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CINEMA

'The Cure' shows brilliance of human spirit

KALY SOTO
Oregon Daily Emerald

Sometimes the simplest stories can make the greatest impact on an audience. The plot for the movie *The Cure* fits this description.

Set in a Mississippi town, *The Cure* is the story of two young boys and the friendship they forge one summer.

Dexter, played with skill and maturity by Joseph Mazzello, is suffering from AIDS. Dexter is shunned by most children his age and spends most of his time alone in his back yard.

Erik, played by Brad Renfro, is a stereotypical Southerner, who blames Dexter for the abuse he suffers from other kids at his school. But after Erik gets to know Dexter they become inseparable.

The movie chronicles their friendship and their journey down the Mississippi River to find "the cure" for AIDS.

Peter Horton, who is best known for his work on *thirtysomething*, makes his feature film directorial debut with *The Cure*. Horton seems to be able to bring out the best in his actors. Renfro and Mazzello's performances are extraordinary. The only problem is that they both seem to have a level of intelligence and understanding that I have yet to see from 11- and 12-year-old boys.

Renfro is a relatively new actor who made his debut in the film version of John Grisham's novel *The Client*. In that film he played

The Cure

Joseph Mazzello, Brad Renfro,
 Annabella Sciorra
 Director: Peter Horton

Rated: G

★★★

a child who was wise beyond his years. *The Cure* puts him in the same position. It is almost strange to watch him playing with toys like a little boy, but speaking and acting very much like an adult.

Mazzello, who has appeared in such blockbusters as *Jurassic Park* and *The River Wild*, also does a fine job in this movie. As a young boy dealing with a terminal illness, his maturity is more than understandable.

Annabella Sciorra, who plays Dexter's mother gives a convincing performance, although she too was a little too understanding - as far as the mischievous Erik is concerned - to be believable. Even so, excessive understanding and compassion are easy things to live with.

This film is about compassion and understanding, and that may be why so much of both abound from the actors. This movie succeeds in showing the brilliance of the human spirit.

The Cure is dedicated to memory Elizabeth Glaser, the wife of Paul Michael Glaser (of *Starsky and Hutch* fame), who died of AIDS earlier this year.



COURTESY PHOTO

Dexter, played by Joseph Mazzello, is an 11-year-old boy with AIDS. He is rescued from his loneliness by his unlikely friendship with the neighborhood bad boy, Erik (in striped shirt), played by Brad Renfro. *The Cure* also stars Annabella Sciorra, who plays Dexter's mother.

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