

FILM



THE MARS CANON
 Guild Theatre, July 19; Whitsell Auditorium, July 20

Believe it or not, Japan has even fewer female film directors than the United States of America. So it's fortunate that Shiori Kazama has released her third feature, *Kasei No Kanon* or *The Mars Canon* (also known as *Canon* on Tuesday). Even better, it includes a lesbian relationship, albeit a rather unsatisfying one.

Kinuko is a 29-year-old beauty who's having an affair with a 40-something married man. They see each other every Tuesday night, and he appears to have no intention of leaving his wife, remarking to Kinuko, "I love you; isn't that enough?"

It isn't really enough, and Kinuko pines for him, seemingly devoid of other relationships, until she meets up with Hijiri, an old acquaintance, and her friend Manabe, a male street poet. The pair try to get Kinuko to leave her lover immediately, both for basically the same reason—each one wants her.

This sounds like an amusing love rectangle

with plenty of space for barbs and sexual exploration, but Kazama's goal isn't merriment, it's postulating on devoting your life to impossible relationships. Kinuko won't give up a man who cannot commit to her entirely; Hijiri pursues a woman who has shown no interest beyond friendship; Manabe tries for both women unsuccessfully. When Kinuko does switch lovers, it's out of desperation and not without regret.

At a full two hours, there's very little action beyond constant anguish among characters, most notably the two women. This extremely slow pace, as well as a lack of close-up shots and scenes of a rather bare-bones Tokyo, parallels Kinuko's existence—she plods along, taking no real steps to improve her completely empty life.

While the pacing works to instill this sense of emptiness, it also works on one's nerves. Scenes could have been cut back a lot without losing aesthetic or narrative purpose. And the lesbian character is portrayed as somewhat pathetic and unstable a la *Basic Instinct*.

Overall, *The Mars Canon* is successful in establishing its point but unsuccessful in its method.

—Lisa Bradshaw

OUT ON DVD

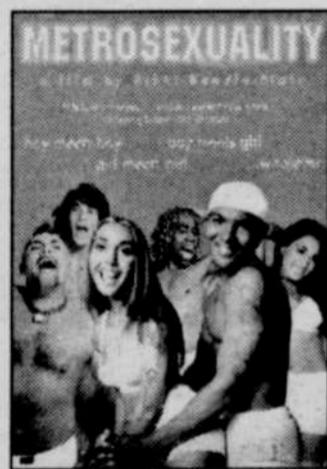
METROSEXUALITY
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Fast on the (high) heels of *Queer as Folk*, and in some ways a corrective to it, comes another homo TV show from Britain's always edgy Channel 4, *Metrosexuality*.

The series was commissioned, according to Channel 4's Adam Barker, "because of its vivid and funny take on the sexual and mating dilemmas of today." One of the criticisms of *Queer as Folk* was that it was too white with no dykes; *Metrosexuality* opts for the opposite in its vision of a manically polyracial, polysexual Britain.

Kwane (Noel Clarke), a 17-year-old straight boy, lusts after his classmate Asha (Rebecca Varney). He has no mother but rather two dads, Max (Rikkie Beadle-Blair, who created the series) and Jordan (Karl Collins). The dads are separated, and Kwane schemes to get them back together, even though Jordan is dating a hunky honky and Max is trawling the personal ads for a new squeeze.

Complicating matters are Kwane's gay best friend's obsession with daddy Max; love trouble between Max's sister and her girlfriend; and a dizzying variety of other relationships, trysts and tricks covering most of the possible permutations of straight and queer, male and female, white and black.



Anyone put off by the superficiality of *Queer as Folk* won't be reassured by *Metrosexuality*. This seldom-funny comedy is frantic and shrill, with a nonstop stream of cutesy effects like words on the screen and faces appearing suddenly in heart-shaped inserts to address the camera. Beadle-Blair's dialogue (he also wrote the 1996 feature *Stonewall*) is delivered at machine-gun speed, perhaps to cover a lack of inspiration. The

acting would be forgettable if it weren't so loud—all snapping fingers, feather boas and carry-on.

Most of the show's energy seems to have gone into the sets, couture, hairdos and thunderous soundtrack (by Moby, among others), which do represent a veritable catalog of modern queer-glam style. Intriguing, but not enough to redeem the rest.

Some of us were surprised that *Queer as Folk* made the transition to U.S. television (even cable), but it seems even less likely that this series will follow suit. Laudable as its goals are—who doesn't want to bust up the white-boy monopoly in queer media?—*Metrosexuality* just isn't up to the job.

The DVD is loaded with extras, including director and cast commentary, "making of" documentaries, deleted scenes, a photo gallery and promos.

—Gary Morris

GOT BMW?

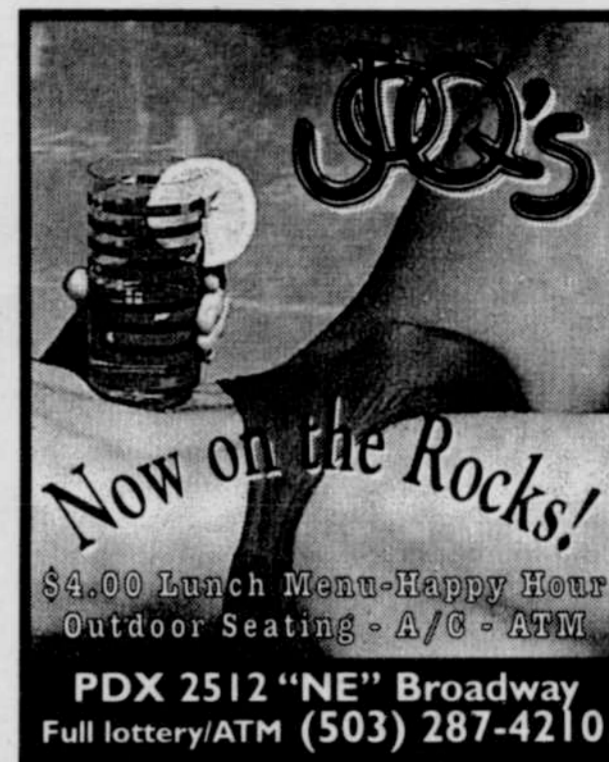


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