



DVD

DISC DETAILS

OUT: Now
RRP: £19.99
DISCS: 1
ASPECT RATIO: 1.78:1
AUDIO: DD5.1
PICTURE: ★★★★★
SOUND: ★★★★★
EXTRAS: Edinburgh International Film Festival Q&A with director Sylvain Chomet; Behind-the-scenes featurette; Photo gallery; Trailer

FILM DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: Pathé
CERT: PG
RUN TIME: 77 mins
YEAR: 2010
DIRECTOR: Sylvain Chomet
VOICES OF: Jean-Claude Donda, Eilidh Rankin, Duncan MacNeil



Dita Von Teese really went to seed after hitting her fifties.

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★
THE ILLUSIONIST
Animation that finds magic in everyday places...

For a film largely devoid of dialogue, there's much to say about *The Illusionist*. Based on an unproduced script by French treasure Jacques Tati, best known for playing Monsieur Hulot, it reignited a real-life story of pain and scandal – namely, the debate over which of Hulot's daughters (Sophie, his youngest, or Helga, the illegitimate child he abandoned) inspired it.

Either way, director Sylvain Chomet's follow-up to 2003's *Belleville Rendez-Vous* is a thoughtful and often melancholy riff on the transition from innocence and childish wonder to experience and cynicism, and the clash of old versus new. Vaudeville magician Tatischeff (Jean-Claude Donda) finds he can't compete with rock'n'roll bands, only for a jukebox to usurp them both. Meanwhile, in a telling visual metaphor, a new TV and hi-fi shop opens as a ventriloquist's dummy languishes in a pawn shop.

The story takes Tatischeff and his grumpy, uncooperative rabbit from Paris to England, then Scotland. Much of the action unfolds in this final setting, which includes a painstakingly recreated '50s period version of Edinburgh. There Tatischeff befriends Alice (Eilidh Rankin),

a young girl who believes him to be genuinely capable of magic, but he can't keep her entranced forever. The pair's interactions play out with little or no dialogue. However, while the film is full of

"It's a rabbit-from-a-hat riposte to the hyper-modern wonder of today's *Toy Stories*."

visual jokes (like the menu offering a full Scottish breakfast... in batter), some scenes would benefit from subtitles, especially the odd lines spoken in French.



"And a glass of your finest wine."

It's not the only omission from this disc. The Q&A with Chomet shows he has plenty to say but, while it's over an hour and a quarter in length, it's no substitute for a commentary. No bonus material was

prepared specifically for the DVD, unless you count the gallery (just a series of film stills), and what's billed as a 'Behind The Scenes' featurette. Unfortunately, three minutes of what is presumably production footage shown over music doesn't make for satisfactory viewing – especially as there's no explanation of who's being filmed or what they're doing.

It's a huge shame, as the main feature is a wonderful film, deservedly nominated for a Best Animated Feature Oscar. It's a rabbit-from-a-hat riposte to the hyper-modern wonder of today's *Toy Stories*, and while Tatischeff's paper flowers and coins have long lost their appeal, *The Illusionist* is a delightful reminder that hand-drawn animation most certainly has not.

Anne Wollenberg

FINAL WORD

Wonderfully whimsical and charming, but the special features provided here fail to enchant.

NEXT STOP...

BELLEVILLE RENDEZ-VOUS (2003)
Chomet's previous endeavour, nominated for two Oscars. When the French mafia kidnaps a cyclist, his granny sets out to rescue him. Extras include director's commentary on selected scenes, interviews and several featurettes.
Film: ★★★★★
Extras: ★★★★★