

# LIMITÉ



September 7, 2010

## [Review: The Romantics](#)



“Our friends got the nickname ‘The Romantics’ because of our incestuous dating history.” In the title scene, Laura sums up the film’s “on the surface” synopsis during a rather awkward rehearsal dinner speech, the night before her ex marries her college roommate.

*The Romantics* is about as independent as independent films get. Replete with unconventional music choices, hand-held camerawork, and a rather simple, yet dramatic and funny plot, the film balances itself out with its share of hits and misses. Based on the novel by Galt Niederhoffer, the author took the helm of the project, guiding it from book to script to screen.



The story centers on seven college friends who gather at a seaside home for the wedding of two of their own. Laura and Lila were college roommates who rivaled over Tom, a dashing scholar with a proclivity for literature. Though Laura and Tom shared a bond unlike either of them had ever experienced, it was Lila who ultimately won the prize. Now, Lila and Tom are headed to the altar while Laura watches on as maid of honor — a slap in the face, if there ever was one. As the most intriguing of the film's characters, Laura is confronted with an internal conflict as she watches her good friend marry the man she still clearly loves.

As Laura, Katie Holmes reminds us that she is more than just Mrs. Tom Cruise. In perhaps her best performance since 2003's *Pieces of April*, Holmes reminds us that — believe it or not — she really *can* act. She leads the film in a role that suits her well, demonstrating a vulnerability that nicely plays against the more seemingly self-assured personalities of her friends.

Oscar-winner and *True Blood* star Anna Paquin plays Lila, the over-anxious bride who secludes herself in her bedroom the night before her big day, even while her friends cavort along the beach in a drunken daze. Unbeknownst to her, her fiancée Tom (Josh Duhamel) goes missing during a group escapade into the ocean. While the friends make a poor attempt at searching for him, Lila's nerves are set ablaze behind closed doors. While Paquin handles the part well, the character comes across as a bit hollow, leaving us wanting to learn more about her and her true feelings for both Tom and Laura.



In one of the film's key scenes, Lila's and Tom's friends address the couple in a series of drunken toasts during the rehearsal dinner. This culminates in Laura's aforementioned rant that provides awkward moments for all who are familiar with Laura's and Tom's past. The scene hearkens back to the never-ending rehearsal dinner in Jonathan Demme's *Rachel Getting Married* (2008). Though the comparison is unavoidable, editor Jacob Craycroft (*A Prairie Home Companion*) uses quick cuts to navigate the scene away from what could have been something as exhausting as the slop audiences were subjected to in *Rachel*.

The well-blended cast spans a variety of experience levels, from some relative newcomers to screen veterans Candice Bergen and Elijah Wood. All parts are well played with a convincing chemistry between them.

*The Romantics* is a character-driven piece that reminds us that what's on the surface isn't always consistent with what's held inside. Though the film starts off slowly and a bit dull, it eventually crescendos to a more interesting place when all characters' feelings are exposed like open wounds in the setting's sea salt air.

The film opens this Friday.

**Limité Rating:** 3/5

**Director:** Galt Niederhoffer

**Writer:** Galt Niederhoffer

**Cast:** Katie Holmes, Josh Duhamel, Anna Paquin, Adam Brody, Malin Åkerman, Elijah Wood, Dianna Agron, Jeremy Strong, Rebecca Lawrence, Candice Bergen

**Genre:** Drama, Comedy

**MPAA Rating:** PG-13

**Runtime:** 95 min.

**Release Date:** September 10, 2010

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posted by: Daniel Quitério labels: [Film](#), [Review](#)

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when I read the description, it sounded like the Big Chill (except that was a funeral, not a wedding) haha. But the Big Chill was a big snore.

And I didn't know the word crescendo existed. Thanks for adding to my vocab.

*Comment by [John H.](#) – September 7, 2010 @ [7:17 pm](#)*

[...] '... hits and misses ... starts off slowly ... crescendos to a more interesting place when a... (Daniel Quitério – Limité) vs. '... fantastic soundtrack ... plays out like a modern day ST. ELMO'S FIRE with a bit of THE BIG CHILL thrown in ... over dramatic at times. ...' (James Wallace – Gordon And The Whale) // [...]

*Pingback by [The Romantics | Movie Reviews | Katie Holmes | Josh Duhamel](#) – September 8, 2010 @ [7:45 am](#)*

Great review, been following your reviews for a while now, you have a broad taste of movies!

*Comment by StevieKeyz – September 8, 2010 @ [12:16 pm](#)*

This review is amazeballs, and much better than that other dudes. You have my vote!

*Comment by Rachel – September 8, 2010 @ [12:36 pm](#)*

I'm a sucker for this type of film...loved the Big Chill, loved St. Elmo's Fire, so I'm glad to hear it's a 3 out of 5 in your book...which is a true success story, since most of these types of films barely make a 2 rating. I'm optimistic about seeing this one, great review!

*Comment by Theresa C – September 9, 2010 @ [6:09 am](#)*

[...] and funny plot, the film balances itself out with its share of hits and misses," says Limité Magazine's Daniel [...]

*Pingback by [Movie Preview: The Romantics | Cupid's Pulse](#) – September 10, 2010 @ [6:02 am](#)*

Thanks, everyone, for the feedback! If anyone's in NYC, you can watch the film this weekend followed by Q&A sessions with the filmmakers and actors. All of these screenings are at the Regal Union Square (850 Broadway):

Each appearance covers the end of a show, and the intro. to another show.

Q/A session: with Director Galt Niederhoffer, Producer Ron Stein, and Stars: Jeremy Strong and Rebecca Lawrence.  
Friday Sept 10th, 8:40PM – 9:40PM EST (Q+A 7:00 and Intro 9:40)

Q/A session with Director Galt Niederhoffer, Producer Ron Stein and Stars: Elijah Wood, Jeremy Strong, and Rebecca Lawrence.  
Saturday afternoon Sept 11th, 1:15PM – 2:15PM EST (Q+A 11:40 and Intro 2:00)

Q/A session with Director Galt Niederhoffer, Producer Ron Stein and Star: Katie Holmes.  
Saturday night Sept 11th, 8:40PM – 9:40PM EST (Q+A 7:00 and Intro 9:40)

*Comment by Dan Q. – September 10, 2010 @ [1:48 pm](#)*

Informative review, has my vote! Was on the fence about seeing this film but my interest has been piqued!

*Comment by DenaG – September 11, 2010 @ [5:58 am](#)*