

Youth (juventud) – Review

Off the back of his Oscar-winning 2013 masterpiece *La grande bellezza* (*The Great Beauty*), acclaimed Italian director Paolo Sorrentino **returns** to the English language in *Youth*, starring Michael Caine and Harvey Keitel as two old friends, British composer Fred Ballinger and Hollywood director Mick Boyle. Ballinger is long **retired**, while Boyle is entering the **twilight** of a hugely **successful** career, and Sorrentino's film follows them during their **stay** at an exclusive Swiss hotel, during which time they deal with the **trials** and **tribulations** of old age, as the **young** and the beautiful, the old and the **strange** swarm around them.

As you would expect from a director of Sorrentino's calibre (*Le conseguenze dell'amore* (2004), *Il Divo* (2008)), *Youth* is a **gorgeous** looking film. In its setting and themes (especially regards art and the **clash** of youth and old age), it recalls Olivier Assayas's similarly **transfixing** *Clouds of Sils Maria* (2014), while largely confining its drama to a hotel also **evokes** Yorgos Lanthimos's arthouse hit *The Lobster* (*Langosta*) (2015), though this is a generally warmer, more **affectionate** picture than both.



Yet the ennui that its central characters struggle with is very much of a piece with the director's earlier work, as are its often surreal flourishes. What makes it so affecting is the superb performances of Caine and Keitel, whose easy **camaraderie** - and **bafflement** at the **world** around them - is **believable** and affecting; its supporting cast, including Rachel Weisz as Ballinger's daughter and Paul Dano as a film star (among numerous other figures and appearances

from musicians such as Sun Kil Moon's Mark Kozelek, pop star Paloma Faith and Korean soprano Sumi Jo) is fantastic, too. Though perhaps not the tour-de-force of filmmaking that *La grande bellezza* was (it feels deliberately slighter in its ambitions), *Youth* is highly recommended all the same: a **tender**, surprising study of love and friendship and how the two **endure** and evolve over the years.