



War Story

A MATTER OF TASTE

See Film feature.

MAZE

Since the PBS documentary *Twitch and Shout* and Jonathan Lethem's novel *Motherless Brooklyn*, Tourette's syndrome — which dooms the sufferer to a life of explosive outbursts and convulsions — has become a Zeitgeist ailment that artists and comedians can't keep their paws off. Sometimes it's played for laughs, as in *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo*; elsewhere, as in Rob Morrow's directorial debut, *Maze*, it can produce a much more thoughtful portrait of the person trapped behind a wall of symptoms. Morrow plays T.S. sufferer and successful sculptor Lyle Maze, who avoids emotional entanglements because of the grief the condition brings him. When his friend Mike (Craig Sheffer) leaves the country, he asks Lyle to take care of his girlfriend, Callie (Laura Linney), who, unbeknownst to either, is pregnant. Callie considers her relationship with Mike over, yet decides to have the child, and Lyle's goodness and kindness gradually emerge as he escorts her through her nine months. Inevitably, feelings are stirred and questions

comedy, as Kubrick did in *Dr. Strangelove*, as a lens through which to view madness on a madman's terms, and lucidly identify it as madness. The Marat/Sade irony of setting these scenes in a madhouse helps, but Macfadyen's volcanic magnetism and spot-on mimicry of Hitler's body language and speech patterns make insight flesh. (*New Beverly; Fri.-Thurs., Nov. 9-15*)(FX. Feeney)

TELL ME SOMETHING

Detective Cho (Han Suk-gyu) is under investigation for corruption, and guilt-ridden over his mother's death, just as garbage bags stuffed with body parts start turning up all over his South Korean city. When Cho is assigned to the case, he asks his superior, "Is this redemption?" His question is answered by the thick sheets of rain that fall in almost every exterior scene of director Chang Youn-hyun's moody thriller, emblematic of both a man and a world in dire need of cleansing. When evidence leads Cho to a troubled young woman, Su-Yeon (Shim Eun-ha), he adds soothing her demons to his search for a killer and salvation. Director Chang builds some chilling suspense into the cop's grim investigative routine — as well as generous helpings of blood: It

runs, splashes and sprays as the amputations continue. Elsewhere, he's all restraint. Chang sustains the professional and the personal in such subtle modulation that it's impossible to discern when Cho's questioning of Su-Yeon about her tortured past leaves the realm of the police procedural and becomes the tender probing of a lover searching for scars. It's a dangerous shift that Cho barely recognizes himself in a film that pits its corporeal horrors against equally debilitating affairs of the heart. (*Grande 4-Plex*)(Paul Malcolm)

WAR STORY

Shot in black and white with an unerring eye for the era-specific detail of early silent film, writer-director John Baumgartner's *War Story* is so inventive that it works on at least a half-dozen levels: social commentary, film-geek homage, love story, queer theory, sly genre overhaul and straight-ahead romantic comedy. It triumphs on all fronts. Baumgartner has taken an overused device — a fictitious discovery of the masterpiece by a now-forgotten film genius (one Metly Moorville, alleged forerunner of Chaplin, Keaton and Lloyd) — and infused it with freshness and wit. Moorville (Baumgartner), clad in little-tramp gear and cursed with empty pockets and a growling stomach, sets off to find a meal one day, but instead stumbles into a waiting gig at a restaurant where the boss is a tyrant and the other waiter a brute. Though Metly initially swoons over a female customer, he's soon smitten by a cute male soldier who returns the ardor, but whose twin brother is a violent homophobe. Mistaken identity, workplace bigotry and burgeoning love are all conveyed through sharply choreographed slapstick and a consistent sweetness of tone that pays off in a final scene of lump-in-the-throat tenderness. (*Silent Movie Theater; Mon.-Wed., Nov. 12-14*)(Ernest Hardy)