

Film

Social and sexual turmoil in *Sammy and Rosie*

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid
Princess Theatre
Run ends March 10

review by Kevin Law

Despite the suggestive title, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is not a sex-ploitation film. Sex does play an important role in the film's plot structure, but on a much deeper level of meaning than any teen "coming of age" flick.

Sammy and Rosie is a multi-levelled film depicting not only sexuality, but social and political principles in a provocative portrayal of turbulent relationships.

This controversial British film is from director Stephen Frears and writer Hanif Kaurer, collaborators on *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Like *Laundrette*, *Sammy and Rosie* is a satiric portrait of class and gender relations set in contemporary London against a background of urban decay and violence. In this film, however, Hanif has endowed his characters with far more depth within the film's focus than in *Laundrette*.

The film revolves around Sammy and Rosie, a young, unconventionally married couple. Sammy (Ayub Khan Din) is a likeable upward bound accountant while his wife Rosie (Frances Barber) is a social worker charged with feminist political fervor. They enjoy an "open marriage", mainly at Rosie's behest; she thinks jealousy is worse than infidelity.

Their lives are suddenly augmented by the arrival of Sammy's father Rafi (Shashi Kapoor), a charming rogue politician fleeing accusations of abuse of power in the East. Rafi remembers London with warm affection but he is immediately distressed by what he finds. His son's neighborhood looks like a war zone, presently being torn apart by a riot sparked by the police killing of a black woman.

Sammy has an ambivalent attitude to his father who left him years ago, yet Rafi wants to give his son a sizeable inheritance (provided he and Rosie buy a house in an area

that isn't "tinned with Beirut") and Sammy cannot resist such a chance at upward mobility.

Rosie's attitude is a different matter. She discovers evidence of Rafi's violent past and confronts the issue at a celebratory restaurant dinner where a cutting clash of ideology ensues that is both darkly humorous and politically appalling.

Rafi also returns to England to renew his romance with Alice, a widow belonging to the colonial upper-class of times past, played with subdued grace by Claire Bloom. Rafi is helped through the mean streets by a young black named Danny (nicely played by Roland Gift of the Fine Young Cannibals) who guides him to the stately suburbs where Alice lives. Along the way Danny confesses his political confusion to Rafi. Danny knows that domestic colonialism "doesn't allow us to run our own neighborhoods" yet he can't bring himself to join the rioters, unsure of the correct path to social change.

Upon returning to their battered neighborhood, an evening party in Rafi's honor is given, liberally populated with social deviants, communists, lesbians and blacks from Sammy's and Rosie's circle of friends. Three fateful couplings occur at the end of the evening: Rafi and Alice, Rosie and Danny, and Sammy and his mistress Anna. At the film's end, however, tragedy strikes as Rafi's personal demons return to haunt him, making escape from the past impossible.

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid is at its best in tension-filled scenes punctuated with black humour. Director Frears effectively conveys an electric vision of social and sexual turmoil against a dark and dense backdrop of social disorder. Frears accentuates the film's theme of confusion and strife by closely composing nearly every scene with a cluttered array of people and objects, and he suggests the reality of this world through natural light and earthy colors.

Moments, images and dialogue are what gives this film power in its mixture of emotion and tone. Frears successfully integrates the various elements into a tapestry that is rich in

personality and motivation, thanks in no small part to Kurosaki's complex script of rounded and believable characters and the intelligent and engaging cast which superbly creates individuals who exist as people.

Because the film's principal focus is characterization, *Sammy and Rosie* steers clear of

moral philosophizing, relying instead on the characters to tell their story. This focus facilitates the many different levels of social and political wills inherent in the film. Perhaps the one message that is manifest in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is the importance of committing to individuals rather than ideals.

Music Trivia Contest

Grant, Lloyd and girls

Women! You just can't make music without them. If they're not recording, producing or writing music, then they're surely the inspiration behind it. Sometimes they do it all by themselves even!

Face it, folks, the days when the female musicians were limited to a career in back-up vocals (although they do that quite nicely as well) are long gone. The recent explosion of all-girls bands (no not the marching type) and solo artists are surely evidence of that. This week's quiz is a tribute to all the talented female artists that have made their mark in the music world.

Anyway, here are last week's answers. Our winner was **Randy Reichardt**, who correctly answered six out of ten questions. If you want Randy's autograph you can visit him at the Science and Technology Library, 2nd Floor, Cameron. If Randy wants our autographs, as well as his prize, a dandy gift certificate from S.U. Records, he should come to room 232 (SUB).

Here's last week's answers:

1. The Falklands War was Chris DeBurgh's inspiration for the song "Borderline".
2. "Rosanna" was written for Rosanna Arquette, a girlfriend of one of the band members from Toto.
3. "Layla" was an ode to Cynthia Harrison, who was still married to George at the time.
4. A Rolling Stones' concert inspired "99 Luftballons".
5. "Empty Garden" was a tribute to John Lennon.
6. The Edmund Fitzgerald sank in Lake Superior.
7. Luba wrote "Every Time I See Your Picture I Cry" for her father.

8. John Lennon sang about his immigration difficulties on the album *Someime in New York City*.

9. "Sexy Sadie" was written by the Beatles about Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

10. Elvis dared to record "In the Ghetto", a song about poverty in Chicago.

Tie Breaker:

11. Mark Knopfler was speaking about Holly Vincent, one of his old girlfriends in the line "Oh Romeo, yeah I used to have a scene with him."

Here we go again:

1. Name Carole Pope's partner in *Rough Trade*.
2. Why did k. d. lang call her band "The Reclines"?
3. Who was Elvis Presley's favourite female vocalist?
4. Who went from a convent to being Mick Jagger's live-in? Hint: she now has her own solo career.
5. Who originally recorded "When a Man Loves a Woman"?
6. What was the name given to Ike and Tina Turner's back-up singers?
7. These two female artists are members of the band Parachute Club and were rumoured to be lovers. Name them.
8. Name the two female members of the short-lived band Toronto.
9. Joni Mitchell often mentions Saskatchewan towns in the lyrics of her songs. Name at least two towns she mentions.
10. What do you call a dog with wings?

Tie Breaker:

11. What is Luba's last name, and what does her first name mean in Ukrainian?

Entries are due no later than 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 9th. Submit answers to room 282 (SUB).

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