

The Films of Benh Zeitlin and Friends: A Benefit

The Films of Benh Zeitlin and Friends: A Benefit SXSW Film Festival. Benh Zeitlin, whose short film "Glory at Sea" received the Wholpin Award at this year's SXSW Film Festival, was seriously injured in a car accident en route to the film's world premiere at the fest. Zeitlin was in surgery while his film screened; the medical bills (for a shattered hip, broken pelvis, and two sprained ankles) have added up to about \$80,000. Thus comes this benefit screening of several of Zeitlin's short films,



along with those of some of his collaborators. See p.58 of this week's Screens section for more on Zeitlin's benefit. (*) @Alamo Drafthouse at the Ritz, Tue., 7, 9:30pm.



THE VISITOR

D: Tom McCarthy; with Richard Jenkins, Haaz Sleiman, Danai Jekesai Gurira, Hiam Abbass, Marian Seldes. (PG-13, 108 min.)

McCarthy, the writer/director of 2003's *The Station Agent*, is back with another humanist drama, although this new one offers bridges among characters of different nationalities rather than personality types. Curiously, *The Visitor* is both predictable and unpredictable. Jenkins (a busy character actor who, no doubt, will be recognizable to viewers from dozens of movies, if not his role as the deceased father on HBO's *Six Feet Under*) is uncharacteristically cast in the lead by McCarthy (himself an actor when not writing and directing). Jenkins' role as Walter Vale is a gift that he capitalizes on fully. The character (and the film) are studies in understatement, communicating often through the absence of words or actions. Vale is a bored widower, a Connecticut university professor who can muster little interest in his students or field of study: economics. When he's sent to New York to deliver a paper he co-authored, he stays at the Manhattan apartment he once shared with his wife and still

Block) leans almost entirely on the obvious: embarrassingly open sentiment and country-song clichés (of her no-good husband, Weisz – uncharacteristically pitchy – mews, "We tried drinking our way back into love"). It all looks gorgeous, but here, too, we're in familiar territory, the Wong romantic lexicon of slo-mo and time-lapse, red-light-district gels and iconic songs on endless replay, not to mention a high-fashion fetish. (That closeup of a Louis Vuitton bag nestled inexplicably on the arm

of working-class Elizabeth, followed by a shout-out in the end credits? Give me a break.) *My Blueberry Nights* can be sexy as hell, but for the first time in a Wong film, I felt duped for being so easily seduced. There are momentary pleasures, to be sure – a corker of a kiss here, an Otis Redding-backed barroom slink there – but frankly, I'm a little weary of Wong wearing "that same old shaggy dress." – Kimberley Jones
★★★ Arbor

TASHAN

D: Vijay Krishna Acharya; with Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Anil Kapoor. (NR, 158 min., subtitled)

Not reviewed at press time. In this highly anticipated new Bollywood film, three people travel across India on a dangerous journey during which no one can be trusted. – Marjorie Baumgarten
Tinseltown South

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