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Review: 'My Last Day Without You' Is a Refreshing Spin on Love, Attraction & Chance (New on DVD Today)

S&A By Mia Barbee | Shadow and Act
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Director Stefan Schaefer's *"My Last Day Without You,"* the multi-award winning independent film starring Nicole Beharie and Ken Duken, is now out on DVD (as of today, November 18th), and will be available on Video On Demand next month.

The film's synopsis reads as follows:

"On a one-day business trip to New York, a German business executive falls in love with a singer-songwriter who exposes him to her Brooklyn world and emotions he's never experienced before."

This is a movie that would've surely passed me by had I not been an admirer of Nicole Beharie's acting; but the film is full of delightful surprises.

What you might think will be yet another interracial romantic farce, turns out to be the least of the couple's barriers. Yes, they have cultural differences, which play out mostly through misunderstood terms. For example, Leticia (Beharie), called "Tisha" throughout, had to explain what "getting with you" meant to Niklas (Duken). There are few moments like this that creep up when you least expect them to, but positively so.

The couple meets so abruptly and no time is wasted honing in on the fact that their sexual attraction is a huge magnet. There are no forced moments of falling in love. It's mostly Niklas' goal to make amends that brings out the sincere emotional attraction from them both. This is where the story could go cliché, but continues to linger in a familiar way... how many people fight the instinct towards emotional healing, but brush it off as something else?

In fact the story ends sharply ambiguous. Yes, the right choice is made, but will the couple chance for a lifetime or just an extended moment? We'll only assume... it's a timeless chance.

A parallel love subplot between Tisha's father, Pastor Johnson and his secretary, Luz, further sustains the theme of love that gels. Their interaction is just as fun and intriguing as Niklas and Leticia, but there's a clear juxtaposition between the cautious younger couple and the mature acceptance of love from the older couple.

The backdrop and driving force of the film involves job loss, but it's not such a crutch that interferes with the impending outcomes that follow the 24 hour lifespan of its main characters.

The chemistry between the leads (Ken Duken and Nicole Beharie) fit like a glove with an equally deserved mention to Laith Nakli as a hired romantic guru cab driver and declared comic relief.

Reg Cathey, as Nicole's Pastor dad brought a sentimental touch.

If you live in Brooklyn, particularly south of Washington Avenue, Bushwick or Prospect Heights, you'll enjoy pinpointing all the recognizable locations.

The music was soulfully inviting and beautifully song by Beharie.

The film's official soundtrack can be accessed [here](#).

My only complaint was the useless jealous ex-boyfriend who had no purpose (at least to me) other than to drop off our German friend in the "projects" (mind you Tisha doesn't live in the projects, but rather a studio loft) to fend for himself. These moments are comic, but not needed as an added blockage to Niklas ultimate decision to stay or go. I'm sure he would've run into those same characters (a group of cool African American young children, drug dealing teen, etc) he encountered on his mission to re-locate Tisha after she finds out an unfortunate truth. The Niklas character was so well defined; he didn't need "extra" blockages. He ultimately was his own obstruction.

All in all, *"My Last Day Without You"* falls in line with a new wave of sensible stories with a diverse cast of characters that don't need to use "race" as the cinematic conflict that binds the story. Niklas could have easily been a "brother", but making him a German just ups the conflict ante, though it doesn't sustain it.



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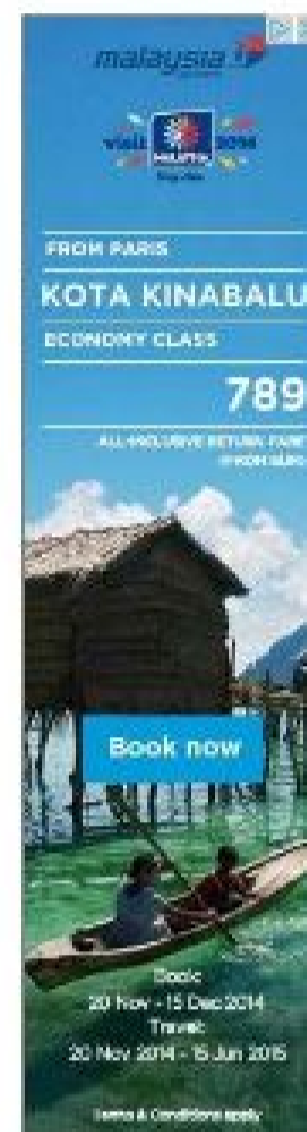
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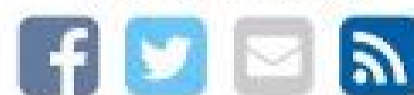


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