

## [Movie Review of CHEERFUL WEATHER FOR A WEDDING by Howard Casner](#)

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Halfway through the movie *Cheerful Weather for a Wedding*, the new veddy, stiff upper lip dramedy from writers Mary Henely-Magill and Donald Rice (who also directed), there is a scene that takes place at a country dance. Nary a word is spoken, but the emotions are palpable. And it's in this scene where we finally realize how the two central characters, Dolly (don't worry, no one says hello to her) and Joseph, really feel about each other. It's also in this scene that I thought the movie might finally coalesce into something. But alas and alack, 'twas not to be. Soon after, the film returns to its somewhat bland, unfocused story about a wedding day.

The real problem with *Cheerful Weather*... is that it is two movies in one. Half of it is a somewhat mild farce on the order of Somerset Maugham and Noel Coward, about a bunch of people gathering at a country house for some approaching nuptials (how veddy BBC/Merchant-Ivory can you get?). The other half is an introspective character study about two people, the bride (Dolly, played by Felicity Jones) and her ex-lover (Joseph, played by Luke Treadway), who can't figure out how they feel about each other, or, if they could figure it out, what to even do about it. These two halves never really fit into a whole, and in fact work against each other, getting in each other's way and constantly tripping over each other's two left feet.

The most successful of the two halves is the demi-farce. It may not reach the manic energy of *Death at a Funeral* or even *Four Weddings and a Funeral* or any other comedy that revolves around a casket, but it does get its laughs. It also has the two most interesting characters, Nancy Dakin (Fenella Woolgar, who played Agatha Christie on a *Dr. Who* episode, and who looks like she should play Agatha Christie every chance she gets) and David Dakin (Mackenzie Crook, appropriate name that since he played Ragetti in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, as well as Gareth on *The Office*) as a middle aged couple who have reached that point in holy matrimony where they simply can't stand each other, but can't stand each other in such a way that you know, like those venerable lovers of Shakespeare, Beatrice and Benedict, that they really, deeply care for each other. It's the resolution of their relationship that is the emotional high point of the film (for those who like movie references, they're like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in *Flying Down to Rio*; Lucille Ball and Keenan Wynn in *Without Love*; and Carrie Fisher and Bruno Kirby in *When Harry Met Sally*..., relationships that are far more interesting and effective than the leads).

But oh, hello Dolly and Joseph (okay, I couldn't resist). Unfortunately, Henely-Magill and Rice have failed to give us any compelling reason to care whether the two non-star crossed lovers end up together or not. But how could the authors, since they didn't leave themselves enough time for it. So much of the plot is devoted to the hi-jinks of the rest of the gathering, that we're never given a convincing explanation as to why the two knuckle heads didn't get married in the first place or why Dolly's mother (a somewhat mannered Elizabeth McGovern—I've a feeling we're not in Downton Abbey anymore, Toto) is so against Joseph as a prospective bridegroom.

The technical aspects of the film are first rate. Everyone is tailored to within an inch of their lives with all the men looking like models in an arrow shirt ad and the women looking like Erté sketchings (costumes by Camille Benda). The mansion the whole thing takes place in is a model for BBC miniseries everywhere (production design by Anna Lavelle). But the highlight is the lovely score by Michael Price which often did what the writers couldn't—convey the emotions necessary to understanding what was going on between the characters. It was so effective that when my friend who accompanied me commented on it, I agreed, saying it's unfortunate that people so often talked over it.

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