

Class battle strays into silly territory

The Weekend Australian

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Page 17 | Section: CULTURE

200cm on the page



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The Party's Over (M)

French with English subtitles

In cinemas as part of the Alliance Francaise French Film Festival, March 3-April 8



The Party's Over is a brisk, 95 minute, satirical exploration of class difference. Imagine Bong Joon Ho's 2019 drama Parasite relocated to the south of France. This film, directed and co-written by Antony Cordier, is not as dark, as serious or as good as the South Korean one, which became the first foreign movie to win a best picture Oscar, but it's lifted by an energetic ensemble cast, especially Laure Calamy, best known for the 2015-20 television series Call My Agent. No-nonsense Nadine Azizi (Calamy) and her handy husband Tony (Ramzy Bedia) are the underpaid, off-the-books caretakers of a holiday home owned by smarmy Paris lawyer Philippe Trousselard (Laurent Lafitte) and his actor wife Laurence (Elodie Bouchez).

The Trousselard's daughter, Garance (Noee Abita), is a wannabe actor. She's accompanied by her new boyfriend Mehdi, a law graduate who worked through his studies as a waiter and delivery driver. He may be a lawyer but in the family's eyes he's at best the French title of this film, *Classe moyenne* (middle class). Tension between the two families goes from simmer to boil when the Trousselards interrupt a 20th birthday celebration for the Azizis' daughter, Mary Lou (Mahia Zrouki) to ask Tony to unclog a drain.

From here we have a war between the Trousselards, who want to dismiss the caretakers, and the Azizis, who threaten to spill the beans on the family unless they are paid off. Caught in the middle is Mehdi, who tries to negotiate a deal. What unfolds is mildly entertaining if rather silly. The director, in his fourth feature, takes a few pot shots at the business of filmmaking. When Mehdi mentions one of Laurence's early films, she replies, "That film captured the male imagination, but don't worry, I've made some with clothes on too".

This film is part of the French Film Festival, an annual deliverer of cinematic bonbons to our shores. Top of my to-see list is Francois Ozon's *The Stranger*, an adaptation of Albert Camus' 1942 novel. I also think *The Richest Woman in the World*, starring Isabelle Huppert, looks like a lot of fun. As this is my final review for this newspaper, I'd like to thank the readers who have taken the time to read my thoughts over many years. (SR) 🍷