

FILMS

Ludovic is an impeccable, beautiful little girl.

The problem, as far as his family is concerned, is that Ludovic was born a boy—and this is the fuel of *Ma Vie en Rose* (*My Life in Pink*).

Considering the heavy subject matter, Belgian director Alain Berliner could have taken a more serious route with his feature film debut, but he decided to keep this flick light, colorful and humorous. From the first scene, you fall in love with Ludovic and cheer for him along the way.

His parents, two deeply confused souls, first dismiss their son's behavior, then call it a phase and send him to therapy, then try to scrape up a deeper understanding of why Ludovic is the way he is. The conclusion is far from dismal.

This movie is a warm, trippy treat.

—Katy Davidson

EVERYTHING RELATIVE

The biggest challenge with *Everything Relative* is remembering all the names and who slept with whom during the incestuous college years of seven old friends who come

drifts in and out of senility, and downstairs lives a "sister" William has never met. Then there's the foul-mouthed sister who's marrying William's first boyfriend.

The many surreal aspects of the film elevate the story from a typical saga of sadness. The adult William is frequently confronted by phantoms of his former selves, including his angst-steeped teen self who inspires the film's title.

What's refreshing is that William's gayness is basically a given—very little of the story has to do with the trauma and drama of his being queer. Instead, the story focuses on how he attempts to fit back into his family of origin. That William appears to have survived his truly awful upbringing and made himself into a compassionate, responsible adult provides hope that anyone might transcend similar circumstances.

The film does feel a bit claustrophobic, as most of the action takes place at the family home, but that also heightens the effect of the ending, which is a nice relief. It is well-acted by unknown actors in a naturalistic style—per-



Lily Tomlin (right) as dowdy lesbian eyes Cher's more exotic character in *Tea with Mussolini*

together for a weekend reunion. Kate and Victoria are the married dykes with a new baby who invite old friends Gina, Luce, Maria, Josie and Sarah to celebrate their new addition and relive old times. I'd tell you who sleeps with whom, but I wouldn't want to ruin the fun.

The rest is all smooth sailing—for the viewer, if not the characters—as they work out old wounds, forge new bonds and generally have a great time. The characters are easy to relate to, well-acted and funny. The movie is blessed with not one but several inspired love scenes (in the unrated director's version) with some wonderfully real women. Snuggle up with someone you love for this one, or just someone with whom you'd like to get closer. It's the perfect date movie.

—Krona Adair

THE HANGING GARDEN

This independent Canadian film set in Nova Scotia tells the story of a gay man with a tortured soul. William returns home after a 10-year absence to visit his family for his sister's wedding and quickly remembers why he stayed away so long. This family is so deeply dysfunctional that the odds are anyone else's family will seem better by comparison.

For starters, his dad is a hard-drinking, hard-hearted guy, and his mother is reaching the end of her victim's rope. Upstairs his grandmother

haps a little too real—the abusive father was almost too real for my comfort level.

A thought-provoking subplot dwells on William's complex relationship with his mother, who is overdue to burst out of her thankless caretaker roles.

It could be cathartic or even therapeutic to watch, depending on the level of dysfunction in your own family. Keep your therapist's number handy!

—Oriana Green

TEA WITH MUSSOLINI

Set in Florence, Italy, just before and during World War II, this sensitive film by director Franco Zeffirelli has at its heart the coming of age of a boy named Luca, though he doesn't actually have all that big a part. This is a semi-autobiographical tale of Zeffirelli's youth and, as such, is seen from quite a distance by the 76-year-old director.

The real stars are the eclectic bunch of aging Englishwomen expatriates who join forces to raise the abandoned Luca and rescue him from an orphanage. He in turn proves loyally useful to them and their two American sidekicks, played by Cher and Lily Tomlin.

While it's wonderful to see Tomlin actually playing a full-blooded dyke, her part is too brief

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