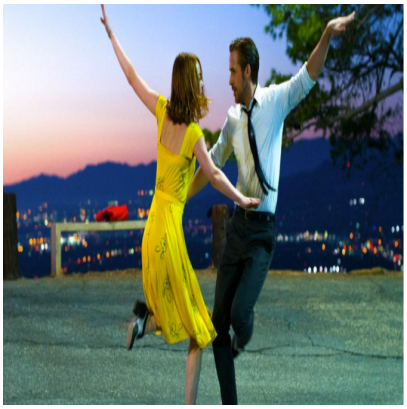
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# â??La La Landâ?? musical masterpiece dazzles Venice film fest

## Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

By AFP

VENICE â?? A bewitching musical starring Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone whipped up a frenzy on the opening day of the Venice film festival Wednesday as it kicked off the race for the Golden Lion.

Damien Chazelleâ??s â??La La Landâ?•, a tribute to the Golden Age of American musicals, reunites the stars, who appeared together in the 2011 romcom â??Crazy, Stupid, Loveâ?• â?? but with oodles of singing this time.

The worldâ??s top film critics, gathered on the glamorous Lido di Venezia for the 10-day fest, cheered loudly as Chazelle and Stone met the press following the screening of the joyful, quirky film which won hearts from the opening shot.

This world premier of the tale of a struggling jazz pianist and his actress girlfriend in Los Angeles is the first of 20 films in competition at the 73rd edition of the worldâ??s oldest film festival.




Director Damien Chazelle at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival, on why he decided to make La La Land now. (Photo credit: ASAC)

â??Now more than ever we need hope and romance on the big screen,â?• said the American director, 31, a former jazz musician whose second feature film â??Whiplashâ?• (2014) received five Academy Award nominations.

â??Thereâ??s something about musicals, they are movies as a dreamland, expressing a world in which you break into song, in which you can violate the rules of reality,â?• he said.

â?? â??Brand new startâ?? â??

The film pays homage to classic musicals, with nods to scenes from â??Singing in the Rainâ?• (1952) and â??Greaseâ?• (1978) as well as old-timers â??Bringing Up Babyâ?• (1938) and â??Top Hatâ?• (1935).

Stone plays Mia, a wide-eyed romantic who goes from audition to failed audition in her quest to make it big, while Gosling is Sebastian, a jazz pianist with a mission to save the medium, but who struggles to pay his bills.

The pair meet â?? in one of L.Aâ??s famous traffic jams and then at a bawdy celebrity party â?? before wooing each other in tap- and ballroom-dancing sequences reminiscent of American icons Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

â??We talked a lot about how to justify doing a musical today. We went back to the old traditions and tried to make it as simple as that. No-one breaks into song unless itâ??s emotionally justified,â?• Chazelle said.

In an auspicious start for the Golden Lion bid, the festivalâ??s artistic director Alberto Barbera described â??La La Landâ?• as a movie â??that does not merely reinvent the musical genre, it gives it a brand new startâ?•.

The picture bursts with enthusiasm and happiness from the opening scene: a big dance number on a freeway with men and women dressed in sun-kissed yellows and rich reds and blues dancing on their cars.

Chazelle said he had brought the love story into the modern day by setting it in L.A., a metropolis he has lived in for almost a decade and which called â??a city of loneliness when you first live there, not a city that offers itself upâ?•.



Damien Chazelle explaining his concept for the musical La La Land during the 73rd Venice International Film Festival. (Photo credit: ASAC)

â??The idea was to build from all the cliches we make fun of; the traffic, the terrible parties, the celebrity culture, the shallowness. But then see what was beautiful beneath the surface, and reconcile the two,â?• he said.

â??It had to feel like a dream, but one that took place in a real place,â?• he added, explaining that to get the light right, filming only took place between 6pm and 7pm each day, â??much to the frustration of the producersâ?•.

â?? â??Absolutely loved itâ?? â??

Stone said she â??absolutely lovedâ?• the experience.




Actress Emma Stone addressing her role as Mia in the latest work, *La La Land,* from Director Damien Chazelle at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival. (Photo credit: ASAC)

â??I went to see Les Miserables when I was eight. Bursting into song has always been a dream of mine,â?• she said.

Although the actress from â??The Amazing Spider-Manâ?• and â??Birdmanâ?• recognized her own early experiences in some of Miaâ??s disastrous auditions, she said â??I donâ??t feel like I was ever quite as brave as she isâ?•.

(Excerpt from: http://www.bangkokpost.com)

*La La Land* proved to be a tantalizing film on many levels beginning with the opening musical number on the bridge to the mesmerizing closing scene. Along the way the costuming, props and camera work add a distinct flavor setting *La La Land* apart from its predecessors. If thereâ??s one film to see this year, *La La Land* is it!

Highly recommended.

**Category**

1. Venice International Film Festival

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