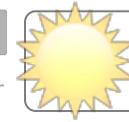


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## Entertainment :: Movies

### Turtle Hill, Brooklyn

by Daniel Scheffler  
EDGE Contributor  
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A scene from 'Turtle Hill, Brooklyn'

What makes **"Turtle Hill, Brooklyn"** interesting is not that it is part of a new wave of gay films, or that its two leads also wrote the script. What makes it interesting is giving Brooklyn, Turtle Hill expressly, a great nod in true reverence to its authentic lifestyle and variegated citizenry. Citizens of the world unite in the second most populous country in the U.S. as "Turtle Hill, Brooklyn" brings the worst and best of everyone to the 90 minutes of film time.

We meet Will (Brian W. Seibert) and his boyfriend, explicitly stated, Mateo (Ricardo Valdez) as they clamber together a life around Will's 30th birthday. With a birthday party to plan, an incessant ringing of the bell and some flavorful characters arriving, the scene is set for imminent breakdown. But not before more worldly details emerge such as Mateo's Scottish kilt, another cute Latino guy arriving and China balls being hung for party decoration.

The bell, irritating at best, brings forth Will's sister, with conservative husband complete with polo shirt and mini person, unannounced on route to, of course,



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By Jonathan Leaf | May 2

DC. And with a rather pathetic huff she rejects his gay lifestyle as she leaves for cooler ground taking her posse along with her. But that is where that story line cul-de-sac's and the writers give you an inconclusive shrug. Next in is Melissa, the friend for life fruit fly, who cutely heaves a "how you doin'" almost Ed Koch-like enforcement of ok-ness on her friend but again with very little affect on any of the characters. Next a Spanish interlude takes over as Luis, the New Yorker who can't handle it any longer and must flee to Spain with his "best relationship," arrives and chats with his friend Mateo about fidelity and looking for, and perhaps finding, "the one."

By the time the jock, oh shock and horror, from the gym arrives and we find out that Mateo has cheated on his waspy boyfriend, the audience has left the building, or comfy couch. There is hardly a profound word said by the hordes of guests, who no longer ring the bell, and, with not even a tiny slick of impuissant humor the script cannot carry the party or its interlopers anywhere. Perhaps the gay Republican with his desire for the "straight" guest attempts to present a new trajectory to the story line as it nearly echoes a strong political opinion, but it loses its value as the cellphone pops the bubble. Well at least it wasn't the bell again.

Mateo's (waiter, painter slash artist) interminable cleaning of the bathroom with his yellow gloves is one of the stronger signals the movie manages to convey as it finally shows off a character trait deeper than what the rather weak script can conjure up. (Damn and it had such potential.) A video camera gift that revolves around the party with messages from each guest reveals absolutely nothing about either of the leads' characters and feels gimmicked and useless as the writing loses its erection after attempts to generate some kind of hunger. If only the film could explore cheating and communication as it nearly assayed on audiences. But the film forgets the essence of the writing, and so the characters' deeper thoughts, and strangely leaves a half eaten candy in your mouth.

What saves the film, partially, is (for the majority) stereotypes are carefully abolished and characters are seemingly left largely untouched as if they were instructed to just ease into their multifaceted-ness as Brooklynites. As the film laments with a hushed "life begins at 30" it feels utterly unconvincing as the worst kind of cliché that somehow managed to creep into this day and age from the previous century.

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Daniel Scheffler is a writer who spends his time in New York, Cape Town and India. Follow him on Twitter



Very loosely based on the life of composer Edvard Grieg, this mostly-forgotten show was brought to life by the Collegiate Chorale and Tom Gold Dance.



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