

International Women's Film Series

Event concludes with moving 'Solos'



Mariá Galina and Ana Fernandez share a mother-daughter moment.

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by Daniel J. Stasiewski
a&e editor

Translated into English, the Spanish title "Solos" becomes "Alone." True to its name, the film revolves around three relationships each which confront loneliness with shared suffering. Does it sound like a soap opera? Well, "Solos" isn't far off.

There are certain moments when the film speaks for itself, and the performances, without words, control the emotion. Despite the strength of honest sentimentality, other scenes put sincerity behind uninhibited ranting and outrage. Fortunately, the solid foundation doesn't allow the shaky spectacle to topple the film.

"Solos" begins in a hospital, where a woman, known simply as mother (Mariá Galina), peers desperately through a recovery room window. The woman's husband has just undergone surgery, and she can only turn to her estranged daughter Mariá (Ana Fernandez) for help. Mariá, a single woman living in a dingy Spanish ghetto, reluctantly opens her home while her father recovers.

Her father's recuperation is far from Mariá's realm of caring. She ran away from his abuse, only to live in poverty. For both situations, she believes her mother is as responsible as her father. Worse, Mariá finds herself impregnated by an abusive and neglectful man. With nowhere else to turn, Mariá hits the bottle.

Her mother tries to mend their relationship, but Mariá won't have it as long as her father is still in the picture. Shunned by her daughter, the mother befriends the lonely widower (Carlos Álvarez-Novoa) who lives downstairs.

While the mother makes the widower's life a little happier, she still manages to make an impression on Mariá. Her mother's caring in the face of Mariá's self-destructive habits opens Mariá's eyes to a side of her mother she always ignored. Soon, however, Mariá's father will be released and both the widower and Mariá will have to continue on without mother.

I would like to credit every player in this Spanish language production for the film's emotional drive, but only the mother can truly claim responsibility. Mariá Galina's subtle, but

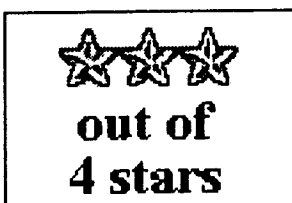
touching performance is positively genuine, which is probably the biggest compliment an actor can receive. She never says much, but the weight of her performance is obvious, not just when she is onscreen, but when she is gone.

There are a number of moments when Galina is stunning. As she interacts with her onscreen daughter Ana Hernandez, she expresses disappointment that deserves sympathy, but never asks for it. Galina is also charming in her scenes with the old widower played by Álvarez-Novoa. Her essentiality, however, isn't evident until she is gone.

The last half-hour of "Solos" focuses on a relationship between the daughter and the widower. The pair undergoes a melodramatic bond-building that's too excessive in its dialogue and performances to follow the subtle developments of the mother's relationships. Álvarez-Novoa isn't so much the cause. His performance seems perfect in its longing, especially in the scene where he waits all-day for the mother to return. Fernandez, on the other hand, never supports the character without Galina.

As the daughter waits in the abortion clinic, the director takes over where Fernandez slips up. First-time filmmaker Benito Zambrano's pan over the other clinic patients is able to create a poignant scene in spite of Fernandez's presence. Zambrano never interrupts Galina like he does Fernandez, making his direction seem less consistent, but the overall film more effective.

"Solos" is a marvelous debut. The character-driven story remains emotionally evocative in the face of flagrantly sentimental scenes and an unnecessary closing voice-over. Hell, Galina's tender performance alone makes this film. Maybe that says more about the casting director than Zambrano, but there's some pride in directing a film as moving as "Solos."



"Solos" directed by Benito Zambrano, starring Mariá Galina, Ana Fernandez, and Carlos Álvarez-Novoa will be showing Tues. at 7:30 p.m. in Reed 117.

Dana Glover full of passion and energy

by Roger Gorny
staff writer

Imagine a sultry, bluesy, R&B voice soaring with tremendous intensity and vocal vigor right out of the gate. Imagine sparkling, tinkling, virtuosic piano playing to go along with the voice. Dream of sensuous, high-energy gospel harmonies that are the icing on the cake.

If this sounds like a terrific, shining new star, then you will want to introduce yourself to Dana Glover and the immense natural beauty sweeping across her debut CD, "Testimony".

The album gets off to a fast start with the driving harmonies of "Rain," a song about an orphaned girl who is constantly searching for someone to love her. She wants to find her own identity, and to reach the warm rays of the sun beyond the gray, dismal rain.

There are many themes of relationships presented on this CD. These include relationships with the special someone you love and relationships that you need to foster within yourself.

"Make It Real" is a song about baring your inner heart and soul to the person you love so that the truth is heard. It goes, "We can make it real/Open your



COURTESY OF ROLLINGSTONE.COM
Sultry songbird Dana Glover.

heart, that's when you start to truly feel/ We can make it real."

"Cherish" is a song that makes you believe how precious time is and that you must strive to make the very most out of every second you spend with those you love. People die, sometimes in the blink of an eye, so you must hear what they have to say now, or cry rivers of sorrow knowing you lost your chance.

"Cherish every moment of your life/ Don't let the days of good and bad pass

you by/ And cherish every moment you're together/'Cause you never know/ When your days are gone/Hold on to the ones you love/They're gone within the twinkling of an eye."

Glover has the ability to wrap you up in her music and infuse your heart into every word and note that she sings. She is a natural star who will be a showcase for years to come. She plays the piano like a virtuoso and really sings with a great amount of heart.

The album ends with "Testimony," a song about finding that perfect someone and proving to everyone that you can really find love even if they don't believe you can. It makes you believe that you will find love, and marriage is not an impossibility.

Everything about Glover's debut is strikingly soulful, painting the most fantastic landscape in your mind. It's a river of passion that will completely sweep you off your feet. She writes lyrics to bane her soul and inspire generations of music lovers. She is a can't miss. Glover means forever. Make it your responsibility, your obligation to hear it. You will feel this music.

No ego for this State College alum

by Erika Jarvis
staff writer

Himan feels he can really express himself through his songs.

Penn State alumus Eric Himan isn't ashamed to admit he once competed in the Mr. Fort Walton Beach High School pageant.

"It was a huge joke but there was a talent portion and I played [my own songs] and won most talented," said the singer-songwriter.

It was at that point in time, in the full auditorium at his Florida high school, when Himan realized that he was a pretty good musician. After all, coming from a household where his father was a New York City jazz musician for more than thirty years was bound to rub off on him. Himan's sister also got the music bug and has become a concert flutist touring Europe and even playing Carnegie Hall in New York City.

"Growing up, after dinners my sister would get out her flute and play 'Flight of the Bumble Bee' and my dad would play a jazz song. Then they'd all look at me [to play] and I realized that I needed to write more songs," Himan said.

That's just what he did. Himan has recorded two CDs as a solo artist. After recording his first solo project, "Invincible," in 2000 he decided to search out a band in need of a lead singer. Himan founded his State College-based band,

"The CD is where you play [your song] once, playing the songs live is where they become more, they become their own thing on stage," says Himan.

Himan's songs became their own in Happy Valley as he worked to get his degree in journalism and perform his songs as often as he could around the college town. Penn State is also where Himan met his now best friend of six years and current manager, Cassandra Buncie.

The duo met when Himan got referred for not leaving his dorm building during a fire alarm, and was sent to see his resident coordinator, Buncie. After Himan explained how he was at the Sigma Epsilon Alpha fraternity house and there was no way he was in the dorm when the fire went off, a friendship and a business partnership started to grow between the two.

With lyrics covering topics such as first impressions in his song "Drop the Coin" to his childhood after his mother died in "One Less Person," Himan is able to reel in his fans with songs that they can relate with.

"The song 'Drop the Coin' is about playing that little game between sororities and fraternities. I just watched it, I was just a spectator and it was fun to



Penn State alumus Eric Himan is set to play Erie this April.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICHIMAN.COM

Dunston Ashe, and opened for such musical acts as Jimmy's Chicken Shack and Fuel.

The band broke up three years later, and Himan went back to being a solo artist.

"We were 'light pop' and I was Mr. Angry Folk Guitarist in the group," says Himan.

Himan went back to the studio to put together 11 songs for his self titled second CD. By listening to as many different artists as possible for inspiration, Himan came up with an album to released on his own record label this time, Thumbcrown Records.

"Tracy Chapman's album 'Telling Stories' really inspired me, then again I'd also turn around and listen to Led Zepelin," Himan said of the artists who have inspired his music. He even covers Chapman's song "Fast Cars" during his performances.

Since becoming an independent singer, Himan has mainly performed at intimate settings such as The Crowbar, Chumley's and the Brewery at State College. In his small private shows

watch it. I would be at my fraternity house and I would look around and everyone was just mingling and playing those eye games. It's confusing as to who hooks up with whom at the end of the night," said Himan.

With songs that aren't always first hand experiences Himan has become pretty big in State College. After graduating, Himan worked hard to play as many shows as possible, ranging from St. Louis to D.C. He'll even be playing in his hometown of Fort Walton Beach soon.

"I have so much advice for aspiring musicians because I'm still an aspiring musician myself. All I know is play everywhere, take your ego and throw it right out the window because no one is going to hand you anything. People try to get from point A to point B but it's a long route," said Himan.

Eric Himan will perform Apr. 4-5 at the Coffee Cup on West 12th St. from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. both nights, or you can visit him on the web at www.ericimhan.com.

LEB Movie of the Week: 'Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers'



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This Wagnerian synthesis of the biblical and pagan boasts more sustained storytelling than its predecessor. Unlike the episodic, kaleidoscopic hurriedness of "The Fellowship of the Ring," "Towers" is a nearly three-hour epic (one minute longer than last time) that uses its time well.--Carrie Rickey, Knight Ridder News

"Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" will be shown Apr. 3 at 9:30 p.m. and Apr. 4-5 at 10 p.m. in Reed 117.