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We Are Your Friends [2015]

Genre: Drama, Music, Romance

Stars: Zac Efron (*17 Again*, *High School Musical*), Wes Bentley (*American Beauty*, *The Hunger Games*), Emily Ratajkowski (*Gone Girl*)

Director: Max Joseph

Four childhood friends living in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles hustle to make money and find fame. One of them is 23-year-old Cole (*Zac Efron*) – a budding DJ who has the skills to make it big but needs the opportunity. A chance meeting with established DJ James (*Wes Bentley*) gives him access to the equipment, advice, and exposure he needs. However, when he falls for James' young assistant (*Emily Ratajkowski*), things become complicated.

We Are Your Friends was a financial flop, but it isn't really that bad a movie. At first glance it seems a lot like *Entourage* – what with all the partying, smoking up, and chasing women. And while it is about the usual themes of friendship, love, and coming of age, it is also about music; and that sets it apart. The writers do a great job of capturing the essence of DJ-ing in a way we can all understand. There's even a well-scripted 60-second guide to how a truly skilled DJ can control a listener's heartbeat.

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The plot is predictable, but the characters are interesting. Not least is the gorgeous Emily Ratajkowski, who in 2014 was #62 on Maxim's "Hot 100". She's a veteran model who you probably know as one of the topless girls from Robin Thicke's music video *Blurred Lines*. Efron does a decent job being more than just a pretty face, and this movie is a perfect next step in his ongoing transition away from *High School Musical*. Wes Bentley (he played the creepy boy in *American Beauty [1999]*) brings his characteristic intensity to the role of washed-up-alcoholic-DJ, which is perhaps especially poignant considering his real-life struggles with drug and alcohol addiction.

We Are Your Friends is a light, feel-good drama and a great 'underdog' story. It goes behind the glitz and glamour of the party scene, but doesn't go so deep that it 'harshes your mellow'. It's a chance to just chill and unwind.