

Great film bridges cultures

"A Great Wall" is a great comedy, a marvelous examination of cultural values contrasted when a Chinese-American family travels from their San Francisco home to the Peking home of the father's sister.

Leo Fang (Peter Wang, who also wrote and directed) has lived the last 30 years of his life in America and has become a top executive in a major computer firm. When the promotion he expects is given to a younger,

Review by Sean Axmaker

less-experienced man he decides it's finally time for the family to pack up and take that vacation they've been talking about for years.

The Chao family live on the pension received by the retired high official Mr. Chao (Hu Xiaoguang) and the most pressing matter for the family revolves around daughter Lili's (Li Qingin) preparation for the national college entrance exam. Mr. Chao obtains the services of an aged scholar who happens to be the father of a classmate and another exam hopeful, Liu

(Wang Xiao), and a tentative romance develops.

The arrival of the Fangs alters life for the Chaos, of course. Only Leo speaks Chinese; his American-born wife Grace (Sharon Iwai) and thoroughly Americanized teenage son Paul (Kelvin Han Yee) never learned the language. In the Chao family, only Lili speaks English, and then haltingly. Strangely enough when they speak to each other in their respective languages they are able to make themselves understood a great deal of the time, though in areas of cultural difference there remains something of a communication gap, particularly in the family units. The way Paul, for example, teases his parents and tosses his dad's hair sets Mr. Chao on edge, and Paul is shocked to see Mrs. Chao read her daughter's mail as a matter of practice.

Along with these differences in culture between the two families, director Wang also finds the similarities. The two teens show common interests and pal around together; the mothers trade cultural fashion ideas and make-up tips while they mime their family life ex-

periences and apprehensions about growing older; the fathers drink together and complain of their wives' lack of respect.

The wonder of the film lies in Wang's ability to visually convey the contrasts and comparisons. Leo's jogging is placed beside Chao's exercises, Paul's love of television football parallels Liu's love of televised musical events (Liu does a hell of a Pavarotti impression); norms of dating, dancing and eating are contrasted; even the two cities are set side by side in the opening moments of the film.

Wang, an Americanized Chinese himself, finds a warm, personable kind of humor in these observations, making fun of no one but finding natural humor arising from the characters. He also celebrates the uniqueness of the families and their ability to share with each other.

"A Great Wall" is great fun, a funny, insightful, intelligent little film that captures the foibles of being human.

Plays at Cinema 7; in English and Mandarin with English subtitles.

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Psychics

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Betts said.

Betts said often one does not know whether an image is real or imagination, so when she is doing psychic investigation she often works with a partner.

"The main foundation of this work is that you have to trust yourself, and the basis of trust in yourself is your intention," Betts said.

"If your intention is to help to find the child and to help the parent, then you will be successful. If your intention is to make money, or to get notoriety, then it does not always work that way," Betts added.

LaFaye Fouts, a psychic channel, has been participating in various psychic fairs for 15 years.

Fouts said she first realized that she had a psychic power 15 years ago when she became aware of three voices inside her head. Two of the voices would give her words that would belong to a sentence; however, each word would change the meaning of the sentence; the third voice told her which word was the correct one.

"It took me a long time to learn that the left side is my conscious mind, the right side is my intuitive mind, and the

third one is the 'I Am' that I am," Fouts said.

Fouts said that once she realized what these three voices were, she understood how they worked for her.

"People could ask me about the people they know, and about their past lives. I could see pictures of what their relationship had been with people in their past, the action in the picture could tell me what the relationship is now."

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