Film Close-Up: Amy Adams

by Joey_Berlin

Anyone who has watched a performance by the super-adorable Amy Adams knows that she is capable of lighting up the big screen. And what better place to shine than in a fairy tale?

AMY ADAMS - Amy Adams stars in Disney's new musical comedy 'Enchanted.' CNS Photo courtesy of Tippet Studios. The redheaded firecracker gets her first major starring role in Disney's new musical comedy, "Enchanted." Adams plays Giselle, a real "once upon a time" princess who gets banished by a wicked queen (Susan Sarandon) from fairy tale land to modern Manhattan. Her crime was a budding romance with a prince, played by James Marsden.

Cute complications ensue when Giselle meets a handsome but engaged lawyer (Patrick Dempsey) while waiting to be rescued by her prince. The 33-year-old Adams is pitch-perfect in the part.

Adams has been steadily building an impressive resume that includes roles in "Catch Me If You Can" and "Talladega Nights." But her big breakthrough came with 2005's "Junebug," in which she played one of the gabbiest pregnant women in film history. Adams was nominated for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar and she scooped up another 11 awards for her performance. She will be seen again shortly in "Charlie Wilson's War," opposite Tom Hanks.

Q: What does it feel like to wrap your mind around the fact that by starring in "Enchanted," you are joining the roster of Disney princesses?

A: I guess I don't really attach myself to it. I know that I am, it's my face, but it's Giselle and I'm a completely different entity than her. I'm very happy that they think enough of this role to include her with them but I take no ownership of it really, in an odd way.

Q: "Enchanted" feels like a classic movie musical. Are you a fan of the genre?

A: I was a huge fan of movie musicals. I started out in musical theater, that's where my first love is and was. You know, "Mary Poppins" was my favorite movie, Julie Andrews was my princess. That was the woman I attached to Hollywood royalty when I was a kid. And so it was a huge influence on the decisions that I made in my life, and leading up to this role.

Q: You have such a great singing voice. Did the filmmakers have you sing when you were auditioning for the role?

A: No, they didn't. They actually were not aware that James or I sang at all, and that was something that he and I immediately leapt on. We really wanted to do our own singing.

Q: When you film the big production numbers, do you get to do the whole song all the way through? Or is there a lot of movie magic where they stop and reset often?

A: Yeah, there's a lot of stop and start, especially in the cleaning scene where we're working with rats and pigeons and special effects. That was a very tedious part of the filming, that process. Oddly enough you cannot train a rat to scrub a toilet! I've tried and they just don't really get it. But there are rats that are trained to sit, there are rats that scamper. They can train a bird to fly on cue from one trainer to the next.

Q: And the cockroaches?

A: Ah, the cockroaches. I don't work with cockroaches. I draw the line. It's funny, they're the smallest of all the animals, that can cause me no harm at all, and I'm just like, "Get them away."

Q: How did you play the subtle transformation that Giselle makes from fantasy to real, live, flesh-and-blood girl?

A: Yeah, that was something I loved about the script, that she got to take that journey. And it posed a really great challenge to me as an actress, to try to make that transition subtle and not too jarring for the audience, and still keep with the spirit of Giselle. I didn't want to change who she is, just change her reality. I still wanted her to have the same essence at the end. I didn't want to strip her of her goodness and kindness and loving spirit.

Q: Does Giselle's transformation in any way match you at the beginning of your career, and your innocence at that time?

A: It very much does! When I first moved to Los Angeles, you know I'm not a small-town girl but it was from a much smaller town than L.A. I came from Minnesota and I had been working in theater, which is such a familial environment with people that just really, truly loved and embraced me. And when I came to Los Angeles, it was just such a Giselle moment. I really was just so wide-eyed and had an innocence, a naivete about the world that I was entering and what it would take to succeed - not in my career, but as a person in that environment.

Q: So what happened? What was your transition to "real girl"?

A: I grew up. I started being more careful about the people that I invited into my life. For me, that's what changed.

Q: But did your naivete serve you well? Was ignorance bliss when you got into this business?

A: Initially yeah, I think it did. I didn't know better so I tackled things. I think if I knew then what I know now, I'd never be in this position. I would have been too scared.

Q: With "Enchanted" and "Charlie Wilson's War" you have two very big, high-profile movies coming out this season. How do you feel about that?

A: I'm excited about it! I'm really happy about the experience of making these films and I think that they're both very unique and different. I hope that they resonate with an audience.

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