

James Cromwell, Genevieve Bujold Ground Moving 'Still Mine'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 25, 2013 - 1:35pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Into the “getting old sucks” genre with award-winners like Sarah Polley’s “Away From Her” and Michael Haneke’s “Amour,” we can add “Still Mine,” opening tomorrow, July 26, 2013, in Chicago. Grounded by two stellar performances from the great James Cromwell and Genevieve Bujold, this Canadian production of a true story rests on a few melodramatic crutches too often but the honesty found by this pair of powerful actors builds to a truly moving final act. In particular, Cromwell (“Babe,” “American Horror Story: Asylum”) does some of the best work of his career. You’d have to be dead inside not to be moved by what he delivers here.

The accomplished actor plays Craig Morrison, an eighty-something farmer faced with a number of challenges late in life. First, the government regulations on his industry are pushing him, like so many small farmers, out of business. Second, his wife Irene (the lovely Bujold) is slowly losing her faculties. She doesn’t remember conversations and seems to scare easily. Craig decides that he’s going to use part of his multi-acre property to build a tiny home for them to move into and live out their remaining years, looking through a beautiful bay window at the gorgeous scenery around them. Sounds lovely, right?



Still Mine

Photo credit: Samuel Goldwyn Films

Believe it or not, one can’t build a home on their own property with their own two hands without surmounting mountains of red tape. Lumber needs to be stamped, fittings need to be examined, permits need to be obtained – and more things for which Craig simply doesn’t have the patience. So while he’s trying to put up this house, worried that he may be running low on time for both his wife and himself, he has to deal with government bureaucrats willing to take him to court and bulldoze the last major life change he wanted to give his wife.

Naturally, the house takes on symbolic tones (although writer/director Michael McGowan never overplays them) in that it’s something true that a man can build with his bare hands that will last hundreds of years, long beyond our own measly lifespans. “Still Mine” is the story of a man building something sound while the foundation of his life, the woman with whom he has spent only a handful of nights apart in over six

decades of marriage, begins to crumble.

McGowan is nicely restrained with the more emotional scenes and clearly works well with actors but his dialogue can often be a bit too much on the nose. There's a scene early on in which Irene and Craig talk about age, even opining "*We'll find out soon enough*" about death. And almost every one of the scenes of legal trouble has the feel of cliché. The two-dimensional dialogue often threatens to derail the piece into TV movie writing, especially when we've seen such complex visions of old age as Polley and Haneke's films.



Still Mine

Photo credit: Samuel Goldwyn Films

However, "Still Mine" stays on course through the sheer talents of its stars. For every scene that feels a little forced, there's a beautiful moment between the two lead characters. When they're lying in bed reminiscing or having difficult conversations near the end, the truth of these performances is remarkable. At its best, "Still Mine" gives off that feeling that we're watching something private, something genuine between two people who absolutely adore each other and have for decades.

And then there's James Cromwell, an actor who has built a career out of old-fashioned, square-jawed, "solid" characters. One can easily believe that he could really build a house with his bare hands. And so to see him vulnerable by his own age and that of his love contains greater power. This is an emotionally raw performance and Cromwell really delivers beyond even this fan's expectations. He's stellar, taking, with the notable help of Bujold, a film that could have easily devolved into melodrama and grounding it in devastating truth.

Note: James Cromwell will be there in person at the Landmark Renaissance this Saturday night for a Q&A following the 7pm showing of the film.

"Still Mine" stars James Cromwell & Genevieve Bujold. It was written and directed by Michael McGowan and opens in Chicago on July 26, 2013.



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