

## ‘La La Land’ Will Create Love for Musicals Again

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 15, 2016 - 2:01pm

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Rating: **5.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “La La Land” has the spirit of an old time “Singin’ In The Rain”-type Hollywood musical, but this is no throwback or revival. It brings that spirit into the modern age and gets it to live, breathe, and thrive once again. It’s a beautiful technicolor spectacle that celebrates the whimsy of musicals, while finding a way to translate it credibly and wonderfully to the modern age.

The story at its roots is a familiar one. Emma Stone is an aspiring actress named Mia whose closest brush with the movies is her job at a coffee shop on the Warner Brothers Lot. Ryan Gosling is a jazz musician named Sebastian who lets his principles get in the way of earning a steady living. They’re both struggling to find their way and keep some sliver of their souls in a town full of strivers where few get to do more than dream.

They requisitely “meet cute” is in a traffic jam on a Los Angeles freeway when he honks his horn at her and drives away in huff...while she’s running lines for an audition and holding up the cars behind her. Through a chance meeting later, they fall in love as they pursue their careers in Hollywood. It’s a movie about two people in “La La Land,” but it manages to find a deeper and more emotionally endearing level than what’s just on the surface, as they genuinely try to find a way to make a life out of pursuing their dreams.



Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) and Mia (Emma Stone) Are Relating in 'La La Land'

*Photo credit: Lionsgate*

Gosling and Stone display a chemistry I could just watch all day, and it helps that they both know how dance a step or two with grace and wit. Emma Stone brightens the screen with a megawatt smile. Her struggles with auditions, casting directors, and hollywood may not be new, but she imbues them with real human emotion and heart.

Ryan Gosling also gets to do more than just play handsome. He also gets to showcase his rarely used gift for comedy, throwing some hilarious reactions and physical comedy amidst this tinseltown love story. With two such appealing stars, it's easy to get swept off your feet, which they literally do at one point as the production indulges in more than a few whimsical flights of fancy. Writer/director Damien Chazelle ("Whiplash") has also stocked the cast with endlessly watchable ringers including John Legend, Rosemarie DeWitt, and Oscar winner (for "Whiplash") J.K. Simmons, who wrings a surprising amount of laughs out of his tiny role.



Emma and Ryan Trip the Light Fantastic in 'La La Land'

*Photo credit: Lionsgate*



Chazelle's opus is a sprawling fable with music running through the marrow of its bones, and a spring in its step. The cinematography, art direction, costume design, and lighting all work perfectly in harmony to bring this fully realized vision to the screen. The dance numbers are inventively staged (including one in a traffic jam, of all things) while also seemingly just at home in the cinema as they might be on a stage.

The songs are a cut above most other musicals of the past decade. In many ways it reminded me of the Broadway sensation "Hamilton," another risky proposition with a questionable subject – it somehow doesn't just succeed in not sucking but manages to become vibrant and alive.

It's the kind of a musical that's bound to win you over even if you aren't the kind of person who generally likes musicals...singing and dancing haven't been this vibrant and joyful on the silver screen since the days of Gene Kelly and Danny Kaye. It's a gift for the holidays.

*"La La Land" opens everywhere on December 16th. Featuring Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, J.K. Simmons, John Legend and Rosemarie DeWitt. Written and directed by Damien Chazelle. Rated "PG-13"*



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