

H is for Happiness

By Maureen

This is a feel-good movie which sends you home with a smile on your face. It is warm, compassionate, optimistic, tender and funny with many LOL moments.

The setting is Albany, WA. Both the scenery and the bright M & M colours add to the optimistic feel of the movie.

The two pre-teen lead actors are engaging. (I did worry about Candice whose parents hadn't supplied her with sunscreen and Douglas Benson who was sorely in need of dental attention.) To me they seemed younger than their 12-going-on-13 years of age in the film, though perhaps not too young for the puppy love they show for each other.

The film has adult themes of loss and unresolved grief, family dysfunction and mental illness, all seen through the children's eyes. I thought it a pity that the adults were depicted as caricatures: teacher played by Miriam Margolys had an unstable eye (presumably computer generated), Rich Uncle Brian was too one-dimensional, Candice's parents were also depicted unsubtly from their initial at-each-other's-throats to their eventual reconciliation. And I wasn't sure about the symbolism of the small white horse-from-another-dimension unless it was to emphasise that this is a fairy tale.

Overall, most enjoyable for adults as well as its intended young-adult audience. And the uproarious climax of the school concert was irresistible.