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### The Wedding Date (Widescreen Edition)

Rated PG » Grade: B-

by Michael C. Sherrin  
 EDGE Entertainment Contributor  
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"The Wedding Date" proves you can pay for romance. This romantic comedy, where Debra Messing ("Will and Grace") helms her first motion picture, successfully creates an adorable love story where logic and reality need not apply.

Kat Ellis (Messing) employs a male escort, Nick (Dermot Mulroney), to play her boyfriend at her younger sister's wedding. Ellis' ex-fiancé, who broke off their engagement last-minute, reappears in her life as the best man. Ellis hopes her new, fake beau will not only to make her ex-jealous, but keep her family's questions about romance at bay.

"The Wedding Date" wonderfully emphasizes cuteness. Messing plays what her television Grace Alder should be – witty, sensitive, insecure, neurotic and most of all, likeable. Though her character has little to accomplish plot-wise (she wants to make her ex

jealous; she doesn't want him back), you root and care about what happens to her. Mulroney ("My Best Friend's Wedding") plays sexy with a James Bondian confidence and an even better six-pack. The two play well together and seem to enjoy the awes and the sighs from the audience.

Thankfully, the film does not try for the slapstick, over-the-top comedy that many films (and "Will and Grace") succumb to for laughs. The jokes provide many smiles and healthy snickers from the randy one-liners said by the welcome-cliché best friend, TJ (Sarah Parish), to Ellis' own neurosis: "I like my dad," Ellis says. "But since he's my step dad, he's not really family. He's more like a hostage."

Sometimes, the humor doesn't go as far as it could. Ellis tries to describe her family as pure horror. Unfortunately, the little we see of the family shows them to be tame even by real-life standards. With the exception of the toast Ellis' mother gives saying she had expected to marry Ellis first, no other scene shows the horror of this family. And family is to comedy what going to the garage alone is to horror movies. Entire movies like "The In-Laws" (the original) and "Meet the Parents" work because family's are inherently embarrassing and thus, funny. Ellis obviously loves her family and even enjoys their company. This is comedy gold thrown out like a cheap bouquet.

For all the chemistry between Messing and Mulroney, their scenes rely more on cuteness than plot – it's good to a point. We never see how Ellis and Nick fall in love or see Ellis fight in any real conflict. She has no goal except to please her family which takes no effort. Though the film satisfies on simple humor and an entertaining cast, everything would be more enjoyable if Ellis had more to accomplish like win her ex, compete with her sister or just outwit her mother.

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**Special Features**

As fun as fluff movies can be, their special features often only fill more fluff. Messing provides solo commentary for the film spending less than half the time talking. If her chemistry with Mulroneu clicked as well as she says, they should have been paired together for a "Jerry Maguire"-esque stroll down memory lane. Messing did reveal some insight into the original script keeping Nick's profession a secret until at the wedding as well as an important deleted scene. Sadly, this deleted scene remained deleted. The included deleted scenes lacked the humor of the rest of the film and had little opportunity to add more where little plot existed. "A Date with Debra" is just a ten minute commentary that would have worked better as a blooper reel.

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