



October 30, 2009

'Sailor' allows couple to adopt new life view

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Special to Desert Post Weekly

Sometimes it takes an unexpected jolt to awaken the realization that life is not merely floating by for everyone.

In "Adopt a Sailor," a young man hits New York City for a night during Fleet Week, spending the evening with a couple who has volunteered to host a sailor — only they have forgotten. His presence throws their schedules off kilter and changes their outlook on the world outside of their apartment.

Charles Evered makes his directorial debut with "Adopt a Sailor," based on the dichotomy of his experience as a sailor and writer. Palm Desert producer Kim Waltrip of WonderStar Productions worked for two years with Evered, a professor at UC Riverside, to bring the film to the screen. The interiors were shot in the Coachella Valley.

The film began as a short play to commemorate Sept. 11, 2001, at a special event. It certainly retains the close feel of a stage set with three characters bound by an evening of obligation. Though the topic expanded from a couple's reaction to the city's attacks to a night with a sailor about to return to war, soul searching remains the story's central focus.

Ethan Peck ("10 Things I Hate about You") stars as the sailor and shares a natural poise and handsome resemblance to grandfather Gregory Peck. His character holds a careful balance between aw-shucks mannerisms and a quiet thoughtfulness.

Bebe Neuwirth ("Frasier") shows off her acting chops as Patricia, perfectly cast for the bold role as an annoyed and nagging wife who manages to incite sympathy despite passive aggressive tendencies. Peter Coyote ("The 4400") hams up his role as Richard, a dependent husband with no serious concerns who finds excessive emotional weight in every situation. Following one excessive diatribe, he labels himself as a "wanker dilettante idiot." The shoe fits.

Peck's sailor becomes the hinge on which the unhappy couple evaluates their lives, whether they are loudly confronting each other in front of him or individually speaking with him as to how their lives have evolved from former contentment.

Through the sailor's naïveté, the couple finds superiority and guilt. The more they justify their behavior, the more they become aware that there is a third person in the room and that their insecurities do not affect his world.

It slowly becomes clear that the couple did not simply adopt a sailor but found a broader view of the world around them.

Additional Facts

'Adopt a Sailor'

Review:

Rated: NR

Length: One hour, 26 min.

Cast: Bebe Neuwirth, Peter Coyote, Ethan Peck

Playing at: Camelot
