

Julianne Moore is a Ringing Sensation in ‘Gloria Bell’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 14, 2019 - 8:16pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The sheer ordinariness of life is not fodder for most dramatic films ... the popcorn munchers generally turn out for something more high concept. But in Exhibit A, there is “Gloria Bell,” in which Julianne Moore portrays the title character in a series of ordinary extraordinary events.

It is poetically ordinary what happens to Gloria, and her survival instinct is what makes it extraordinary. With a stellar cast – led by Moore – hitting all the right beats, “Bell” rings out in a way that is familiar to everyone (well, at least to everyone over a certain point in their lives). The inner life that Moore creates for her character is the most fascinating point of view in the film, who on the surface is a somewhat lonely divorced woman who loves dancing and keeping her life on track. The film was directed by Sebastián Lelio, the filmmaker who makes deep observations of human motives (“A Fantastic Woman,” “Disobedience”) in his creations. The combination of him and Moore was stupendously effective, and allows Gloria Bell to rise to her own truth.

Gloria Bell (Moore) is a longtime divorced woman who obviously has made a decision to get out of the house, as we first meet her dancing at a “meet market” bar. The fishing expedition yields success, as a newly divorced man named Arnold (John Turturro) takes a shine to her, and a relationship is launched. But something about him seems amiss almost immediately, and this will affect Gloria going forward.



Glorious Gloria: Julianne Moore as 'Gloria Bell'

Photo credit: A24

In the midst of this new relationship, Gloria is wrestling with two children, a son (Michael Cera) who has split from his wife and is caring for his own infant son and a daughter (Caren Pistorius) who has a relationship that will take her away from the family. Add a kvetching ex-husband (Brad Garrett), and Gloria will need all her sense memory to understand the next phase in her life.

There is nothing tremendously overwhelming about the situation presented (the story was based on a same-titled Chilean film by Lelio), it was Julianne Moore that provided the energy that made it more powerful. There are many moments where the character is seen to be reflective, and that thought process becomes the motivation for the action that follows. Moore's creation of persona for Gloria expands upon the triumphs and mistakes that are all part of her story.

The cast is a mix of familiar and non-familiar faces, with known actors like Brad Garrett ("Everybody Loves Raymond") getting a chance, for example, to expand his curmudgeonly image. John Turturro was also a reminder of how precise an actor he is, portraying a severely insecure man in a relationship he had no business even starting. The fact that he won't "man up" and face his truth transfers the burden of how it will work all to Gloria, who threatened her own stability with the risk of coupling.



Light on Her Feats: Arnold (John Turturro) Courts 'Gloria Bell'

Photo credit: A24

And really, this is the lesson the film, we all need to fulfill our own destinies of self awareness before we can be healthy in a relationship. That means that 99.9% of us are not ready, but that is the point of "Gloria Bell." If we can't hook up properly, we might as well dance ... the film has a charming way of using syrupy pop songs in its soundtrack.

The other night, Julianne Moore was on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" and it was almost uncomfortable to see her as she is, that's how completely she inhabits her various characters. But the passion was there, the light in her eyes that expressed an exactness to what she was accomplishing, and we can actually learn something about ourselves through her creations.

"Gloria Bell" opens in Chicago on March 15th, part of a nationwide release. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Julianne Moore, John Turturro, Michael Cera, Rita Wilson, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Brad Garrett and Sean Astin. Based on "Gloria" (2013) by Sebastián Lelio, screenplay adapted by Alice Johnson Boher. Directed by Sebastián Lelio. Rated "R"



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