

Continued from Page 25

On a more dour note, the Argentinian feature *Night Watch* brings that indie gay cinema regular, the rent boy, to the fore. But this is no typical portrait. Victor (Gonzalo Heredia) is a sensitive guy whose one-day odyssey through the streets of Buenos Aires takes him through familiar territory as he showers with a friend and fends off an unwelcome trick. Less familiar are scenes in which he trades sex for protection from a middle-aged man, gets hired as a whore-for-the-night at a classy diplomats club and hallucinates the murder of a man by his girlfriend and his own near-death at the hands of a supposed pal. A twisty ending makes the viewer question much of what's gone before: reality or hallucination? Director Edgardo Cozarinsky captures the precariousness and aimlessness of Victor's life in these beautifully shot sequences, most of which occur at night. A former girlfriend tells him, "When the sun rises, all fears vanish." The story takes place on All-Soul's Eve, and rarely was a sunset so eagerly awaited as in this movie.

It's no surprise in a culture that generally favors men over women that there are more gay male narratives this year than lesbian ones. At least there's *El Favor*, an amusing if dubious sex farce. This brightly colored film depicts a very different Buenos Aires than the one seen in *Night Watch*. Here the action involves lovers Roberta (Onetto Victory) and

Continued on Page 28

Rewind

Take a trip back in time with a pre-festival screening of Gus Van Sant's first film

by Christopher McQuain

Is there any cinema enthusiast in town who could live with not attending the 20th anniversary benefit screening of Portland filmmaker Gus Van Sant's first completed feature film, 1985's *Mala Noche*?

Ticket purchases benefit Outside In and the Social Justice Fund Northwest; gain attendees a chance to see Van Sant and Walt Curtis (the Portland author upon whose novel the film is based) introduce and discuss the film; and afford Van Sant aficionados and curious onlookers alike a rare glimpse of the film itself, which has long been out of circulation.

Anyone familiar with the near-obsessive fascination with the dispossessed—young street hustlers, disenfranchised gay boys, poor kids, junkies—apparent in much of Van Sant's *oeuvre* will understand the draw of filming Curtis' quasi-autobiographical recollection. Against the backdrop of mid-1980s Portland (cinema-tographer John Campbell immortalizes the film's pre-gentrification, way pre-Pearl District inner Northwest locations in noirish black and white), a sort of disconnected, culture-clashing love triangle plays out: Lovelorn slacker/convenience store clerk Walt (Tim Streeter) has it bad for Mexican immigrant/delinquent/loiterer Johnny (Doug Cooyate). With his affections unreciprocated, Walt turns to Johnny's more



Mala Noche predated New Queer Cinema and Pearl District gentrification.

willing friend Roberto (Ray Monge), an unfortunate manipulator who cannot help using Walt's frustration to his own sexual and material advantage.

On the aesthetic level, *Mala Noche* uses avant-garde techniques of composition and editing, achieving a cool yet ultimately empathetic tone. If only for its unworried political incorrectness and the boldness of its queer content, the film surely must have been an instigative touchstone for the much later New Queer Cinema; more immediately, it is the rowdy queer sibling of Jim Jarmusch's similarly independent, low-temperature, black-and-white and episodic 1984 film *Stranger Than Paradise*.


Mala Noche is tragic, but not without its mordant humor and romance. The erotic tension between lost young men of queer or mutable sexuality is as palpable—and more graphic—here than in *My Own Private Idaho*, the Van Sant film it most closely resembles. Twenty years later, *Mala Noche* remains uniquely alive enough to assure it its own place both in Van Sant's body of work and in the affections of his fans. **J**

MALA NOCHE screens 8 p.m. Oct. 13 at Wonder Ballroom, 128 N.E. Russell St. Tickets are \$15-\$75 from Ticketmaster.

**Northwest
23rd**

It's all here!

DINING
~~~~~  
SHOPPING  
~~~~~  
HIV TESTING


APEX 
Pharmacy

1215 NW 23rd Ave. Portland, OR

**Free testing
for HIV and
syphilis**


**Monday Oct. 31
9:30am-3pm**

Private
Comfortable
Expert testing
Free parking or
Go by streetcar



*Availability limited. First-come, first-served. Testing by Multnomah County Health Dept.

Arthouse ★ Foreign ★ Cult Classics ★ Gay & Lesbian Documentaries ★ Asian Cult ★ The Latest Chart Busters



POP IN!

VIDEORAMA

ALL RENTALS—5 DAYS

2310 N Lombard | 1136 NW Lovejoy | 1990 SE Ladd | 7522 N Lombard | 2640 NE Alberta
503-289-8408 | 503-796-2825 | 503-231-1181 | 503-247-3433 | 503-288-4067