

OddsAgainstTomorrowRobertWiseHarryBelafonte1959TextTVS

By Tim Van Schmidt

Odds Against Tomorrow ****

"Odds Against Tomorrow" is not just a heist movie, but a morality play about racism besides. The black and white photography starkly reflects the harsh personalities that come together to do the job and an exceptional jazz soundtrack reflects the tension that comes with the situation. Not only do some basic rules of thievery come out- like, little stuff you didn't plan for can change the plan- but also the clear message that racism is a dead end.

Besides having a very strong jazz soundtrack, the character played by Harry Belafonte in "Odds Against Tomorrow" is a jazz vocalist and vibes player, besides a desperate gambler. This makes jazz a distinctive element here.

But more, the action is underscored by character studies of those involved- the hard-bitten Southern bigot, the scheming young black man, the old retired cop who's just sure he's found a chink in the system to exploit. It's a desperate project with desperate characters who live right on the edge, nervous, combustible jazz wailing in their ears.

Directed by Robert Wise...1959...96 min...featuring Harry Belafonte, Robert Ryan, Gloria Grahame, Shelley Winters, Ed Begley.