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In the Supper Room, Town Hall, Ferguson St St Williamstown, at 7.30 pm, last Wednesday of the month.

2021 Program

The Farewell

The Farewell is a bittersweet Chinese tragicomedy, based on events in the life of Lulu Wang, the director and writer.

Billi (Awkwafina) is a young Chinese New Yorker struggling to make her way in the world. She has a place of her own to distance herself from her parents - Haiyan (*Arrival's* Tzi Ma) and Lu Jian (Diana Lin) - but is struggling to fund it. But despite a typically spiky teenage relationship with her parents, family is important to her.

There's a big shock then when her beloved "Nai Nai" (Shuzhen Zhao), back in China, is diagnosed with terminal cancer and her younger sister (Hong Lu) has decided to keep the news from her. This is in line with the Chinese saying "When people get Cancer they die". (Based on the rationale that it is not necessarily the disease that kills you, but the fear that destroys your useful life).

The whole extended family sign up - reluctantly - to her decision. A wedding between the comically reluctant grandson Hao Hao (Han Chen) and his new Japanese girlfriend Aiko (Aoi Mizuhara) is the excuse for one last family get-together in Changchun.

However, the burden of this lie is heavy and conflicts, confusion and misunderstandings soon occur. Faced with seeing Nai Nai face-to-face, and being forced to "celebrate" together, can the family - and the emotionally attached Billi in particular - hold it together and keep the secret?

For such a 'small' film, the scale is sometimes truly cinematic. Director and writer, Lulu Wang, achieves some gloriously memorable movie moments. A stony-faced, determined march of the key players towards the camera - which could be subtitled "The Magnificent Eight" - is slo-mo'd for about 30 seconds and is utterly mesmerizing. And a scene at a cemetery is a comic masterpiece of Chinese tradition. Teenaged Bau (Jinhang Liu) of course still has his face in his phone throughout!

The music is by Alex Weston, and it's one of the stars of the film. It's truly quirky with everything as diverse as a vocalised version of Beethoven's Sonata No. 8 "Pathétique"; a karaoke version of "Killing Me Softly"; and a hugely entertaining Chinese version of Niilson's "Without You" over the end titles.

The film is truly multi-cultural. It's not an American film with some local content crudely inserted to cater for the Far East markets, it is an almost equal blend of American language and Mandarin language with subtitles.

This is a feelgood film about a tough subject. The ending of the film pulls off the trick of being both devastating and uplifting at the same time.

And it's all "based on a true lie"!

See the trailer at :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RofpAjqwMa8>

Colour Running time: 100 mins

Starbox Results

	5	4	3	2	1	Average
Return Home	16	13	7	6	0	3.9