



FILM: **A STAR IS BORN**

FDG RATING: 4.2 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Bradley Cooper: *director*
Lady Gaga: *actress, Ally*
Bradley Cooper: *actor, Jackson Maine*

DATE: October 21, 2018

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **A STAR IS BORN**

It's the same old fairytale story as in 1937 (Janet Gaynor & Fredrick March), 1954 (Judy Garland & James Mason), and 1978 (Barbara Streisand & Kris Kristofferson) but updated in 2018 (Bradley Cooper & Lady Gaga) for our generation. The tale is evidently timeless, emotionally resonating with each audience even when we know exactly what is going to happen. The ambiance and music is updated as is the mode of self-destruction for the famous musician spiraling downward as his female protégé rises to success.

Bradley Cooper hits the mark in his directorial debut of *A Star Is Born* and also as the seasoned musician Jackson Maine who discovers and falls in love with a struggling singer, Ally. Lady Gaga, as Ally, is almost unrecognizable, with no makeup and playing the role of an unknown, unconfident, singer so completely authentically. Jack first notices her late one night in a Hollywood drag club where she sings after her waitress shift ends. She has just about given up on her dream to make it big until Jackson takes her under his wing and then coaxes her into the spotlight.

Most of us were rather dubious about yet another remake, but being supportive fans of Bradley Cooper and knowing the phenomenal voice of Lady Gaga, plus those of us who were blown away by her performance as the vampirisque fashionista Countess in *An American Horror Story: Hotel*, we were willing to give the film a chance. And boy were we glad we did.

The film realistically shows us the intoxicating excitement and suffocating manipulative destructive demands of music world. We liked seeing Ally's back story with her supportive, father and his cronies who all worked as limo drivers for celebrities in New York. And Jackson's back story with his conflicted relationship with his brother (Sam Elliott). Everything felt very real in the film. One discussion participant described the relationship of Ally and Jackson as two souls coming together. Another commented that the title could be "*A Star Is Lost*" since it is as much a story about the demise of a famous musician. Conversely, for one resident reviewer, Ally's success came too easily and that is a flaw in the story. She is discouraged, has no confidence, and then goes on stage and like the wave of a magic wand, she is propelled to success.

Kudos to Bradley Cooper, for his skill as director. There were some intensely, emotionally painful scenes, but we didn't feel manipulated.

Superb acting, excellent directing, good songs and music. We applauded *A Star is Born* with a star studded 4.2 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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