

JOSH JARMAN

RATING 3.5

(Director: Pip Mushin, Not Rated, 96 min)
Our first screening - South By Southwest 2005
(Regional Premiere)

Josh (Marcus Graham) is an uncompromising playwright who writes brilliantly, but his average audience is around 20 people. He gets a break when he is called in to see a big-time producer, Stan Billows (Kym Gyngell). Josh isn't thrilled when Stan tells him that his script is good, but it's too tragic to be commercial. The one good thing that comes out of the appointment is that Josh meets Sasha (Kestie Morassi), in the office. She's another writer and they hit it off immediately. What Josh doesn't know is that Sasha is Stan's daughter and she's using Josh as her "normal boyfriend" to get in good with Dad - but the good side is Billows now wants to produce Josh's play, so everybody's happy... as long as Josh can keep Sasha happy.

Josh gets a famous director and a big theatre lined up, all he has to do is be cool, suffer through some serious rewrites (plus casting changes and a new musical number or two), avoid Mrs. Billows' advances, keep his roommate Russ (Damien Richardson) out of trouble, and find out more about his new neighbor Maxine (Daniella Farinacci) who gets off playing her cello.

This little gem from down under could have been a tragic tale of a sell-out (it has a certain ring of truth), except that is too funny to be sad. The script is witty and smart and includes some rhyming slang (which is big in England and Australia but hasn't been embraced yet in the U.S.), however they explain it over and over (because Josh doesn't get it either) and it kind of grows on you. There's also an "orgasm scene" in a record store that rivals Meg Ryan's performance in the sandwich shop (where can we get that Hungarian Rhapsody).

Marcus Graham has just the right amount of un-cool and winning charm that's perfect for this part; it doesn't hurt that he's surrounded by an excellent supporting cast. Damien Richardson threatens to steal the show (when he's not busy trying to steal from gas stations and drive-thrus).

MOVIE CHICKS

Cheryl Dawson



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Movie Chick Cherryl:

"It's easy to like Josh and root for him to have a happy ending that equals his fantasy. His play may not be all that he was hoping for, but his movie's a hit - 3.5"

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