

Film Review: 'The Favourite' is a triangular palace intrigue with an Oscar-winning lead



CHENNAI: Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos film “The Favourite” launched its lead actress Olivia Colman to the highest Hollywood honor on Sunday, when she won the Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role for her portrayal of 18th century England’s Queen Anne.

The film itself, which nabbed 10 nominations at the awards show but only scored a win for one, is a fantastic showcase of 18th century England, more specifically, of the palace intrigues that made and marred the lives of many nobles.

Lanthimos has Colman playing an ailing, gout-stricken English queen, with ladies-in-waiting Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone desperately trying to win favors and power. It is a triangle of sorts, with the three women in a crazy game of hysteria and one-upmanship. Queen Anne’s closest confidante is Lady Sarah (Weisz), and her opinion matters because her husband, Lord Marlborough (Mark Gatiss), is the commander-in-

chief of the British Army. Sometimes, Sarah's views irritate the queen and she snaps, even screams. But she is naive and easily fooled, even kept out of the loop — something that Colman portrays with astonishing might.

Sarah's influence and power are threatened with the arrival of her cousin, Abigail (Stone). She needs a job after falling on hard times and uses her cunning to get close to the queen, sparking a royal battle between the two women with the queen in-between.

The imaginatively mounted movie is divided into eight chapters and despite a queen who is portrayed in a depressive light, there is levity. Colman is brilliant as a woman who spends most of her time in a wheelchair and is often the butt of ridicule. Stone displays an impressive arc — from a pretense of innocence to cool calculation used to undermine her adversary. Weisz is equally convincing as a domineering lady who uses both her charm and vile games to stay afloat.

Visually stunning with brilliant camerawork by Ireland's Robbie Ryan, "The Favorite" has eye-catching costumes, which at times take attention away from the vicious games played with a sense of relish in Queen Anne's court.

Oscars Glory

"The Favourite" actress Olivia Colman delighted the audience with a tearful and humorous acceptance speech as she took home the Oscar for the Best Actress in a Leading Role on Sunday.

"It's genuinely quite stressful. This is hilarious," Colman said in accepting the trophy, which she won over nominees Glenn Close, Lady Gaga, Melissa McCarthy and Yalitza Aparicio.

"And my kids who are home watching - well if you're not, kind of well done," Colman said through tears. "I sort of hope you are. This is not going to happen again," she added to laughs from the audience.
