

Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 21st September at 19:30

Chocolat (2016)

12A 1h 59min France

Director; Roschdy Zem

Stars; OmarSy, James Thieree, Clotilde Hesme

The life story of Rafael Padilla, a former slave in Cuba, who unexpectedly became a star clown in the Paris of the Belle Epoque. Discovered in a small country circus in the North of France by George Footit, a British clown and acrobat, he formed a successful duo with him, 'Footit and Chocolat'. For two decades, and despite conflicts between the two artists, Footit as the authoritarian white clown and Chocolat as the Auguste Black drudge filled crowds with enthusiasm. But nothing lasts forever and the glory of Chocolat, despite his high ambitions, started to decline until his premature death in 1917.



Removing the Stigma: Omar Sy on “The Intouchables” and “Samba”

Sy spoke with RogerEbert.com about how “The Intouchables” changed his view of filmmaking, the delight of making “[Jurassic World](#),” and his deep belief in the messages of Nakache and Toledano’s films.

The character of Samba is, in many ways, an inverse of your role in “The Intouchables.”

That’s why it was interesting for me to play him. I’m working with the same directors, and each time we collaborate, they give me a new kind of challenge as an actor. It was challenging for me to play a character who was so far from who I am. His accent, the way he moves, how he looks at people were all really interesting to research. I met some immigrants who went through that life and had the experience of living illegally [in France] for a time. I asked them how they found work, how they got paid, how they made friends, how they traveled—even how they crossed the street. They told me everything.

The topics of the movie were interesting for me as well, in how they connected with my own backstory, since my parents are immigrants. I love how Eric and Olivier bring a lot of heart and love to their movies and how they mix drama with humor. This film deals with very important issues, and it was the right time for the directors to [explore] them. We had fortunate timing, considering what’s going on today in Europe and even here, regarding immigration. It’s an international issue, and everyone can connect with it, whether they are an immigrant or know someone who has immigrated.

It shows how different the lives of people can be within the same country. Sometimes you can be in the same area at the same moment—even at the same event—and still be in an entirely different world. The film challenges people to explore immigration from a personal perspective, because it’s an issue that is all too often [politicized]. At its core, it’s about people just trying to make a better life for themselves, and we can learn from their stories.

I don’t want to tell people what to think about the issues raised in the film. But if they come out of the screening room and find their views on immigration changing just a little bit, that’s a big step forward, and it would make me so happy. I really believe that “Samba” can entertain people while, at the same time, show them something new about the world. After people saw “The Intouchables,” they would come up to me and say, “Thank you, that film made a big difference for me.” That’s when I learned how movies can be more than entertainment and actually make a difference in the world.

Edited by Alex O'Reilly

