Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 121 minutes

This Netflix feature is available for streaming.

During a difficult time, it can be a nice break to shut one’s brain off and just try to have a bit of fun. *Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga* attempts to help viewers do just that, using the very real European music competition as a backdrop for utter silliness. Truth be told, this movie is probably a bit too long for its own good. It also rambles in sections, giving the impression that much of the dialogue may have been improvised on the spot. However, this reviewer couldn’t help but find it an amusingly sweet-natured affair, delivering a handful of big laughs and goofy pop songs performed by outrageous personalities.

All his life, Icelander Lars Erickssong (Will Farrell) has wanted to win the Eurovision Song Contest, despite being told he has little musical talent. While Lars’ father (Pierce Brosnan) expresses disappointment and embarrassment at his middle-aged son’s continued efforts, bandmate Sigrit Ericksdottir (Rachel McAdams) encourages them and continues reaching for the stars. Through blind luck, they are selected to compete in Reykjavik for a spot as the country’s representative in the contest. An even more bizarre occurrence finds them headed to Edinburgh, Scotland, to challenge the best acts from various countries.

The meek pair encounters competitors like Alexander Lemtov (Dan Stevens), a Russian who sees potential in Sigrit and encourages her to leave Lars behind and go solo.

The story is very simple, much like the naïve lead characters. This is not a deep movie, with the main message being to sing from the heart and never let mistakes prevent you from attaining your goal. Most of the humor pokes gentle fun at the over-the-top and outrageousness on display at the pop music contest. The leads certainly attempt it all with gusto.

After a career playing in bars to locals who only want to hear one very particular song over and over again, Lars and Sigrit must deal with nerves and discomfort as they perform for bigger and bigger audiences. And as the competition heats up, the elaborate performances lead to more silliness from all parties involved. Some of memorably ridiculous tunes include goofy titles like “Volcano Man”, “Yaya Ding Dong” and “Lion of Love”.

Leads Farrell and McAdams appear to be having a good time playing their innocent characters, while Stevens camps it up for all his role is worth. Things do slow down as Lars begins to ignore his partner’s concerns and the duo deals with artistic differences and the negative influence of others. Their bickering does become repetitious and it doesn’t feel like the script could have used more deviousness from the Lemtov character. But the flat elements are broken up soon enough by an entertainingly bizarre number of on-stage trip ups.

There is also a running joke throughout the movie about Sigrit’s unwavering belief in guardian elves. Thankfully, this subplot delivers a hilarious pay-off late in the film.

It’s also an enjoyable change of pace to see supporting performers like Ólafur Darri Ólafsson and Björn Hlynur Haraldsson, known for their dark and grimacing roles in Nordic Noir procedural crime shows, play decidedly less edgy and sharp-witted roles in this feature. And for those who do follow the real competition, you will also witness several cameos from recent European Song Contest winners, many of whom partake in a lengthy and impressive musical mashup number midway through the picture.

And of course, the movie also benefits from some beautiful locations in Iceland and Edinburgh.

Admittedly, this movie is incredibly dopey. Not all of the jokes land. Yet those involved seem to have an affection for the real competition and most of the gags are good-natured and enjoyably silly.

Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga may not earn a perfect score from all the judges, but it is a sweet and entertaining endeavor that should win over some fans who decide to give it a spin.

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