

Thursday September 28th 2023

Rye Lane

Britain 2023 82mins Cert 15

Rye Lane has a sustained energy that makes it a joyous experience to watch - a madcap romantic comedy that's as in love with its characters as they are with each other, it mostly takes place during one aimless day, as a ridiculously likeable couple get to know each other in their favourite part of London.

Director Raine Allen-Miller has made the kind of unapologetically fun romance that we don't get enough of these days. The film tells the story of Dom and Yas (David Jonsson and Vivian Oparah), with the sort of electric chemistry that every romantic comedy director dreams of inducing, and takes place in and around Peckham, south London, where Rye Lane with its eclectic mix of unique shops and restaurants, is at the heart of the neighbourhood's good natured chaos. Premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, the original screenplay placed the action in Camden but there is a real sense that Peckham is an area the characters know and love.

If anything, Allen-Miller can be too enamoured of her locations, capturing buildings and murals strikingly with her wide-angle lens so that the characters feel slightly secondary in the composition. More often than not, however, she's giving us delightful background gags involving some flamboyant extras who populate the neighbourhood.

She gets to flex her stylistic chops in some scenes, such as the flashbacks to Dom and Yas describing how their previous relationships ended but she proves most adept at building on comedic set pieces, including a surprise visit to a neighbourhood barbecue and an ill-advised breaking and entering. She hits her madcap best early on, when Yas crashes Dom's lunch with his ex and best friend - who are now an item - to save him from the awkward emotional pain.

Not all the gags in *Rye Lane* work, but more do than don't, and Allen-Miller bounces us nimbly from one set piece to the next, so the film never gets boring. Plus, it helps that we so want to see these characters end up together, that it's a pleasure to go along with them for the ride.

Acknowledgments: Jeremy Mathews, *EyeforFilm*

"Peckham, despite more than two decades of the gentrification that has affected so many of London's neighbourhoods, still has a thriving Black community, a wide mix of nationalities living cheek by jowl, and a street-level vibrancy. To the credit of Raine Allen-Miller, her cast and crew, this location-shot film captures [its] sizzling energy and the buzz of nearby [...] Brixton, a locale just as gentrified as Peckham"
Lou Thomas, *Sight&Sound*

Leading Players

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| David Jonsson | Dom |
| Vivian Oparah | Yas |
| Poppy Allen-Quarby | Cass |
| Simon Mayonda | Nathan |
| Levi Roots | 'Uncle' |

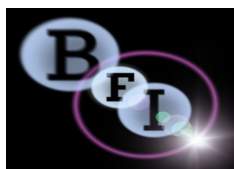
Production Credits

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Director | Raine Allen-Miller |
| Producers | Damien Jones, Tom Melia + 12 others |
| Screenplay | Nathan Bryon, Tom Melia |
| Cinematography | Olan Collardy DP |
| Original Music | Kwes |

Coming soon

October 26th

L'ECLISSE (Italy, 1962, 126mins, Cert PG) Concluding Michelangelo Antonioni's informal trilogy on the modern malaise, which began with *L'Avventura*, *L'Eclisse* tells the story of a young woman who leaves one lover only to drift into a relationship with another. Using the classic architecture of Rome as backdrop to the couple's doomed affair, Antonioni reaches the apotheosis of his modernist style, returning to his favourite themes - alienation and the difficulty of finding connections in an increasingly estranged world.



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