FALL IN LOVE WITH MOVIES AGAIN

It’s the usual tiresome sunny day. Dozens of cars are ensnared in traffic on a Los Angeles freeway. The squalling horns and cacophony of competing radio stations fade as the focus shifts to a woman dressed in yellow in her car, singing to the beats of the song Another Day of Sun. As she steps out of her car and starts dancing on the road, the repellent traffic soon transforms into a full orchestral musical number with a hundred people now joining the fantastic musical spectacle. The boring L.A. traffic turns into a euphoric dance number! Yes, I am talking about the very opening scene from the 2016 musical La La Land that makes you think: **who knew that watching a traffic jam could be so aesthetically pleasing?**

**Another day of sun.png**

Cinema is art, cinema is escapism. When our mundane lives make us feel numb, movies help us to feel something real for a few hours, they help us to escape from the reality. In the hussle of cinematic universes, sagas, trilogies and sequels, somewhere along the way we forgot movies that made us laugh, cry, angry, happy and did not “need” any sequel. But there is a cure to this savagery; there is an antidote to this absurdity! It’s called **La La Land** and it is here to remind you what movies are made for. Damien Chazelle’s 2016 film La La Land brings back the nostalgia of how exuberant and colourful life is, right from the opening musical number that quickly overflows with a flurry of performers darting across the screen! The movie tells us not a love story, but a story of love between two dreaming artists in the City of Stars(modern-day Los Angeles) trying to achieve their dreams whilst finding a future of them together. Before we delve into the story of this beautiful movie musical, do not scroll any further if you still haven’t watched the film as this contains major spoilers!

**Audacious, retro, funny and heartfelt, La La Land is the latest great musical for people who don’t like musicals – and will slap a mile-wide smile across the most miserable of faces.**

**— Empire**

# Welcome to La La Land

Here’s to the ones who dream  
Foolish as they may seem  
Here’s to the hearts that ache  
Here’s to the mess we make

Welcome to lala land.png

The movie follows Mia(played by the radiant Emma Stone), a college dropout who works as a barista in the Warner Bros. studio lot and aspires to be a successful actress. She auditions for dubious films and TV shows but every time her audition either gets interrupted or she is rejected. One night, her friends take her to a lifeless party to find that “someone in the crowd” but she returns disappointed. While returning home she is seduced by the beautiful jazz music being played on a piano. As she follows the melody to a Lipton’s restaurant, she finds herself captivated by the piano player.

The story intercuts to Sebastian, played by Ryan Gosling, who is a jazz aficionado and yearns of opening his own jazz club one day and save jazz from dying away. Unfortunately Sebastian is stuck playing jingles under his strict boss(played by the incredible J.K Simmons). Sebastian suddenly switches to jazz as he passionately plays the theme that seduces Mia from outside the restaurant. Yes, the piano player that Mia was fascinated by was none other than Sebastian! Then we finally come to the magical moment when Mia stands aghast at the Sebastian’s delicate key strokes, while we are paralyzed by the overwhelming beauty of the sound that resonates in our ears. Most would believe this is the moment when Mia and Sebastian become lovers instantly, but no! Sebastian gets fired by his boss for his free-play and brushes past Mia…

First glance.png

Needless to say, their paths meet again and again in some magical moments and sparks begin to fly. As the sun sets, the sky turns into magnificent purple and Ryan Gosling’s Sebastian starts singing: “We’ve stumbled on a view that’s tailor-made for two; what a shame those two are you and me…” and though they sing about how they are clearly not a couple and how the gorgeous night is being wasted because of them singing “What a waste of lovely night”, their bodies tell something else with a fantastically choreographed dance number. We watch them fall in love through dance and music!

*“This is the dream! It’s conflict and its compromise and it’s just… it’s very very exciting!”*

*— Sebastian*

Vertical blue shots.png

# City of Stars

Whether they are walking the streets of Warner Bros Lot, enjoying jazz in The Lighthouse Cafe, watching a movie at the Rialto or dancing at the Griffith Observatory, Mia and Sebastian’s love sparkles like in the fairy tales. Dancing and singing their way through the iconic streets of Los Angeles, they are the most perfect couple that anyone can imagine of. The story swerves in a different direction when Sebastian confronts the challenges of innovation vs tradition as his old acquaintance offers him a place at his band, Messengers (where they play modern music) and Mia prepares for a one-woman play. Things go haywire when Sebastian’s band instantly becomes popular but Mia’s show fails miserably and they begin to wonder if what they’re really chasing are just pipe dreams…

City of stars.png

***City of Stars, Are you shining just for me?***

***City of Stars, There’s so much that I can’t see***

***Who knows? Is this the start of something wonderful and new***

***Or one more dream, That I cannot make true?***

*— Sebastian(singing)*

Sebastian is tired of playing the new instruments instead of pure jazz and they have been separate for months. Miracle happens when the casting director calls Sebastian and says she was impressed by Mia’s one-woman show and wants her to audition. Sebastian quickly drives to Mia’s house and convinces a broken Mia who thinks “Maybe I am not good enough” to give one last try at her dreams.

# A Look at the Magic

By now, the audiences have already been bedazzled by the magic of the wonderful colours and enchanting music that are the primary elements that connect each scene. Quite ironically, La La Land is not about Mia or Sebastian. It is filmmaker Damien Chazelle’s wondrous love letter of the old Hollywood musicals. Flexing an immense visual muscle, Damien Chazelle creates a riot of colours and shades with help from cinematographer Linus Sandgren. Every shot from the movie is an art, a painting! Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone shine as the central characters in the magical land of Hollywood as they are bathed in the neon of Los Angeles night or dripping in the magic hour twilight of its days. Another reason the movie delivers such a powerful emotion is that they use music to communicate. The most exciting thing about the movie is that every song in it is authentic and is sung by the respective performers. Thus the actors get a unique chance to exhibit their talents and bring the magical moments to life. Chazelle has a deft hand in bringing magic in storytelling through music.

## La La Land is one of the most beautiful movies ever made…

## Colours of lala land.png

# Epilogue

A bit of madness is key  
To give us new colors to see  
Who knows where it will lead us?  
And that’s why they need us

— Mia

In the third act of the film, Damien Chazelle effectively glides down to a poignant conclusion that is sure to boost tears in each and every eye that watches the movie. Continuing the story, Mia eventually goes to audition the next morning with Sebastian. This time, Mia is asked by the casting director to narrate a story. As she starts telling a story, she breaks into a passionate song summarizing the very theme of La La Land: “**Here’s to the fools who dream…**” For some minutes, we are completely oblivious of our surroundings. All we can see for those few moments is Mia singing her heart fervidly.

We skip to five years later. Mia is an aspiring and successful actress, she has a husband and a child. The night sky takes over and Mia and her husband come to a club named Seb’s as Mia stands in awe at the neon blue name plate. On the stage is Sebastian, who has succesfully opened his jazz club. Sebastian and Mia share a glance before Sebastian starts playing — a quieter tune, just piano, soft and tender and melancholy. Mia recognizes it, it’s their song, the music that first attracted Mia back when they first met! A drop of tear already oozes out of our eye. This is the most beautiful we’ve ever heard his playing. The most tender, and full of emotion, it has ever sounded. The emotional scene explodes into a melodious musical fantasy montage where Mia and Sebastian always stayed together, achieved their dreams, married and had a child.

Sebastian ends his piece and the audience applauds. We are thrown back to reality again. Mia and her husband get up to leave but Mia looks back once, for the last time. Sebastian looks at her; they lock eyes for a fleeting second. He gives a hint of a smile and Mia’s eyes become wet as she smiles back. Seb nods and Mia leaves…

Epilogue.png

Without a single line of dialogue, the film brings such a strong, emotional, cruel but accurate depiction of reality! Normally we would expect to get the ‘happily lived ever after’ ending, but Chazelle effectively brings realism even in the fantasy world of La La Land. We only have the option of feeling the answer to the dramatic question posed, because it’s not spoken. Their last glance gets tears rolling down our cheek. The boldest thing about La La Land is not the songs but that it asks its audience to understand that a happy ending doesn’t require its leads to still be in love. Chazelle has created a film for people to appreciate cinema once again, to “live” a colourful life through the eyes of Mia & Sebastian — which is exactly what I think people need! Because while Mia and Sebastian fall in love with each other, you will fall in love with movies, with La La Land…

The end.png