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Showcase
FILM SERIES

Note from Roger â?? Donâ??t Call Me Son

Description

Dear Cinephiles,

With â??Donâ??t Call Me Sonâ?• Brazilian writer-director Anna Muylaert proves to be a filmmaker of remarkable range, subtlety and intelligence â?? a Brazilian talent whoâ??s deservedly gaining a place on the world stage.

The movie is based on a true story. It plays tonight at 5:00pm and tomorrow at 7:30pm at the Riviera Theatre. Below is a rave review from the Hollywood Reporter.

See you at the movies!
Roger Durling

Click here for tickets.

Anna Muylaert (â??The Second Motherâ??) returns with her latest drama.
By Jordan Mintzer â?? The Hollywood Reporter

You canâ??t choose your family, though your family can sometimes choose you. Thatâ??s the troubling lesson learned by the characters in Donâ??t Call Me Son (Mae Son Ha Uma), a poignant and energetic Brazilian drama that turns a potentially bleak subject into a warmhearted study of genetics, gender and the true meaning of home.

Written and directed by Anna Muylaert, who won last yearâ??s Berlinale Panorama Audience Award for her class-conscious tale The Second Mother, this fast-paced, endearingly performed story of a cross-dressing teenage boy who finds out he was stolen at birth, and is then forced to move in with his wealthy biological parents, could find itself adopted by art house distributors interested in both LGBT fare and bittersweet entertainment that doesnâ??t shy away from the darker side of growing up.

Pierre (Naomi Nero) is a guyliner-wearing high school student who, the first time we see him, has sex with a girl in a bathroom at a party, his pants hitting the floor to reveal a black lace G-string and garter belt. When heâ??s not getting busy or playing in a band, Pierre hangs at home with his working-class single mom, Arcay (Dani Nefussi), and younger sister, Jacqueline (Lais Dais), going through the usual minor adolescent crises.

But that all changes when Arcay and her son are suddenly asked to do DNA tests, and the truth comes out: Pierre was robbed from the cradle by his mother, who is whisked away to jail without warning, leaving her faux family in the hands of social workers. Soon enough, Pierre â?? whose birth name is Felipe â?? is introduced to his biological parents: the affluent, very traditional Gloria (again played by Nefussi) and her straight-edge husband Matheus (Matheus Nachtergaele), who want nothing more than to get their little boy back in their arms.

Muylaert sets up the filmâ??s dramatic core in a series of quick and highly efficient scenes â?? the running time without credits is under 80 minutes â?? where Pierre sees his life unraveling before his eyes, yet seems generally more concerned with his own sexual identity. Keeping the action almost exclusively glued to his viewpoint, the script reveals how something as major as oneâ??s true lineage might not matter at first to a teenager exploring the transience of gender as a means to find out who he is.

But the question of Pierreâ??s true nature comes flying to the forefront when heâ??s forced to move into the swank household of Gloria, Matheus and their very boyish younger son, Joca (Daniel Botelho). The couple offers their newly found child everything he wants, and the sequence where Gloria shows off her home to Pierre/Felipe â?? they canâ??t figure out what to call him â?? is heartbreaking in an undemonstrative way, revealing how all the money in the world canâ??t compensate for the loss of a son who may be coming back to the nest way too late, and for whom such creature comforts are meaningless.

Indeed, tempers begin to flare when Pierre, who tries his best to be polite at first, starts to reject a family whose bourgeois ways are not exactly his cup of tea. In one of the filmâ??s best scenes â?? shot in a single long take â?? we look on as Gloria and Matheus take their son to an upscale clothing store in the hopes of getting him a set of new Polo shirts, only to wind up with a garish, zebra-striped dress instead. Itâ??s an act of rebellion that underlines the nurture vs. nature issues raised by the script, leaving Pierre and his â??realâ?• parents to contemplate what it means to be connected by blood ties, if not necessarily by anything else.

Working with a terrific cast â?? first-timer Nero is a real discovery â?? Muylaert makes all the traumatic twists in the story feel both natural and almost casual at times, as if weâ??re watching everyday people whose lives have suddenly been transformed into a telenovela plot. Using the relatively unknown Nefussi to play the role of both moms was also an excellent idea on the directorâ??s part, adding another layer of confusion to the subject of parentage that lies at the heart of film â?? whose original title translates to: â??Thereâ??s Only One Mother.â?• If it could be so simple.

(Source:sbiff.org)

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