Annie to be her Maid of Honor.

Also in the wedding party are Lillian's Chicago friend Helen (Rose Byrne), who becomes competition for the insecure Annie, the boisterous Megan (Melissa McCarthy, who nearly steals the movie), the cooped-up Rita (Wendi McLendon-Covey of "Reno 911") and the shy Becca (Ellie Kemper of "The Office"). Most of the film involves the days leading up to the wedding but writers Wiig & Annie Mumolo also track Annie's dating life, including an obnoxious f-buddy (played with great smarm by Jon Hamm) and a potential new love interest (the great Chris O'Dowd).



Bridesmaids

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Wiig has never been this likable, charming, or believable. She's simply fantastic and she's nearly matched by great supporting work by Rudolph, Byrne, and McCarthy. (Kemper and McLendon-Covey certainly aren't bad, but they're kind of pushed to the side plot-wise). Hamm steals a few scenes and O'Dowd is incredibly genuine, finding a real chemistry with Wiig that helps the piece immensely.

"Bridesmaids" has a unique balance of extreme humor and heart. It's rare to see a film in which a group of women can get violent food poisoning while trying on bridesmaids dresses that also feels realistic. McCarthy's over-the-top character could have been a total mess but Wiig and Feig do such a great job of tethering everything they do to the ground that it never becomes TOO ridiculous. And McCarthy's pep talk with Annie near the end will easily be one of my favorite scenes of the year.

Despite so many elements that work in "Bridesmaids," there is an odd rhythm to the film like some of Apatow's recent work. The pacing isn't always right. Some scenes go on too long while other plot points are discarded abruptly. I kept waiting for the film to really grab me. It's one I admire and laughed at (and so it's definitely worth seeing) but it's not quite perfect. Whatever genre label you want to put on it, a comedy with female stars this talented that produces as many laughs as "Bridesmaids" doesn't really need to be perfect to be a rarity.

"Bridesmaids" stars Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph, Rose Byrne, Melissa McCarthy, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Ellie Kemper, Jon Hamm, and Chris O'Dowd. It was written by Wiig & Annie Mumolo and directed by Paul Feig. It is rated R and was released on May 13th, 2011.



[15]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [16]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [15]

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