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Calendar: Film Listings

What Love Is

Year Released: 2007
Directed By: Mars Callahan
Starring: Mars Callahan, Cuba Gooding Jr., Matthew Lillard, Sean Astin, Anne Heche, Andrew Daly, Gina Gershon, Tamala Jones, Jud Tylor, Shiri Appleby (R, 88 min.)

What Love Is is a throwback to the salad days of American independent cinema, a time when filmmakers like Kevin Smith and Richard Linklater were making small, personal movies about the insignificant lives of normal people – no explosions, no car chases, no budget. Just talking. And talking and talking. Writer/director Callahan keeps his characters talking from the first frame to the last, without a break. And fast. In fact, his movie must be up there with *His Girl Friday* for most words spoken per minute. Of course Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell sustained their verbal machine-gunning amidst taking care of other things: writing copy, bribing officials, saving innocent lives. The characters in *What Love Is*, on the other hand, have nothing to do but pontificate. And like all great chatterers, from Socrates to Oscar Wilde, their preferred topic is love and all its variations. Men and women, women and men: what they want, what they need, why they're so crazy. The possibilities are endless. The man with the most to say is Sal (Lillard), a wannabe gangster who, like Vince Vaughn in *Swingers*, is a semantic alpha male, a misogynist who hides his own insecurities behind a wall of theories, none of which can be disputed because they're so humorously and well-explicated. He, along with his friends Ken, Wayne, and George (Callahan, Daly, and Astin), comes to the rescue of Tom (Gooding Jr.) after his girlfriend dumps him on Valentine's Day. Unfortunately, they don't know how to help, beyond talking his ear off, so they talk his ear off. About relationships, sex, marriage. But mostly about the failings of women. Then Gershon and her crew of girlfriends arrive, and *they* talk Tom's ear off. About all of the above. But mostly about the failings of men. In its own peculiar way, *What Love Is* is a testament to the redemptive power of words. Thankfully, Callahan knows to keep it short and sweet, lest his audience go mad from the noise.



★★★ Josh Rosenblatt [2007-03-23]

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NEW REVIEWS

Married Life
This film's wonderful, amoral resignation makes *Married Life* so deliciously different from other period-set crime stories, and its terrific cast keeps thing percolating. - *Josh Rosenblatt*
★★★★

Run Fatboy Run
Funnyman Simon Pegg stars in this soft and plodgy rom-com: Sadly, this by-the-numbers redemption tale careens uncomfortably from sentimentality to stomach-turning sight gags. - *Kimberley Jones*
★★★

Shutter
Shutter is a shabby American remake of a Thai movie about a couple who see mysterious images in photographs. - *Marc Savlov*
★

Stop-Loss
A real-world fuse burns throughout the military drama of *Stop-Loss*, the Austin-lensed film by *Boys Don't Cry*'s Kimberley Peirce that stars Ryan Phillippe. - *Marc Savlov*
★★★★

Superhero Movie
The team behind the last couple of entries in the *Scary Movie* franchise returns with a

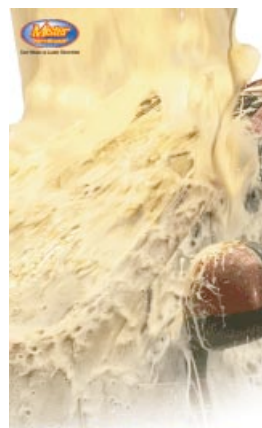
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