

ELEPHANT SHOES

A film review by Steve Rhodes
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RATING (0 TO ****): *** 1/2

ELEPHANT SHOES, written and directed by Christos Sourligas, is a delightful talkfest of a romantic comedy, à la BEFORE SUNRISE. Manny (Greg Shamie) meets Alex (Stacie Morgain Lewis) on the street near his apartment in Montreal. After giving her directions to the hotel where she has a reservation, he ends up, almost on a lark, inviting her out to dinner.

Well, I'm here to report that, after agreeing to just of Alex's two rules -- "no sex" and later "no falling in love" -- they end up never going out to eat, staying instead in his apartment where they spend the evening gabbing and happily violating their two rules.

Every section of the movie has a cute little title, typical of these is "2. Awkwardness." Once in his kitchen to share a glass of white wine, they get giggly. "I get a nervous twitch," he says to her, "when I get to first base." Laughing, she quickly corrects him, "Don't kid yourself. You're still at bat." Their first kisses are interrupted with nervous laughter.

Manny would make Babe Ruth proud. He hits a home run in record time. The sex between them, while not the least bit graphic, is quite passionate, hot and very believable. These are two actors with great chemistry who kiss convincingly, a simple act that movies can't do credibly, and who show real desire for each other. After the sex scene is a stage labeled "3. Denial," but it could have been titled "Buyer's Remorse?" as they each try to figure out if they really did the right thing. She circles the room, avoiding eye contact with him, while he busies himself by throwing a ball as hard as he can into his baseball glove.

Their fling, romance, newly found friendship or whatever it is goes through many more stages that night. Thanks to a smartly written script, all of the stages are cute. When ELEPHANT SHOES ends, you'll feel like you're bidding adieu to a pair of friends with whom you haven't been able to spend nearly as much time as you would have liked.

ELEPHANT SHOES runs 1:29.

The film is being shown as part of San Jose's Cinequest Film Festival (www.Cinequest.org), which runs March 2-13, 2005.

Web: <http://www.InternetReviews.com>

Email: Steve.Rhodes@InternetReviews.com

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