Ben Swearingen

Dr. Champion

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*Love & Basketball* Review

Gina Prince-Bythewood delivers a solid directorial debut with *Love & Basketball*. While I don’t tend to gravitate towards romance films, I can’t help but enjoy a well-written love story. *Love & Basketball* was able to avoid most of the pitfalls other romantic stories fall into and provide a mature, interesting look at the two main character’s intertwined lives.

I really appreciated the way Prince-Bythewood chose to frame the story into four “quarters.” I was a fun device to cover their entire lives and tie the framework of the story into the subject matter. Each “quarter” provides a new look at the characters Monica and Quincy (brilliantly portrayed by their respective actors) and really helps develop their relationship. Each character is given much depth. We see how they grow, and we see how their attitudes change towards each other. By the end of the movie, we can see how they have learned and matured.

The direction was phenomenal as well. Being Prince-Bythewood’s first feature film, there seemed to be some adolescent directorial choices; but, instead of hindering the film, these choices added charm and felt consistent with the character’s adolescence (at least in the first half of the movie). I must further note the excellent direction during the “sports” sequences. I especially loved the POV shots with Monica’s narration – it really helped put the audience in the character’s shoes.

The latter half of the movie, unfortunately, does not hold up as well as the former. Firstly, the narrative could have been tightened up. I started feeling the length of the movie in the last twenty-ish minutes. Second, I thought the film felt more mature than the “fairy-tale ending” we were given.

The most commendable comment I can give *Love & Basketball* is that I do not usually like sports films or romantic films and this movie got me on board with both! I was surprised with this film and would recommend it, despite my few complaints.