

## THE YOUNG VICTORIA

Director: Jean-Marc Vallée

Cast: Emily Blunt, Jim Broadbent, Miranda Richardson, Paul Bettany, Mark Strong, Rupert Friend  
100 minutes Canada/United Kingdom/ USA NR

Acclaimed director Jean-Marc Vallée (C.R.A.Z.Y.) returns with *The Young Victoria*, a delicate and profoundly romantic look at England's last golden age. Starring Emily Blunt as the queen, the film follows Victoria's struggle to succeed her uncle as the ruler of England, a quest blocked by her mother, the Duchess of Kent (Miranda Richardson), and her odious "adviser," Sir John Conroy (Mark Strong).

Widowed at a young age, the duchess has been convinced by Conroy that she must protect Victoria's health at all costs and keep her away from the court in order to preserve her own position – despite the vocal complaints of King William (Jim Broadbent), Victoria's uncle, who clearly wants his niece to follow in his footsteps. When Victoria is finally crowned, she's utterly unaware of the potential ramifications of her actions and allows herself to be misled by the dashing Lord Melbourne (Paul Bettany), who may be using her youth and inexperience to further enhance his own position.

Enter Prince Albert (Rupert Friend), who almost immediately charms Victoria by refusing to stick to the script given him by his scheming and Machiavellian relations. As love grows between the two, crucial questions remain unanswered: will Victoria listen to Albert's counsel or will her loyalty to Melbourne win out? *The Young Victoria* gives us an in-depth portrait of the often ruthless machinations that characterized the dealings between royal families: patriotism and family loyalties were labyrinthine in their complications, and battles for leverage and position even poisoned mother-daughter relationships. But Vallée's film is also a truly felt romance; from the very first meeting, we sense a mutual bond between Albert and Victoria, despite the restrictions placed on their interactions. Beautifully directed and exquisitely acted, *The Young Victoria* is a memorable, sophisticated and very charming exploration of English history.