

Young Adult

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Review at a Glance

Must See: if you're a die-hard fan of Theron or Oswalt. And if you don't know who I'm talking about...well...

Take a Look: for a better than average drama.

Skip It: If you're flat-out demanding work from director Jason Reitman as good as *Up in the Air*.

Jason Reitman offers the latest installment of what has the potential to be a stellar directing career with the film *Young Adult*. In this coming of middle-age darkish comedy, Mavis Gray, played wonderfully dour by Oscar winner Charlize Theron, has a bit of mid-life crisis and returns to her small hometown in an attempt to reclaim her high school sweetheart (played by Patrick Wilson). Her trip is spurred by an email announcement of the old flame's brand-new baby. Oh, and he's happily married. During her visit to the town, she strikes up a friendship with an old schoolmate, played by Patton Oswalt, who is desperately trying to stop Mavis from getting in between her past boyfriend and his current wife.

This film struck many chords with this middle-aged reviewer, but none of them ever became a melody. First, the film's concept was flawed (you be the judge as to whether that flaw was fatal). The motivation of the lead character was not one with which you could relate very easily—unless perhaps you're psychotic and/or delusional. The acting throughout was superb—especially Theron who wasn't this blatantly unattractive since her film *Monster* (2003) for which she won the Oscar. Another great performance was from Patton Oswalt, who you'll remember as the quirky friend of Kevin James in the television series *King of Queens*.

So much of the dialogue in this film tried to do the thinking for me. I don't like that. And much of the subtle story revelations were neither subtle nor revelations. I'd become a fan of Reitman with such great films as *Up in the Air* (2009) and *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), as well as one of his greatest successes (although not such a favorite of mine), *Juno* (2007). You can see that he takes his time (two years in between each release) to make these movies the best they can be. It's just that this one misses the mark.

And just a note: the 2012 Golden Globe nominations were made recently. It's good to see films predicted to win critical nominations right here in this column are on the list (*50/50*, *The Help*, *My Week with Marilyn*), but I'm confused by their categories. *My Week with Marilyn* was neither a musical nor a comedy. I'll stick with the Oscars, thanks. The Cape May Film Society's Pre-Oscar Party will be at Mad Batter, 5:30pm on Sunday, February 26. For more info email capemayfilm@hotmail.com.