



Ruth Sheen and Jim Broadbent in *Another Year*

There's Something about Mary

The master director of Happy-Go-Lucky returns

ANOTHER YEAR: Written and directed by Mike Leigh. Cinematography, Dick Pope. Music, Gary Yershon. Starring Lesley Manville, Jim Broadbent and Ruth Sheen. Sony Pictures Classics, 2010. PG-13. 129 minutes. ★★★★★

Somewhere in London, an aging couple is inexhaustibly happy. Gerri (Ruth Sheen) is a gentle and capable counselor, while Tom (Jim Broadbent) is a jolly if judgmental geologist. Together they embrace, rather than shrink from, the world's rhythms and fluctuations — they're both four-season gardeners — and their relationship is hearty, fortified, even graceful. They're at ease in the world because they adapt to it. If only their friends were so fortunate. How we resist change, and under what circumstances change is possible, is the central question of *Another Year*.

Another Year is the latest from writer and director Mike Leigh (*Naked*, *Secrets & Lies*), an artist whose unscripted approach to social realism often finds

ordinary people negotiating a crisis. At face value, *Another Year* refers to a typical year for Gerri and Tom. Being a safe port, they tend to attract boats in a storm, and so we meet Mary (Lesley Manville), Gerri's dippy co-worker, and later, Ken (Peter Wright), a clumsy friend of Tom's. Mary, following a homecooked meal with Gerri and Tom, repays the kindness by drinking too much and passing out. Ken, who visits soon after, drinks too much and collapses into tears. With friends like these, best to avoid friends altogether. But the disconnect is merely a starting point in *Another Year*, where characters who at first seem minor turn out to be major players, while other characters, seemingly major, simply drift away. Exuberantly positive folks harbor great pain and fear in Leigh's work, but also great reserves of strength.

Mary is a self-deprecating type whose polished exterior hides signs of

a breakdown. She's always late, usually following some mishap or catastrophe, even if we sense it's in her imagination. Earnest, she addresses people by their first name far too often, as if a supplicant looking for reassurance. She clearly adores Gerri, but one can imagine her putting a move on Tom, in part because she's a natural flirt and in part because in the presence of wine, she's has a tendency to overserve herself by tossing it back in great desperate glugs. As it turns out, she has it bad for their son, Joe (Oliver Martman). With each passing scene, Leigh makes a case for her as possibly the world's loneliest woman, a shift so natural and evolutionary that you barely notice it happening. First she's buoyant, then she's sunk: It's a great example of how much drama can be wrung from a completely unself-aware person.

Meanwhile, while Gerri and Tom remain genetically predisposed to kindness, they can be sweetly

patronizing to both Mary and Ken. They indulge their lonely friends, but only up to a point. Jim in particular is quite tart when he wants to be. But throughout *Another Year*, they're shining examples of stability and perseverance — Tom's brother loses his wife, Gerri has to cut off Mary for a time — qualities they're so in control of that they're barely aware they possess them. Eventually, Mary is invited back into their house, but has anything changed? Has Mary the courage to change? We can debate all we want the mysterious ending of *Inception*; whether it's a dream or not is irrelevant. By contrast, the ending of *Another Year* is almost molecularly subtle. That Lesley Manville isn't nominated for an Oscar for her role as Mary is the oversight of awards season. *Another Year* is one of the most rewarding movies of the year. Precise, humane, and lovely, it's a forward-thinking movie about people whose lives are stuck in park. **EW**

**ONE FLEW
OVER the
CUCKOO'S NEST**

BY KEN KESEY

ADAPTED BY DALE WASSERMAN
DIRECTED BY CHRIS PINTO

FEBRUARY 3RD-20TH
8 PM PERFORMANCES 2 PM MATINÉES
3,4,5 • 10,11,12 • 18,19 13 • 19 & 20

PARENTAL ADVISORY \$8 - Students/Seniors \$10 - General
\$5 Student Discount on Opening Night!

541-463-5761 LANECC.EDU/TICKETS








traveling soon?
medical advice for global travelers

THE TRAVEL CLINIC

John D. Wilson, M.D.
1200 Hilyard St., Suite S-560
541/343-6028
www.TravelClinicOregon.com

Questions? Email us at travelclinic3436028@gmail.com

Safe Removal of Mercury Fillings
Wellness Centered
Dentistry

868-2008
300 Country Club Rd
Ste 290

Rob Whicker DDS www.wcdentistry.com


