

Eastwood directing of 'Hereafter' worthy of this world



'Hereafter'

Rated PG-13

3.5 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

If Clint Eastwood never acted in a movie again I would be bummed for sure. But so long as he continues his incredible winning streak as a director, I think I'll overlook the lack of acting.

Here is a filmmaker like a fine vintage out of Napa Valley that truly gets better with age. Eastwood is at that stage in his career/life where he can make movies that he is clearly passionate about. He also gets an incredible amount of freedom to not rush, so his movies are like reading novels with each scene on the screen a different page eagerly waiting to be read.

And all this from Dirty Harry, too?

Eastwood has crafted a piece of work that will leave you asking more questions than it delivers answers. I think in

part because Eastwood is clearly in the twilight of his life, he's probably wondering what lies beyond this existence. At 80 years of age, though, he shows no signs of resting on his laurels.



Matt Damon
stars in
"Hereafter."

"Hereafter" opens dramatically, mirroring some of the tragic climatic news we've been witnessing lately so you find yourself immediately captivated. With Eastwood's magic touch and Peter Morgan's ("The Queen," "Frost/Nixon") script, Matt Damon stars as George, a former psychic who communicated with dead people but has retired from the field. He seeks out something that can relieve his mind from such pressure and decides to put his body to work employed as a factory worker in San Francisco. Apparently, though, he still has the touch when he grasps another person's hand and can "see" what that loved one who has passed on has to say. It's actually more of a curse than a gift and reminded me a lot of 1983's "The Dead Zone" (directed by David Cronenberg and based on Stephen King's novel) starring Christopher Walken where when he grabbed someone's hand he could see what was going to happen in their immediate future.

Anyway, back to George. He would rather leave his own future behind him, but his brother, Billy (played by Jay Mohr) has other ideas with wanting to market him utilizing his gift for profit.



Eastwood sectionalizes the movie, which is smart as to keep up the interest focusing on several stories centered on George's talent. It's creepy in one way, sad in another and you feel for the characters; longing to be in touch with a loved one so that they can find a small degree of (and I loathe this word) closure on moments left unfinished. One of the more moving stories is about a London boy, Marcus (George McLaren) who wants to reach out to his dead twin brother. The other story is the opener

with Cecila De France as Marie LeLay, a journalist who survives the incredible opening scene (don't want to reveal too much because the effects are amazing) and becomes so traumatized that she no longer sees her job as important but buries herself in an investigation able to perform her job. She plunges into an investigation on whether or not there is an afterlife. Man, I had this weird feeling after seeing this wondering (God forbid) if this was in fact Eastwood's last movie would he have wanted this to conclude this way? He has a few other projects in the works, but I don't know, this one just seemed to capsule one's journey here and you find yourself thinking what in fact does lie waiting in the "Hereafter?"

"Hereafter" is rated PG-13 for mature thematic elements including disturbing disaster and accident images, and for brief strong language with a running time of 130 minutes.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.