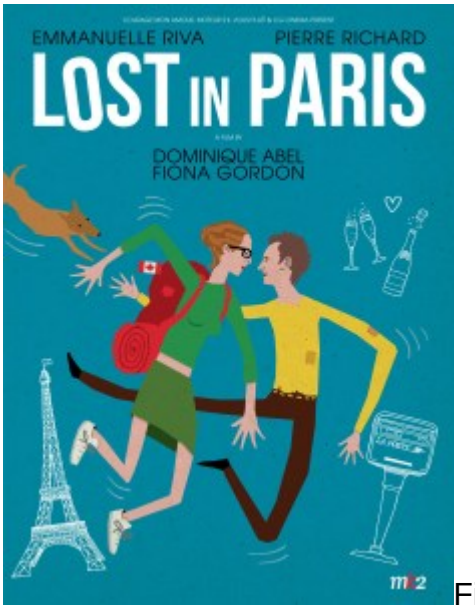
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FILM REVIEW: Lost In Paris (Abel, Gordon, 2016): France

Description



Filmmakers Dominique Abel and Fiona Gordon have crafted out their seventh film together with Oscilloscope Laboratoriesâ?? *Lost in Paris,* a burlesque comedy, about a small-town Canadian librarian, Fiona, portrayed in a stellar performance by Gordon, whose life is disrupted by a letter of distress from her Aunt Martha, who is living in Paris. Fiona hops on the first plane she can only to discover Aunt Martha has disappeared. In a myriad of episodic disasters, Fiona encounters a strangely seductive and oddly egotistical vagabond, Dom, portrayed in an unmissable performance by Abel, who wonâ??t leave Fiona alone.

Replete with memorable antics harkening back to early Hollywood films featuring Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton as well as homage paid to French filmmaker, Jaques Tati, *Lost in Paris* mixes in a measure of poetic license coupled with a slapstick-like choreography, in addition to revealing a peculiar story of clownish characters finding love while lost in the City of Lights.

Utilizing a simple narrative within a framework of what appears to be an amateuresque investigation, Abel and Gordon allow their burlesque, larger-than-life charactersâ?? physical performances to take hold and engage the viewers. Almost all the events take place over a period of two days and two nights with the characters bumping into each other almost constantly while in a heightened state of emergency mania.



88-year-old, renowned French actress and Academy Award-nominee, Emmanuelle Riva, portrays Aunt Martha, a headstrong, independent, audacious and seemingly happy senior citizen on the verge of being placed into a nursing home. Her freedom is non-negotiable. Aunt Martha represents liberty, lightheartedness and â??joie de vivreâ?• (exuberant enjoyment of life).

Fiona embodies a spinster librarian living in rural Canada. She becomes a wonderstruck tourist â?? lacking in life experience â?? as she stumbles through every step of her rather awkward journey. In contrast to Martha, Fiona has rarely done anything adventurous until she dives headfirst into Marthaâ??s world. It becomes apparent Fiona is a Martha in the making as she understands Martha.



Dom, on the other hand, is a selfish, conceited hobo who carries himself with a marked elegance despite his tattered and worn clothing. At first, his impulsiveness infuriates both Martha and Fiona. Yet,

as the story unfolds, Dom becomes a liberating presence.

Interestingly, all the filmâ??s characters are non-conformist â?? full of hope, resistance and innocence â?? while they evoke laughter, vulnerability and a sense of beauty. Actor Pierre Richard portrays Norman, an elderly, independent, charismatic artist who resurfaces three times throughout the filmâ??s storyline, with an understated grace, humor and charm. A classic foot dance, in my opinion, Norman and Martha engage in, is a defining example of one of the filmâ??s themes â?? that a sense of lightness doesnâ??t necessarily convey a sense of triviality or thoughtlessness, but rather a synonym for joy, liberty and vitality.



Aesthetically, the filmmakers utilize a plethora of fixed shots, long takes and some highly artisanal special effects in Brechtian fashion. In addition, the film is set in Paris, a mythical city and a symbol of dreams and grandeur. Symbolically, Dom lives in a tent at the foot of the Statue of Liberty (a miniature replica). His daily environment is the Iâ??lle aux Cygnes, a portal from which the historical center transforms into the modern city. On one side, there are stone bridges and the Eiffel Tower; on the other side concrete walls, express lanes and rows of skyscrapers. Nevertheless, the directors arenâ??t showcasing the cityâ??s monuments solely for aesthetics, but rather for symbolic power and the poetic images conveyed as the characters move through the Parisian geography in real-time.

Lost in Paris, firmly anchored in contemporary society, opens in Los Angeles and Orange County today, July 7th, is a funny, poetic, heroic and sometimes pathetic piece about human beings who are knocked about by life and flail in order to existâ?¦.and who keep getting up one more time to live their lives on their own lifeâ??s terms.

Highly recommended.



Category

1. Feature Film

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