

Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling in Great 'Crazy, Stupid, Love.'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 28, 2011 - 3:17pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” is undeniably clichéd, broad in its humor, and a bit manipulative in its sentimentality, but it should be. This is a movie about grand statements, soulmates, and true passion, a film that unabashedly believes in the craziness and the stupidity of what we call love. It’s also one of the most purely entertaining films of the year.

Dan Fogelman’s script follows multiple characters and arcs to their inevitable intersections and directors Glenn Ficarra & John Requa (“I Love You Phillip Morris”) expertly assemble the pieces in such a way that the saccharine flavor and cheesy topping won’t bother any but the most cynical viewers. With one of the best romantic dramedy ensembles of all time (including three once-and-future Oscar nominees along with at least one other likely to join that club) clicking in every possible way, “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” is smart, funny, clever, and what so few of these movies ever are – simply enjoyable.



Crazy, Stupid, Love

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

Cal (Steve Carell) and Emily Weaver (Julianne Moore) are getting a divorce. Emily slept with a smarmy co-worker (Kevin Bacon) after losing the passion in their marriage over so many years. Their son Robbie (Jonah Bobo) is passionately in love with his babysitter Jessica (Analeigh

Tipton), who happens to be passionately in love with Cal. Life in the Weaver household is complicated.

Of course, after the divorce announcement, Cal moves out and spends most of his time in the least-crowded bar in the world (there’s never anyone standing in it, you can always get to the bartender, and it has the highest hot-girl-to-guy ratio on the planet...seriously, it’s like a trendy bar regular’s vision of heaven). It’s there that he runs into his opposite when it comes to success with the ladies – the super-smooth Jacob (Ryan Gosling). After watching Cal pout into his drink while waiting for his nightly conquest a few too many times, Jacob confronts him on his lack of a spine and offers to give him one.

Before you know it, Cal has a new outfit, a new pick-up routine, and even a few new girlfriends. But he still longs to get back with Emily. Meanwhile, Hanna (Emma Stone) gets hit on by Jacob but dismisses him for her boring boyfriend (Josh Groban)...for now.



Crazy, Stupid, Love

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

The script for “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” is incredibly quick and clever, weaving together references to everything from “McCloud” to “The Karate Kid” to “Dirty Dancing” and yet not feeling like it’s trying too hard to be hip. It’s rare to see a romantic comedy this light on its feet, one that doesn’t hit the same predictable beats like a screenwriting program designed to spit out easily-digested chick flicks. There’s a weight to the drama that someone like Alexander Payne (“Sideways”) or Thomas McCarthy (“Win Win”) bring to their work that’s missing from this one and it could have been a true classic with a bit of that extra gravity, but Fogelman comes closer to his best comedy writing peers than anyone else has this year.

However, the script for “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” features enough broad humor and cliché that the film could have fallen flat on its face without the right cast to pull it off. They got the RIGHT cast. Everyone, down to the very small roles taken by great actors like Bacon and Marisa Tomei, fits the film. Even the newcomers like Tipton and Bobo do memorable work, especially the former, a past contestant from “America’s Next Top Model” who really breaks through with a performance that’s much more complex than it looks.

Strong supporting cast aside, “Crazy, Stupid, Love.” belongs to the leads. Carell is better than he’s been since “The 40-Year-Old Virgin,” adding emotional weight to a part that could have been pure schlub silliness. Julianne Moore...what can one say about one of our best actresses? Watch a key scene late in the film in which Emily calls Cal and we see her through a window. She takes what could have been such a standard scene and elevates into something touching and genuine.



Crazy, Stupid, Love
Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

And then there's Emma and Ryan. They are, without question, two on the very short list of the best actors of their generation. There's a scene between the two of them with such amazing chemistry and star power that it reminds one of that feeling you get watching early performances from future Oscar winners. It's just THERE – that intangible element that elevates an actor above the standard rom-com archetype. It helps that Gosling proves that he has comic timing to match his immense dramatic skills and there are few actresses more inherently likable than Stone.

That's the key word for "Crazy, Stupid, Love." – likable. It takes a true cynic to come down too hard on a movie like this one that embraces its own ridiculousness with open arms. Love should be crazy and stupid. It doesn't work if it's not (at least sometimes). Yet it takes very sane, very smart people to make a movie this good.

"Crazy, Stupid, Love." stars Steve Carell, Julianne Moore, Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone, Marisa Tomei, Kevin Bacon, Jonah Bobo, Joey King, and Analeigh Tipton. It was written by Dan Fogelman and directed by Glenn Ficarra & John Requa. It is rated PG-13 and opens on July 29th, 2011.



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