

My Week with Marilyn

From Tom Sims, Executive Director of the Cape May Film Festival

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MUST SEE for fans of Marilyn Monroe and well told stories. This film makes great use of superb performances and uncanny likenesses.

CATCH IT WHEN YOU CAN if you have a passing interest in film folklore and nicely reenacted historical narratives.

SKIP IT if you're not at all interested in Hollywood stars or you think such narratives are inaccurate at best or otherwise "a bunch of baloney" (if you still use that phrase). This is one person's recollection of events, and rumors of spin are not so farfetched.

My friend commented leaving the theater, "If you have to remind yourself that this isn't really Marilyn Monroe, then the movie works." And that might be exactly what the Academy says if it honors actress Michelle Williams with an Oscar nomination for her role as the Hollywood icon in the new film "My Week with Marilyn." What is so striking beyond Williams' mannerisms so reminiscent of Monroe is the film's treatment of this sad and troubled celebrity.

The film is about the time Colin Clark spent as an assistant director during the filming of *The Prince and the Showgirl* in 1956. Clark is played by Eddie Redmayne, who won the 2010 Tony Award for his performance in the play "Red". The film starred Monroe and Sir Laurence Olivier (played in this movie by Kenneth Branagh). In the story, Monroe befriends Clark, and the two have an emotional affair during the shooting of the film. It is through Clark's calming influence that Monroe is able to stay focused and finish the film.

Clark is infatuated with a wardrobe assistant named Lucy, who is played by Harry Potter star Emma Watson. I'm not sure if this is exactly the first time I've seen Watson outside her role as Hermione Granger, but it has to be one of the first. And what film is Judi Dench not in these days (here she plays actress Dame Sybil Thamdike)?

As historical narratives go, this film is much better than *J. Edgar*, and as far as film industry introspection, it is more moving than *Hugo*. To those who say, "She wanted a life of fame and glory, she should have known what to expect," see the movie. The film's portrayal of her insecurities, her entourage of opportunists, her uncertainty, fears... all brilliantly captured by a well-written script, beautiful scenes, and fantastic performances.

For a free ballot to vote for Oscar favorites at our 2012 Pre-Oscar Party (February 26 at Mad Batter), be the first to email to capemayfilm@hotmail.com with the name of the next film that Monroe shot immediately following *The Prince and the Showgirl*.

