

work in his oeuvre, *Time to Leave* still bears the mark of an accomplished, world-class filmmaker. **B+**  
—CM

## HERE I AM: COMING OUT IN A JEWISH SCHOOL

7 p.m. Oct. 11

Perfectly timed for National Coming Out Day, this documentary chronicles a lesbian student's fight to establish a Gay Straight Alliance at a Jewish high school in the Boston area.

## AMNESIA: THE JAMES BRIGHTON ENIGMA

9 p.m. Oct. 11

Queer Canadian cinema is on a roll.

In March the outstanding gay coming-of-age drama *C.R.A.Z.Y.* swept the Genies, Canada's equivalent to the Academy Awards. Unfortunately, *C.R.A.Z.Y.* isn't playing at the Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, but audiences can still get a refreshing dose of northern exposure by watching the deft psychological drama *Amnesia*.

The film is a fictionalized account of real events concerning a male amnesia patient whose sole memory was that he was gay. Constructed in nonlinear order by writer and director Denis Langlois, the film is a jigsaw puzzle that comes together through flashbacks, dreams, memory flashes and the investigative efforts of a woman writing her Ph.D. thesis on the case.

*Amnesia* starts off with a chilly, somber tone and becomes more emotionally accessible as the protagonist collaborates with others to try to piece his life together. As the film opens, a young man who has apparently suffered a major trauma wakes up naked in a Montreal parking lot and undergoes extensive medical testing. He's certain that he's gay, and he believes that his name is James Brighton.

But when he appears on television, several people identify him as a Tennessee resident named Matthew Honeycutt. A trip to Tennessee churns up few memories for him, though the film provides us with a plausible and horrifying account of the homophobic hate crime that stripped him of his memory and his clothes.

Yugoslavian-born actor Dusan Ducik is easy on the eyes in the lead role, but don't get too excited about the nude scene because he's



Queens

shrouded in shadows and there are no full-frontal disclosures. His dark and brooding presence is perfect for the character, though his overboard outburst in one scene is hard to take seriously.

Along with numerous scenes of gay clubs and male intimacy, *Amnesia* packs a bit of lesbian heat. In the course of her investigation, the Ph.D. candidate has a tender bedroom rendezvous with one of her interview subjects.

Langlois so effectively enters the confused mind of his protagonist that, at times, the film rivals *Memento* for its capacity to disorient the viewer. But unlike *Memento*, *Amnesia* ultimately deposits a satisfying amount of concrete information in our memory banks. **B+**  
—SB

## MRS. STEVENS HEARS THE MERMAIDS SINGING

6:30 p.m. Oct. 12

This Merchant-Ivory-esque romance tells the story of Hilary Stevens, a 70-year-old lesbian poet who wrote a shocking novel about love between women in the 1920s. When a volume of her sonnets strikes a chord with a new generation in 1964, two young critics visit for an interview.

## THE MAN YOU HAD IN MIND

9 p.m. Oct. 12

This touching documentary explores the intimate lives of five Oregon gay male couples who have been together between one and 51 years. Director James Tuschmidt and the subjects of the film will be in attendance.

## MOM

7 p.m. Oct. 13

This comic adventure follows a market researcher (with aspirations of being a TV news field reporter) and her butch, talkative camerawoman (with aspirations of being a tattoo artist) as they're shipped off to gather data—and learn a few things about themselves and each other along the way.



Local couple Eugene Woodworth (left) and Eric Marcoux reflect on their 51 years together in *The Man You Had in Mind*.

## QUEENS

9 p.m. Oct. 13

With Spain already well ahead of the United States in legalizing same-sex marriage, it's no surprise that one of the first films exploring the issue, albeit in a comic way and not very well, would be this Spanish film. Director Manuel Gómez Pereira is known for his farcical romances, but this one's more farcical—and not in the good sense—than romantic.

The story takes place in the few days before Spain's first gay wedding. It focuses initially on three couples: Miguel, a rich boy who wears a white wig, and Oscar, an Argentinian masseur; Hugo, a nervous nelly, and Narciso, who has a nasty little secret; and another rich boy, Rafa, who's set to wed his mom's gardener's son, Jonas. These characters are barely distinguishable from each other thanks to the drabness of the acting, and it soon becomes clear who the title refers to. The "queens" are in fact the over-the-top mothers of the boys, and they're played with varying degrees of success by the cream of Spanish actresses. Carmen Maura registers nicely as an icy hotelier; Verónica Forqué cartoonizes her nymphomaniac; Mercedes Sampietro bores as a homophobic judge forced to officiate at her son's wedding; Betiana Blum increasingly annoys as a bimbo whose dog gets lost; and Marisa Paredes impresses most as a famous actress who's hot for her hunky gardener (who bares all in one scene).

The film time-shifts to a dizzying degree, with titles informing us it's "Four Hours Later" or "Four Hours Earlier," though the plot is so byzantine, and so loaded with coincidences and sheer incident, that it becomes almost impossible to follow. The film works some of its gags, like the lost dog appearing suddenly wherever one of the gay couples is, into the ground. Most aggravating, perhaps, is the fact that *Queens* seems to suggest that queers (and queer sex) are all well and

Continued on Page 31



Mom

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