

arts & leisure

Max at the Movies

Although Max loves to review some of the latest music sent our way (he has a pretty long commute each day), *OITM* occasionally sends Max some of the movies we receive to review when we know he's going to be home long enough to fire up his DVD player. Here's his take on the latest batch we sent his way.

Max Martini's Rating Scale:



- 0 Martinis – “No need – it's that good!”
- 1 Martini – “What the hell – just one!”
- 2 Martinis – “Oh yeah – that's better!”
- 3 Martinis – “You'll need 'em!”
- 4 Martinis – “Wake me up when it's over!”

In The City [En la Ciudad]

Wolfe Video
(www.wolfevideo.com)
Spanish/English subtitles
Release: 4/19/05

Their Take:

In The City is a charming romantic comedy about a group of friends sharing their secrets and passions in Barcelona. Irene (Monica Lopez) is married to – but sexually frustrated by – an air-traffic controller who believes more in healthy finances than a healthy marriage. Bookish Sofia (Maria Pujalte) has fallen for a French businessman who spices up her life whenever he is in town. Architect Mario (Eduard Fernandez) suspects his wife is having an affair, so he meets up for a brief, meaningless fling with Cristina (Leonor Watling). And Tomas (Alex Brendemuhl) is having an ill-advised affair with one of his music students, 16-year-old Ana (Miranda Makaroff), who is Mario's niece. Relationships and friendships get shaken up when Irene runs into her old college friend Silvia (Aurea Marquez) and finds her own bisexual nature awakened. *In The City* is directed by Cese Gay (who also directed *Nico And Dani*). Eduard Fernandez won a Best Supporting Actor

trophy at the Spanish Goya Awards for his role as Mario in this film and Leonor Watling, who played Cristina, won the Cinema Writers' Circle award for Best Supporting Actress.

Max's Take:

Think of this movie along the lines of *The Big Chill* in Spanish but without the death of one of the members of the group, a lot more sex, and the Motown music soundtrack (okay, maybe not the best analogy but you get the picture). *In The City* is an ensemble story focused on a group of friends living in Barcelona who all have secrets that they are able (for the most part) to keep from each other even though they all spend a significant amount of time together. The movie is superbly directed by Cese Gay who got the inspiration for the film from a meal he had with some of his own friends.

The film is like a private view of a group of friends that have a number of emotional experiences in their lives that they never talk about. All of the performers put in extremely believable performances but Maria Pujalte's Sofia is one of my favorite characters in the movie, as she so easily makes up scenarios about her life (that aren't exactly true) and eventual-

ly has to deal with having one of her untruths becoming reality. **2 Martinis**

Our Fathers

A Showtime Original Picture
(www.sho.com)
Premiered: 5/21/05

Their Take:

On Saturday, May 21, 2005 Showtime Networks presented their new original drama, *Our Fathers*, a sobering look at the discovery of sexually abusive priests over the last five decades in the Boston Diocese.

Our Fathers includes a star-studded cast including Ted Danson (as lawyer Mitchell Garabedian), Christopher Plummer (as Cardinal Bernard Law), Brian Dennehy (as Father Spagnolia), Daniel Baldwin (as Angelo DeFranco – one of the many victims), and Ellen Burstyn (as Mary Ryan, the mother of seven children who were all abused by Father John J. Geoghan). Directed by Dan Curtis, from the screenplay by Thomas Michael Donnelly, the film is based on the Newsweek journalist David France's powerful best selling book *Our Fathers: The Secret Life of the Catholic Church in an Age of Scandal*.

Max's Take:

I was raised Catholic, and this was not an easy movie to watch. But I was truly impressed by the Showtime production. I had followed the real-life story as it unfolded in the media and found that I learned some things from watching *Our Fathers* that I hadn't known. The filmmakers were obviously committed to a story approach that was both accurate and engaging.

Our Fathers was produced with the cooperation of

several of the victims who insisted their names be used in the film. The courage and pain of the survivors who came forward to tell their stories clearly shows through in the production. Gary Bergeron (played by Thomas Mitchell), Tom Blanchette (played by Hugh Thompson), Olan Horne (played by Chris Bauer), and Bernie McDaid (played by Aidan Devine) were all abused by Father Joseph Birmingham. The men visited the set during production and met the actors who were portraying them in the film. McDaid said after his visit, “Showtime took the lead, and I hope this is just the beginning. There needs to be more acknowledgement of the problem.”

Executive Producer David Kennedy notes, “I hope [the film] will impact people, move them, and make them angry.” Take it from Max, it will. **1 Martini**

Brother To Brother

Wolfe Video
(www.wolfevideo.com or
www.brothertobrotherthe-
movie.com)
Release Date: 6/14/05

Their Take:

Winner of the Special Grand Jury Prize at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, as well as four Independent Spirit Award nominations, *Brother To Brother* is writer-director Rodney Evans' exploration of the link between the present and the past through a unique relationship between Perry (played by Anthony Mackie), a young black artist, and the 1930s Harlem Renaissance poet/painter Bruce Nugent (Roger Robinson).

Perry, who has been kicked out of his family home for being gay, is stuck between the black community and the gay community. Perry searches for a connection in the real world and discovers Nugent, who exposes Perry to the legacy and hardships of pioneering black artists, such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Wallace Thurman, through

flashback scenes from his own past.

Max's Take:

This movie is a definite must-see. Anthony Mackie (also in *Million Dollar Baby* and *8 Mile*) does a great job as Perry, but Roger Robinson is amazing as the aging Bruce Nugent. Watching their unique friendship develop and grow throughout the film, as the past and present meet, is truly the stuff of great filmmaking. Rodney Evans obviously has a devotion to and passion for history, as he blends in black and white flashback scenes from Bruce's past. Daniel Sunjata (playing Langston Hughes), Aunjanue Eliss (playing Zora Neale Hurston), Ray Ford (playing Wallace Thurman), and Duane Boutte (playing the young Bruce Nugent) also give strong performances.

The DVD edition of the film will contain the unrated director's cut of the film as well as commentary tracks and an in-depth interview with Rodney Evans. An edited version of *Brother To Brother* is also scheduled to air on PBS in June.

0 Martinis ▼

Max is willing to try anything once, does enjoy an occasional martini, but prefers Tab @!