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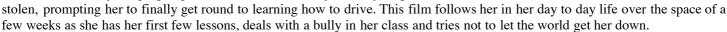**realbuzz.com**
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Happy-Go-Lucky

2008

Director: Mike Leigh
Stars: Sally Hawkins, Alexis Zegerman, Eddie Marsan, Kate O'Flynn
Length: 118 min

★★★★☆

Happy-Go-Lucky synopsis

Poppy is a primary school teacher living in London and trying to get the most out of life by keeping a positive outlook. One day her bicycle gets stolen, prompting her to finally get round to learning how to drive. This film follows her in her day to day life over the space of a few weeks as she has her first few lessons, deals with a bully in her class and tries not to let the world get her down.

Opinion on *Happy-Go-Lucky*

'Happy-Go-Lucky' feels more like an excerpt from a soap than a movie, a kind of Eastenders meets Bridget Jones' Diary type affair. We meet Poppy mid-action and we know that she'll continue her life afterwards, but the small screen effect only accentuates the idea that perspective is what's important in life.

Poppy's absurdly bright and optimistic attitude is designed to grate on the senses from the very start. Her constant chatter and giggly, gushing noises are pretty annoying, yes, but the positivity - rebutted by most of the people she encounters in daily life - is not. Director Mike Leigh paints a pretty accurate picture of London life, from the brash, bright colours to the pent up emotions of everyday people afraid to reach out to others, too self-involved or insecure to speak to a stranger in the street. Not so Poppy, and she does her best in even the most trying of circumstances - how could we fail to respect the woman as she sits on the physiotherapist's table, smiling bravely as tears of pain well up in her eyes?

Female relationships are key in this film. Alexis Zegerman plays Zoe, Poppy's best friend and flatmate, and though her performance is a little too deadpan at times, it's good to observe a female bond that gives both such a feeling of safety and security. Both are pleasingly unconcerned about the usual problems doled out to female characters - finding a boyfriend, having babies etc - but aren't written off as career obsessed or unfeeling either. This is a rare thing. Younger sister Tash (Sarah Niles) is a bit of an emo kid stereotype complete with exaggerated guttural accent and patterned hoodie, but the jokes and quips between her and Poppy show real warmth and affection.

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