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FILM

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Slamdance

Fix

By DENNIS HARVEY

A LAFCO and Mangusta production. Produced by Nat Dinga. Executive producers, Christopher Redlich, Giancarlo Canavesio, Cher Helina, Robert Kandle. Directed by Tao Ruspoli. Screenplay, Ruspoli, Jeremy C. Fels, based on a story by Ruspoli, Paul Duran, Charles Castaldi.

With: Shawn Andrews, Olivia Wilde, Megalyn Echikunwoke, Tao Ruspoli, Dedee Pfeiffer, Jacob Von Eichel.

Fraternal duty turns into a wild ride through nearly all Greater Los Angeles in Tao Ruspoli's breezy, brash narrative feature debut "Fix." Urban road-trip pic risks being yet another tiresome exercise in full-length, hand-held first-person-camera. But the diversity of visual tactics, characters, settings and incidents keep this shaggy-dog tale consistently diverting. Theatrical prospects are a longshot, but fests gigs and niche DVD should be easy to come by.

Filmmaking partners of indeterminate romantic status Milo (Ruspoli, seldom on-camera) and Bella (Olivia Wilde) fly down from S.F. to ensure Milo's junkie sibling Leo (Shawn Andrews) makes it to rehab by evening, otherwise he'll get a mandatory prison stint. Bella is unenthused and unamused when Leo turns up shoeless in pajamas, an obviously unrepentant scam artist and hedonist. Since he needs to raise several thou to fund rehab, he leads the couple on a mazelike series of schemes and errands from the Hollywood Hills to Venice to Watts, picking up sometime g.f. Carmen (Megalyn Echikunwoke) and a pound of medical-grade marijuana en route. Music supervisor Bryan Ling's cool mix-tape soundtrack, mixed pro/amateur perfs, energetic pace and non-copout ending keep "Fix" fresh.

Camera (color, Sony HDcam), Christopher Gallo, Ruspoli; editor, Paul Forte; music supervisor, Bryan Ling; production designers, Sarah Osbourne, Erin Eagleton. Reviewed at Slamdance Film Festival (competing), Jan. 21, 2008. Running time: 90 MIN.

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