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### Review: Celeste and Jesse Forever

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on August 24, 2012 - 11:30am in [Reviews](#)



Actress/writer [Rashida Jones](#), daughter of famed music producer Quincy Jones and '60s TV star Peggy Lipton, is a woman for the ages: smart, funny, tenacious and slightly overbearing. And so is her character Celeste in the indie romantic comedy *Celeste & Jesse Forever*, opening in Austin theaters today.

When we first encounter childhood sweethearts Celeste and Jesse ([Andy Samberg](#)) in the movie, they're in relationship limbo. After six years of marriage, the two have decided to legally separate, but find it difficult to emotionally separate. Professional slacker and artist-wannabe Jesse continues to live in his backyard studio, with Celeste living in the couples' former home. When he's not watching the Beijing Olympics, he and Celeste, a trends forecaster for an L.A. marketing company and author, resume a somewhat platonic best friendship, much to the chagrin of the couples' long-time friends Beth ([Ary Graynor](#)) and her fiance Tucker ([Eric Christian Olson](#)).

Celeste and Jesse's inside jokes, which mainly involve phallic-shaped objects and German accents, put a damper not only on their social lives but their dating lives as well. That is, until the gang has a chance encounter with Jesse's former one-night stand.

And that's where things get interesting.

The script to *Celeste & Jesse Forever*, co-written by Jones and co-star [Will McCormack](#), captures the plight of 21st-century women who strive to have it all: the Prius in the driveway, an office with a view and a loving family of their own. While striving for a balance between work and home, Celeste loses sight of what's truly important to her. It's only through the secondary characters, such as Celeste's gay business partner Scott ([Elijah Wood](#)), Jesse's pot dealer/friend Skillz (McCormack), Ke\$ha-esque pop star Riley Banks ([Emma Roberts](#)) and yoga love interest Paul ([Chris Messina](#)) that Celeste sees and is able to transcend the painful truth.

Joes and *SNL* alum Samberg share an easygoing onscreen chemistry. They play their characters with compassion and a subtle realism that allows for moments of awkwardness (like watching Samberg cry -- I'm still not convinced he can pull off drama) and confusion.

But the film's really not about Samberg. With her unconventional good looks and disquieting humor, Jones gives her mostly male cast a run for their money. Her deft performance and the beautiful cinematography by [David Lanzenberg](#) help lift *Celeste & Jesse Forever* above the traditional rom-com pack.

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