

**ELEPHANT SHOES****(Canada, 2004)****Directed by Christos Sourligas****September 25, 7:15 p.m., Uptown**

If life were like a rented DVD, you'd be able to fast-forward through the dull bits and hit slow-motion or pause to savour the sweeter moments. *Elephant Shoes*, subtitled *A Modern Look at Love*, takes just such an approach to romance and comedy.

It tells of Alex (Stacie Morgain Lewis) and Manny (Greg Shamie), who meet by chance outside Manny's Montreal apartment. He invites her up for a drink. She's due back in Toronto the next morning, and she declines, then cautiously accepts. Alex vows there'll be no sex, but her reluc-

tance soon melts as he charms her with disarming insight into her tastes in music, art and travel. The result is an intense, 12-hour affair into which the willing partners cram enough revelations, sensations, jealousies, disappointments and unabashed romance to

occupy most couples for months.

Shamie and Lewis, the film's only cast members, are splendid in their roles. Each expresses convincing vulnerability, though at completely different times, in a sharply written story by director Christos Sourligas. This isn't a

big-budget production, but the money's all up on the screen, where two strangers manage to communicate volumes about love, gender roles and life's bittersweet truths.

BOB BLAKEY