

REVIEWS



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Competed and exhibited in various festivals,schools and communities abroad: New York, Los Angeles,Boston, Yale University, Oregon,Chicago, Hawaii, Vancouver, India, Korea, Hongkong, Geneva, Zurich,Madrid,University of Alberta

Screening all over the country in schools, communities, parishes in partnership with various organizations. UP, Assumption, FEU, Ateneo De Naga, Holy Infant Jesus, Philippine High School for the Arts., De La Salle, Benilde, Don Bosco, Centro Escolar University, Lourdes, Technological University of the Philippines, Earist, Claret...several schools in Tacloban, Baguio, Pangasinan... Communities in Tondo, Bagong Silang.. Government offices, DOJ,NEDA. Aksyon para sa Kapayapaan, Humein Ecology, Pasay Children's Network, Couples for Christ, CBCP, Alumnae of various schools...

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From TV, Film, Theater Practitioners and Critics :

"... specially moving and value-laden film. I was in tears many times, so clean and well told. " - *Cheche Lazaro, Broadcast Journalist*

"Brilliant Cinema!" - *Joel Lamangan,film director*

" The film has Magic."--*Ronald Arguelles, Cinema One*

"... your film is one of the best in the four years of Cinemalaya. " - *Gil Portes,film director*

The film got three minutes of standing ovation. Four encore applause during the end credits. Two national artists cheering for more. And 1,800 people shouting "bravo!".BOSES is one of the best films in Cinemalaya this year .The film is close to perfection.... the direction was flawless..... Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil was able to put everything together to create a masterpiece. *Cinmanyak Dennis blog, July 2008*

"BOSES will soothe the uneasy, fearful, troubled beast ... The story tackles child abuse, healing, and friendship-without being preachy and didactic.

Never has a local movie integrated social advocacy and the promotion of classical music so seamlessly, movingly, and beautifully. ... movie collaboration at its creative best." - *Mario Hernando, Malaya, Urian*

"The film is made even more compelling by the stirring performances turned in by the boy who plays Onyok, Davao, Picache - and most of all, by Bolipata, who moves us not only with his unexpectedly felt and insightful portrayal but also with his musical performance, which is an overwhelming experience." - *Nestor Torre, PDI*

"At the premiere night, the audience was not shy in proclaiming its feelings about the movie, both shouting, laughing and crying at various times. In one scene, Ariel attempts to elude Ricky's character and the audience collectively cheered, some people even rising from their seats! At the back of the hall was a row of foreigners and I wondered what they all thought of this Filipino brand of audience participation.

At the end, a rousing ovation was given the movie (the foreigners had risen, too) and the crowd started to chant Onyok's name and Julian stood with pride and went onstage. Like Pacquaio at the end of a well-fought match, he stood at the center, crossed his arms and looked straight into the lenses of the cameras that had flocked around him. Standing far away, I knew that the audience recognized genius and was giving it its proper recognition." – *Rica Bolipata, Phil. Star*

"The essence of transforming lives is so meaningful.Coke and Onyok were so natural." - *Irene Rada, CCP*

. What a contribution to Philippine culture and society! And para na rin kaming lifted to heaven. Thanks for making that film. – *Liza Magtoto, playwright*

"The moving BOSES offers an emotionally rich, cathartic experience ... This is an intense, heartfelt film brimming with lovely moments."
- *Gibbs Cadiz, PDI*

"Unpretentiously funny, this movie proves that quiet films can be quite riveting ..." - *Rome Jorge, Manila Times Lifestyle Editor*

"... more than the movie being about how wounded people can be;more than how terrible it is that people who should love us hurt us and can somehow still miraculously redeem themselves;more than the movie being about the ability to heal and the heart to strengthen;
more than the movie about being able to let go of peopleand trusting in what you have taught them;the movie is about how healing can come from art."
- *Rica Bolipata-Santos, Philippine Star, Columnist*

"... has powerful emotional appeal, electrifying musical scenes and intrinsic moral values which raise it several cuts above the average movie."
- *Rosalinda Orosa, Phil. Star, Columnist*

Surprisingly, Bolipata shines as an actor. His warmth and empathy for children, developed through years of teaching, shines through in this film. The man is funny as well. But Duque is even better. To say so much without a word is a command performance."
- *Rome Jorge, Manila Times Lifestyle Editor*

"Duque's crushing innocence embodies the movie's purity."- *Lito Zulueta, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Lifestyle Editor*

"Your film made me motionless for some time even after watching it.Its beauty really moved me. Poignant and so powerful, the music comes fromtheheart."- *Archie de Calma, journalist, Golden Screen Awards*

"One of the year's most intensely moving film so far, brilliantly acted by the entire cast and directed with great sensitivity..." - *Mario Bautista, People's Journal*

I love your film..... .Malaki ang magiging impact niya sa Phil. Society.-.....Vic Acedillo Jr., filmmaker

“A FASCINATING and lyrical approach to story telling about one of the most vicious of sins and crimes-that of child abuse. “Boses” is a film that paves the way to a more subtle and inner discourse of blatant and obvious destructive occurrences in our everyday lives. Many filmmakers will always be tempted to present the issue of child abuse stripped of interpretation; commonly approached with stark realism as if it was the only way to capture what is real. It sometimes becomes more of the exploitation of the exploited that surfaces in such cases. It is likened to turning scars back into wounds that remain open. It often has been described as pornography (that subject matter is not necessarily always sex... violence can be pornography) when crassness and lack of interpretation in presentation happens.” *Gigi Javier Alfonso, Urian, Manila Times*

If there is anything that comes to near perfection-as a film that is-I'd say it is Boses. *Butch Francisco, Philippine Star, September 6, 2008-12-03*

Films like these have affected not only the mainstream but also their fellow indies, creating another path in the wilderness with a distinctly feminine mindset and sensibility. *Janiyo Arcellana, Philippine Star, August 11, 08*

I've been raving about Julian Duque's endearing performance as a boy ash-tray to his father's sadistic hate in Boses. I am amazed how this Ellen Marfil film (written by Rody Vera and Froi Medina) managed to incorporate an advocacy with melodrama elements and high brow classical music.
Nick Pichay (artandlaw.blogspot.com)

Portions from *Joel David's Review, Oct. 13, 2008, Phil. Daily Inquirer*

-a member of the cultural studies faculty at the College of Social Sciences of Inha University in Incheon, Korea. He was founding Director and a former Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines Film Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in Cinema Studies at New York University, where he was a Fulbright grantee. He is the author of several books on Philippine cinema and had won the Manila Critics Circle's National Book Award for Film Criticism .

“Boses takes a grim situation (child abuse), matches it with high-art therapy (classical music), and unfolds the narrative with a strong dose of pleasure, as startling in its effectiveness as it is unexpected, given the nature of its material. In this manner the film betokens not just some of the best moments of the local industry, but also that of Classical Hollywood – the dominant 20th-century film movement that the rest of world cinema attempted to topple, with the European New Wave finally managing the feat just a few decades ago.....

The mode that Ongkeko-Marfil chose constituted her gravest challenge to serious film evaluators: melodrama, a type of genre that belongs to the larger group of “body” films, so-called because of their ability to provoke corporeal, as opposed to cerebral, responses – i.e., tear-jerking in this instance, goose bump-raising in horror, sexual arousal in pornography, laughter incitement in comedy. For the greater part of the last couple of decades, feminist critics have been spearheading the campaign to recuperate these much-derided genres, but their uphill movement shows no signs of reaching level ground in high-art (and therefore essentially conservative) culture, the indie-film scene included.....

Though Boses benefits immeasurably from the chemistry between the pair's star turns, the high level of quality displayed by the rest of the film's cast proves that Ongkeko-Marfil's background in stage arts has helped complement the impressive evolution of her cinematic skills. With Boses, she hewed close to what Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal, misrecognized among indie filmmakers as foreign-festival and anti-mass audience innovators, struggled to achieve throughout their extensive careers: the unapologetic catering to spectatorial pleasure alongside their inevitably intelligent handling of material.

A few films have helped incite revolutionary change, and the inward turn that “Boses” inspires ought to be fulfilment enough for the talents behind it. Most local digital practitioners will continue to aspire for and attain festival honors abroad, but this is the first movie made by a colleague of theirs that, more than anything else, truly belongs to the world because it remains rooted at home.”

From International Film Programmers and Reviewers:

I know people are going to love Boses, and I am so thrilled that Ellen has continued to develop and hone her exquisite sensibilities.

Hannah Fischer, Programmer Women's International Film and TV showcase, West Hollywood.

An extraordinary film from the Philippines, it is my personal choice, my favourite and must-see.
Chuch Boller, Executive Director Hawaii International Film Festival

Filipina helmer Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil's second feature is a sensitively handled plea for the rights of children and tackles unpleasant truths with great integrity. *Richard Kiupers, Variety.com*

From Children's Welfare Advocates :

"Sobrang galing. It is a must-see!"- *Dr. Honey Carandang, Child Psychologist*

It is a landmark film made in the name of abused children all over the Philippines. It is a story of triumph which illustrates the enduring spirit of a boy, and his amazing capacity to heal, love and forgive despite being a victim of violence and neglect."

Ani Saguisag, Unicef representative, Child Protection Unit

Boses is more than just a movie; it is a film that communicates its message to the soul using the soul's language: music. And not just "muzak" as often used by cinematic potboilers, but music issuing from the bowels of the violin in the fullness of its range from playful to plaintive. Boses is a rarity in the Philippine cinema industry...

Boses should be seen and enjoyed by as many people as possible, especially the young and those who have anything to do with the young, whether they are teachers, lawmakers, law enforcers, media people, guidance counselors, social workers, religious educators, or plain parents. *CBCP CINEMA*

This can and should be viewed by everyone. Grade school kids should however watch with adult supervision. *PG-13. MTRCB*

"Here in Tondo, entertainment is quite an effective medium since it's a guaranteed crowd drawer.... "Boses" is the perfect film for our message of hope and promotion of children's rights...What we want to do is to empower the people to create change within themselves.

Our primary concern is battling the feeling of hopelessness and desperation in our community. Tondo, in particular, is "the perfect place" for showing the film. I'd hear parents tell the teacher: 'Pag makulit yung anak ko, batukan niyo ha! Kahit gulpihin niyo yan. Minsan, talagang matigas ang ulo niyan (When my child is stubborn, cuff him. Even if you beat him up. Sometimes, he is really headstrong).... A film like 'Boses' is a great tool to educate more people effectively. "Here in Tondo, they take it against the teacher if she or he is kind to children. It's something we need to improve to help raise awareness of children's rights. You can see that the children want to express themselves. They are either afraid or angry.

"Boses" message of healing makes it a memorable film. We are all broken spirits. We can heal ourselves through healing other people also. Sometimes we're not even aware of it but it happens. It's one of God's gifts. *Joyce Alcoreza , Tondo Asenso Foundation*

BOSES Synopsis:

Rescued by a concerned neighbor from his abusive father, 7-year old Onyok is brought to a shelter for abused children. Amanda, the shelter's owner-founder realizes that Onyok is unable to speak, caused by a physical trauma that damaged his larynx. On the first day of his stay in the shelter he hears the faint sound of a violin being played from far off. This strange but beautiful music that has captivated Onyok's attention comes from Amanda's reclusive brother Ariel, who has turned back on his career as a concert violinist in Manila and came back to the family house bearing a terrible guilt.

This is the beginning of a simple, yet moving friendship between Onyok and Ariel. Ariel's initial cynicism over his sister's commitment to caring for abused children slowly melts when he sees Onyok's intrinsic inclination to the violin. Onyok proves to have inborn talents to the instrument that leads Ariel to teach the mute little boy.

Amanda begins to worry, however, when Ariel begins to push Onyok beyond his limits, leading the boy away from dealing with his own emotional issues as well as straining his new-found friendship with Shirley, a young precocious child in the shelter. In the course of the film, Ariel's secret guilt over the death of his sweetheart protege is revealed. The question of Ariel's motives about him pushing Onyok's gifted talents to a similar level comes to the fore. Does Ariel really care for Onyok's condition, or is he pushing Onyok to fulfill a shattered dream?

Onyok's abusive father is slowly rehabilitated and the shelter is eventually preparing for a reconciliation between father and son. Ariel realizes that he does not own the child. And their friendship will have to encompass both their individual issues -- hardly similar and yet resonant to both of them.

Nobody knows whether Onyok's reconciliation with an abusive parent will succeed. But one thing has remained inevitably clear: he has regained his voice.

An **ERASTO FILMS** Production
in cooperation with UNICEF CASA SAN MIGUEL DSWD

Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA)
Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP)

Introducing

COKE BOLIPATA JULIAN DUQUE
starring RICKY DAVAO CHERRY PIE PICACHE MERYLL SORIANO

Consultant for Scriptwriting ARMANDO LAO

Consultant for Child Psychology PEACHY FERNANDO

Sound Supervision ALLAN MARCELO HILADO

Editor and Sound Design ORLEAN TAN

Colorist JOHN TAN

Production Design BIANCA GONZALES

Musical Score JOURDANN O. PETALVER

Musical Direction COKE BOLIPATA

Director of Photography NAP JAMIR

Co-Director and Technical Supervisor MILO ALTO-PAZ

Supervising Producer CYNTHIA PAZ

Executive Producers MARTIN P. MARFIL & ELLEN ONGKEKO-MARFIL

Based on Froi Medina's Tinig sa Dilim, 2nd prize winner at the Cinemanila 2007 scriptwriting competition.

Screenplay FROILAN MEDINA and RODY VERA

Direction ELLEN ONGKEKO-MARFIL

For more information, trailers, reviews, interviews...check out www.ellemarfil.com