



Ryan Gosling stars in the 2011 action drama "Drive" as a man of few words who works as a movie stunt driver and moonlights as a getaway car driver for armed heists.

Buckle up for 'Drive'



BY KEN DUSOLD
Assistant Editor

After the first 10 minutes of "Drive," your jaw likely is hanging a bit, your eyes are opened wide and your heart is pounding in sync to the uptuned score. What you've just watched is one of the best crafted opening sequences from the last decade, as director Nicolas Winding Refn places you in the front seat of an expertly steered film that balances on the tight rope between noir and action. From that moment, "Drive" winds its way through the next 90 minutes loaded with a most intriguing story and refined performances.

Ryan Gosling is the Driver. He has no name, no background and little to say. This tactic on the filmmakers' part might seem corny or stupid ... and would be if in most other movies. However, for "Drive," this decision to leave the protagonist without an identity compliments the "now" aspect to the story. Everything that happens is important only to the players in the present. Indeed, the audience will have little time to contemplate the world before or after the events being watched on screen have taken place.

When we meet Gosling's professional, sharp-minded and solitary Driver, who works part time as a stunt driver and mechanic, he is moonlighting as a getaway driver for a couple of inconsequential thugs.

There are maybe 10 words of dialogue spoken between the criminals before the scene unfolds into an exhilarating five minute ride through the Los Angeles streets. As the sounds of fast-paced music, the exchanges between authorities on the police radio and a Dodgers baseball game on the car radio blankets the chase with pertinent information and intensity, the Driver maneuvers his way through traffic and away from cop cars, arriving at the clients' destination without so much as a raised eyebrow.

Having successfully lured the audience in, the film then latches them onto the Driver's promising future in stock car

racing with friend, boss and father-figure Shannon (Bryan Cranston), ex-movie producer-turned mobster Bernie Rose (Albert Brooks) and the dangerous crime boss Nino (Ron Perlman). With the film's conflict being carefully set up, an unlikely development arises in the form of the Driver's neighbor Irene (Carey Mulligan) and her son Benicio (Kaden Leos). Falling for them seems out of character for the Driver. It also fills the missing piece needed for the story's collision with trouble when her husband (Oscar Isaac) returns home from prison and hires the Driver to help him with a robbery.

Gosling's performance is genius as he uses complex minimalism to lightly shade in a human form that serves as little more than an enigma throughout a film that manages to capture its audience in an irremovable grip.

Supporting Gosling is an impressively cast group of talented artists. Cranston's physically and metaphorically broken Shannon tries desperately to exploit the Driver

for personal gain while exuding an unparalleled level of somberness and care for his young friend.

Mulligan and Perlman are both as excellent as possible for their roles, which are given just slightly less with which to work than the other central players. As Irene, Mulligan portrays a woman fighting to remain stoic, only to later collapse quietly into her emotions. Nino, by contrast to the Driver, almost is a caricature of most film gangsters. Perlman successfully adds significant — but again subtle — depth to a role that could have been useless if left to a lesser performer.

Most striking among the co-stars is Brooks, as Nino's pleasingly deceitful and unscrupulous financial partner and the film's ultimate antagonist. This is not Brooks as the nervous and overly cautious Marlin in "Finding Nemo" or the compulsive and petulant reporter in "Broadcast News." This is a new,

darker and more terrifying Brooks. The result is nothing short of amazing. An Oscar nomination would be suitable compensation for Brooks as this image-shifting villain.

Beyond the outstanding story and cast, "Drive" quite simply is a beautifully filmed product that adeptly merges opposing images for the sake of telling the story whenever and wherever dialogue is absent. The careful occasional use of slow motion juxtaposes the speed with which the Driver's life seems to be moving as smoothly as incredibly strong violence juxtaposes the breathless kisses between the Driver and Irene. Throw in some terrific stunt work and "Drive" definitely is a ride worth taking, assuming you have penchant for excellence and a pulse.

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Have mercy on music

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A crime has been committed that has talented music legends such as Beethoven and Jimi Hendrix rolling in their graves.

Music is defined as "the tones or sounds employed...and sounded or to be sounded by one or more voices or instruments, or both," according to dictionary.com. However in recent years, vocals, pianos, guitars, violins and other traditional instruments have been replaced with computerized techno beats and synthesized voices. It seems computers are taking control of the music scene.

I must admit, I fall victim to a random "club hit" every now and then. Sometimes hearing robot-like voices and a heavy bass line that drowns out every ounce of musicality hits the spot.

However, a line must be drawn. In the past, music became popular because of strong vocal performances or catchy, thought-out rhythms. Nowadays, it seems like every song you hear has the same synthetic beat and tasteless, thoughtless lyrics.

Perhaps I'm a little biased. I'm a new music major who loves playing the French horn. I even listen to classical music as I jog. But still, I respect good music of any genre when I hear it.

I love hearing Beethoven just as much as Run DMC, Stevie Nicks, Michael Jackson, Johnny Cash or Frank Sinatra. All these performers have mastered their genres in different ways. They have some less "clever" singles sprinkled among their repertoire and maybe they weren't the best performers, but they still released some good work using real, human musical talent.

I'm not saying there is no talent left in the modern music industry. I'm just saying it is being smothered by less "musically sophisticated" individuals and groups using technology to make up for incapacities. It is sad to me that strong performers like Adele have to compete against individuals like Ke\$ha.

In one of my music classes, containing many music majors and minors, the professor played a music clip and asked if anyone could identify it. Within two seconds, I was on the edge of my seat. Of course I knew it. It was Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. I didn't want to seem too eager, so I waited a bit, but no one else spoke.

I was shocked I potentially was the only student to recognize the piece. My shock was only intensified when the professor informed the class Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is one of the most identifiable and well-known songs in the world. Yet, in this room of individuals studying music, I was one of few, if not the only one, to know the name of one of the most renowned pieces of music created. Something did not seem right about that to me.

I admit there might be a track by Lil Wayne or Lady Gaga on my MP3 player. However, respect and attention must be paid to the classics and the traditionally musically talented. Sure, you can listen to Ke\$ha, but make some time for strong vocalists such as Sinatra, Adele and Beyonce and talented instrumentalists like Jimi Hendrix and Yo-Yo Ma.

In a world of ever-increasing technology, there must be some balance.

A computer repeatedly can make a mean synthesized beat, but it still does not come close to capturing the true power of natural, human talent. Computers rock, but so do humans.

SAB advertising gets creative



Junior Alex Sydlow dressed as "SABox" and junior Andrew Korte dressed as "Purple Man" to advertise an SAB event on Family Day Saturday on The Mall.

Jessie Poole/Index