The Illusionist

Hello this is Jake Winters for eye on the triangle this is Snowverated and Today I will be taking a look at the French Animated Film The Illusionist.

There are a lot of people today that when they hear a film is animated they will assume it is made for children or at the most young adults. This is something I have brought up before and I will say it again. This is simply not true. Animation is a medium for film that is as diverse if not more diverse than physical film. There are no boundaries in animation beside what your mind create and that is what makes it so different from your average film. Of course there is framing lighting and visual effects in regular film but this is also considered and planned in animated films. They are just as sophisticated as a normal film.

So enough of that rant. There is a lot to like about this film. It tells almost all of its story without audio and what audio there is is in a variety of mumbling singing and jumbled languages. I love how they make the setting and characters feel so much more alive with the use of sound. You hear the pitter patter of rain on an umbrella and the woosh of wind as it enters through a window and when the man preforms it is impressive to hear how well they could capture the sounds of both impressed and unimpressed audiences.

The water color style of the movie is something that I have seen in a few short animated films but have never had the chance to see in a feature length film. The style is so enjoyable to watch and it truly can be said in this that every second of the film is a painting. There are so many breath taking and utterly enjoyable shots in the film that I wouldn’t hesitate to say that if you paused the movie at any particular moment you could frame it. Of course some are more impressive than others but the style of the film as a whole was extremely well done.

I have always loved when films use minimal dialogue and Illusionist does this in a way I have never seen before. The story takes place in a couple of countries, which is one of the things that allows the artists to make such awesome visuals, and the languages that come with this are so satisfying to hear. At one point in the film what I think is supposed to be an American or maybe just a high class british man is talking to the illusionist and the interpretation of his speech patterns is very amusing. The story that they are able to capture just in the movements and expressions of the characters is so real and genuine that connecting with the characters really isn’t an option. The story is no-where near childish either. The dark somber tones of the movie are what come through most heavily in the story. The story is heartbreaking and sad for most of the film but I wouldn’t say it would make me cry but depending on the person I wouldn’t be surprised if it happened. The story follows a magician as he travels around performing his shows for various groups of genrally unamused audiences where he shadows more popular shows. He ends up meeting a younger girl that he takes under his wing. Their relationship is not conventional but is very heartwarming to see people take care of each other in that way.

The animation is done so well in this film. One of the things that I noticed the most was the way in how different ages of characters moved. You could see the age in the characters and feel the struggle that comes with it. There is one final shot at the very end of the movie that is just so interesting to look at that I watched it 3-4 times. It is a shot of the city that the illusionist ends up living in for the majority of the movie. The shot is just staggering and I found myself looking for mistakes in minute details not that I even believed there would be any of them.

The illusionist is a great example of what animated films can be for adults. The show sophisticated pieces of art that are alive with emotion and movement and tell stories in ways that regular film would have trouble doing. The sad story of this man’s travels as a magician left me thinking about what really matters in life and what it is to care about someone. The animation of the film as beautifully done and the story even more so. I am giving this movie a 4/5. If you have listened to my review before you may notice that I changed my scale to 5 points instead of ten. This is because I found myself using mainly the upper end of the ten point scale because I generally enjoy very movie but the films I found to be the worst usually didn’t get below a 5.

Anyway, You can stream this amazon. Thank you for listening to this weeks edition of Eye on the Triangle and Snowverated. I hope you enjoy the rest of your evening