



New Spanish Film Fest Starts Up at SIFF

by Michael van Baker on October 15, 2009



Pragda's annual Festival of New Spanish Cinema brings eight films to SIFF's McCaw Hall theater, tonight through October 21 (full series pass: \$50, \$40 for SIFF members—that's a big savings because each film is \$10). That "new" is supposed to tip you off that it isn't all Almodovar. In fact, there isn't any Almodovar. Let's get that straight right now. But there are Almodovar actresses (see photo).

Tonight's opening night fiesta kicks off with *Desperate Women* (*Enloquecidas*), directed by Juan Luis Iborra. It's a "hilarious and outrageous thriller" in which a young woman meets the man of her dreams, only to discover that he's supposed to be dead. Ha! Spanish women don't let a little thing like death stop them.

After the film, there's a see-and-schmooze event at the Alki Room at Seattle Center, in celebration of the festival. Irene Cardona, director of *A Fiancee for Yasmina*, is supposed to show, and there'll be Spanish music,



complimentary Freixenet Spanish Cava, and paella from Taberna del Alabardero. (Tickets are \$20 for both reception and film, or \$10 for just the film.)

I will now demonstrate my mastery of film preview lead-ins.

In order of festival appearance, you have *A Fiancee for Yasmina*, “Cupid has his hands full with these star-crossed and double-crossed lovers”; *Ramirez*, “He’s a drug dealer obsessed with one-night-stands and photography”; *The Sound of the Sea*, “Graphic novelist Miguelanxo Prado’s fantastic, sea-going history of love”; *Camino*, “What happens when an 11-year-old girl gets *Footloose* on Opus Dei”; *The Shame*, “Pepe and Lucia had everything, except an easy way to give back their adopted son”; *Amateurs*, “He’s 65 and lonely...and she’s 16 and says she’s his daughter”; and *One-Armed Trick*, “He can only move one arm, but his heart and hip-hop moved all of Spain.” Most of these show twice, except for *One-Armed Trick*. If you like Spanish hip-hop, circle October 19 on your calendar right now.

I also checked in with The SunBreak sponsor Scarecrow Video for extendyour-fest options.

- In store they have *In Your Absence* (*En Tu Auscencia*), which played at SIFF this year, and two dark comedies that Jen says “are apparently insanely popular in Spain”: *Torrente: El Brazo Tonto De La Ley* (*The Stupid Arm of the Law*) and *Torrente 2: Mission In Maribella*. Says Jen: “I haven’t seen them but they’re apparently about a lazy, drunk, right-wing cop.”
- For those of you wanting to mix your celebration of Spanish cinema with the Halloween spirit, there’s Juanama Bajo Ullo’s *Fragile* and the collection *Six Films To Keep You Awake*, which features Alex de la Iglesia’s *The Baby’s Room*.
- Scarecrow also has sections for several modern Spanish directors (including Alex de la Iglesia): Alejandro Amenabar (*Open Your Eyes*, the film Cameron Crowe remade into *Vanilla Sky*), Julio Medem (*Basqueball*, *Sex and Lucia*), Carlos Saura (*Tango*) and of course Pedro Almodovar.