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Rosa And The Executioner Of The Fiend DVD Review

March 4, 2010 by [Christina](#)

Filed under [2010 DVD Reviews](#)

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Despite the distractingly lower-budget look of Ivan Acosta's [film Rosa And The Executioner Of The Fiend](#) ([released on DVD](#) on February 23rd by MVD), the intent of the film is high-minded: to bring to light atrocities of both the Holocaust and the Cuban Missile Crisis that we as present-day Americans may not know. One is the refusal to admit 937 mostly Jewish passengers on a ship fleeing The Third Reich from Hamburg, Germany to Havana, Cuba on May 13, 1939 by the U.S. and Cuban governments (sending them back on the St. Louis to the Nazis, and many even died in transit). Another is the Pedro Pan, where in 1960 14,048 unaccompanied Cuban children left their homeland, sent by their parents to avoid Castro and Marxism, and many never saw their parents again.

The film begins with a young man looking up to the window of an apartment building in New York City across the street from the United Nations Building. An elderly woman admits him into her apartment as he feigns being her grocery delivery man, whereupon he grabs her and gags her, saying that he will make her famous. Again the odd music component (strong only when the main character plays her [records](#)) and weak audio of the [movie](#) (at this point making some of the words themselves often not discernible) take away heftily from the plot. She gets the man to ungag her and then says she has to use the bathroom, where she locks herself in and starts screaming for help, yelling that the man wants to rape her. Meanwhile the young man searches her home and finds out that her name is Rosa Mandelbaum.

Unfortunately good cinematography, music and audio are the stuff not only of dreams but of good film-making (beyond plot and idea), and Rosa, thinking that the young man is a Nazi or a thief, while he denies this, is intriguing but watered down by the feeble execution of the film. When Rosa is not looking the man places some sort of box in the window behind the drapes, after which they begin a long dialogue and eat a dinner that Rosa cooks for them. They see on TV that many diplomats are travelling to the United Nations Building, and Rosa guesses correctly that the young man wants to execute one of the "fiends."

Rosa And The Executioner Of The Fiend goes on too long (and builds too slowly) for its limited set, which would be more appropriate for a play. Both Rosa (Graciela Lecube) and the infiltrator (Gabriel Gorces) are sensitive, competent and believable [actors](#), but as they listen to Rosa's jazz and classical records the large Spanish subtitles (which we can't click away, and the film is in English) are distracting.

I would like to give this film a good recommendation, based on both the personal historical "facts" of the characters and the political themes that shape it, but I fear that too many viewers will find it boring and stop watching after the first half-hour or so. Even [the police](#) entering her apartment and questioning Rosa (as she hides her intruder) does not create enough tension to keep us curious as to her motives.

There is no rating but this film is not offensive (except for those parents who may not want their children to hear about political tortures). The beauty of the plot is the bonding between Rosa and the young man, transcending age, gender and

cultural barriers and showing us the vastness of Rosa’s loneliness (who is basically an extrovert but all alone now, with health problems, and “I don’t want the company of zombies and those who are about to die,” she tells us). Being a lover of words and life stories I am drawn by the similarities in the lives of these two people (based on being made victims by others), but I doubt that most would continue to have the patience to continue to view the film even to that point (since it relies too much on talk rather than action, besides its lack of craftsmanship), much less all the way to its surprising conclusion.



[Rosa And The Executioner Of The Fiend...](#)
 Gabriel Gorces, Il...
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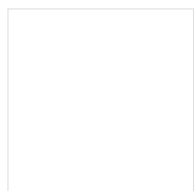
MPAA Rating: Not Rated
Running Time: 101 Minutes
DVD Release Date: February 23, 2010

Grade: C

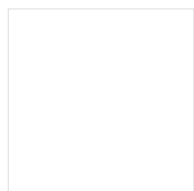
Written and directed by Ivan Acosta
 With Graciela Lecube, Gabriel Gorces, Ileana Canal and Ino Gomez

Rosa and the Executioner of the Fiend DVD Review by Christina of Movie Room Reviews

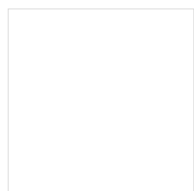
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