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## Review Of The Movie A Star Is Born

There are many versions of the same story that powers A Star is Born, which has seen three remakes up until now. The original 1937 film starring Janet Gaynor and Fredric March was remade in 1954 and 1976, and with its third remake, we see Bradley Cooper stepping behind the camera for the first time, as music superstar Lady Gaga makes her movie debut, readily sinking her teeth into a role done before only by the likes of Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. Essentially, every version of the 1937 original reiterates the same thing – the magic of music and creativity, and above all, of enduring love. Of course, there are also elements of jealousy and melodrama between the lead actors, as well as disillusionment with the “show business” side of the music industry. But thanks to an emotional core that is both robust and amazingly accurate for the current times, Bradley Cooper’s version ends up being the best version of the three.

The robust emotional core at the centre of this movie only exists because of the superlative performances by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper. The two share a comfort so natural and easy-going that it inevitably lends itself to their chemistry that is luminous, magical and best of all – one that flows so smoothly that you have no choice but to float along. Even if this is a recycled love story between an older, troubled musician coming to terms with his rapidly dwindling success and a young up-and-coming newbie that is propelled for music stardom, it has been done very nicely, written with fantastic heft by Bradley Cooper, Will Fetters (The Lucky One) and Eric Roth (Forrest Gump). What also works is the presence of awareness – the writers are incredibly aware of what it means to wrestle with your personal demons, be hit by and struggle with traumatic experiences, and still somehow find a modicum of comfort amidst all the chaos. I this isn’t an amazingly apt metaphor for the horrors of mental illness in 2018, I don’t know what is.

There is a scene in the movie where Cooper’s Jackson Maine calls Gaga’s Ally and tells her that he did so just because he wanted to take another look at her. The entire movie is infused with such honesty, that it’s like a gust of strong, fresh air to the lungs. There is absolutely no farce here. Yes, there is melodrama as there should be. Jackson “Jack” Maine is a well-established and successful country singer-songwriter who is struggling to accept and come to terms with the fact that his time in the spotlight is rapidly dwindling while dealing with alcoholism and drug addiction due to personal demons. Even then, his relationship with Ally rings true both as musicians and lovers which is why it’s easy to take them seriously.

Cooper is in fantastic form here, delivering a performance brimming with emotion, that it might be his best yet. He makes good work of Jack, a character who could have easily been sleazy, brazen, and crude, but is instead sympathetic and charming even though he’s in a word of pain. Lady Gaga, with her voice the stuff of angels is a natural performer. However, her character Ally has markedly less nuance or heft compared to Cooper’s Jack. Despite that, you are left rooting for, sobbing, and swept by the whirlwind romance between the two. Special mention should also be made for Sam Elliott, who delivers a moving performance as Jac’s put-upon manager. There’s also a great performance by Andrew Dice Clay as Ally’s father Lorenzo, who manages to be both touching and funny every time he’s on screen.

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Bradley Cooper makes ample use of jump cuts and sudden transitions to keep the pace of the movie fast enough. This also helps maintain the naturally intimate nature of Jack and Ally's relationship, which is a plus. However, there is one observation that needs to be made here. *A Star Is Born* works better as a romantic comedy than as a remake of the 1937 original. This is because the movie does a surprisingly shoddy job of showing the pitfalls and the transient nature of American show/music business. The film is at its strongest when it shows Jack and Ally's romance, or Jack's submission to his demons and consequential spiral into darkness, not while showing how Ally 'sold out' and became a superstar. Even then, *A Star is Born* is worth seeing at least twice – first for the music alone, second, for Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga's magical performances. The movie deserves and justifies every ounce of hype it has generated, and then some.

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