

PAGEANT
THEATRE
SEPTEMBER 13 - 19

THE FAREWELL



FRI - SAT: 4pm and 7pm / SUN: 1pm and 4pm
MON - THU: 4pm and 7pm
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REEL WORLD



Bittersweet reunion

‘Small marvels’ abound in well-acted dramedy

The Farewell, the prize-winning Chinese-American comedy/drama, is so full of small marvels that it exudes a spell of enchantment that is by no means small. It's a multigenerational tale that's thoroughly and seriously charming throughout. It's that rare bird, a PG-rated entertainment that addresses adult issues, a “feel-good” movie that clearly prefers honest emotion to cheap sentiment.

by
**Juan-Carlos
Selznick**



The Farewell
Opens Friday, Sept. 13.
Starring Awkwafina,
Diana Lin and Zhao
Shuzhen. Directed by
Lulu Wang. Pageant
Theatre. Rated PG.

The story premise has a quirky young Chinese-American adult (Billi, memorably played by Awkwafina) and her Chinese-born parents making a return visit to their hometown. The occasion is ostensibly the wedding of a young relative, but the nuptials are above all a convenient excuse for a family reunion, and that reunion in turn comes about because of the not-so-public news that Billi's beloved grandmother may be near death.

But the diagnosis, stage-4 cancer, has been kept from grandma Nai Nai (Zhao Shuzhen) and family tradition dictates that no one should tell her the truth during what is presumably their final visit with her. What ensues from that is a witty and bittersweet comedy of culture clash, generation gaps, international by-play, and cycles of tradition and modernity.

In its sprightly intelligence and free-spiritedness, the relationship of Billi and Nai Nai is the emotional and spiritual centerpiece of the entire film, and the performances of Awkwafina and Shuzhen in those two roles are chief among those “small marvels.” But writer-director Lulu Wang has peopled her film with a whole range of illuminating pairings—Billi and her mother (Diana Lin), Nai Nai and her slightly younger sister (Lu Hong), Billi and her father (Tzi Ma), Billi's father and her Uncle Haibin (Jiang Yongbo), cousin Hao Hao (Chen Han) and his Japanese fiancée (Aoi Mizuhara), etc.

Wang's directorial skills extend into the visual design of the film, presumably in collaboration with cinematographer Anna Franquesa Solano and production designer Yong Ok Lee. *The Farewell* is deftly scripted as both comedy and drama, but it also packs a wealth of expressiveness into the composition of its widescreen images. Intriguingly ornate settings, including streetside locations and rectangular interiors, recur, as well as quietly complex shots in which separate parts of the composition act as counterpoint or contrast to the conversation that proceeds in yet another portion of that same image. □



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent