

MOVIES

'Cal' Superb, Strictly Adult, Film of N. Ireland

By Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — "Cal" (Warners-Goldcrest) is one of the best films ever made about the conflict in Northern Ireland.

But what "Cal" succeeds brilliantly in doing is telling you how that conflict feels — not in general, for art doesn't deal in generalities, but in particular the effect upon two quite ordinary people.

Cal (John Lynch), a sensitive young man in his early 20s, lives with his

widowed father (Donal McCann) in a predominately Protestant neighborhood in Belfast. His father works in a slaughterhouse, but Cal is unemployed. He had been working with his father, but the atmosphere of the slaughterhouse was too much for him, and he quit.

He plays a guitar in his room and listens to American music — jazz, rock and country. And he unwillingly has gotten himself drawn into the murderous orbit of the Irish Republican Army.

The slaughterhouse job he abandoned came by way of a favor. To repay the favor, he

was forced to drive the getaway car for a psychotic young terrorist named Cyril (Ray McAnnally), a man capable of killing without compunction. Once he was involved, further obligations followed.

In one terrorist mission a year before, the memory of which is like a recurring nightmare to Cal, Cyril shot a policeman at the victim's own front door and then crippled the man's father when he tried to come to his son's aid.

With time on his hands, Cal goes to the library, where he becomes attracted to a

woman in her 30s named Marcella (Helen Mirren) who works there and who, he is shocked to learn, is the widow of the murdered policeman.

Marcella, a Catholic, lives with her in-laws, prosperous Protestant farmers, and helps to care for her father-in-law, now confined to a wheelchair. Cal visits this place, so ill-omened in his memory, to sell some firewood. The woman whose son he helped murder takes a liking to him and eventually hires him to do odd jobs.

Marcella, aware from the

first of Cal's admiration for her, finds herself gradually drawn to him, and an affair finally begins. The affair is doomed, not so much by the differences in age and education that separate the two, but by that factor which shapes not only the fate of the lovers but that of Ireland itself: the crushing weight of the past, in this case the quite recent as well as the distant past.

All this is told with somber, poignant force by Bernard MacLaverty's screenplay, adapted from his own novel, and Pat O'Connor's sure and sensitive directorial hand. The efforts of both are enhanced greatly by a spare,

lovely musical score by Mark Knopfler.

The acting is superb. But splendid as young Lynch is as Cal and McCann as his father, Miss Mirren's marvelous performance as Marcella is the soul of the picture and, more than any other single element, will make it linger long in the memory. (She won the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival.)

As should be apparent, "Cal" is strictly mature fare. It has some nudity and a fairly graphic love scene. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-IV — adults with reservations. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

Recent Movie Ratings

New York (NC) — Here is a list of recent films which the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Communication has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the USCC rating. The second symbol is the rating of the Motion Picture Association of America.

These are the USCC symbols and their meanings: A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; A-IV — adults with reservations (an A-IV classification designates certain films that, while not morally offensive in themselves, require caution and some analysis and explanation as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions); O — morally offensive. The word "recommended" appears behind the titles of those films which merit such a designation.

Here are the Motion Picture Association of America symbols and their meanings: G — general audiences, all ages admitted; PG — parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13, some material may be inappropriate for young children; R — restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; X — no one under 17 admitted (age limit may vary in certain areas).

B Bachelor Party, O (R) Best Defense, O (R) The Bostonians, A-II (no rating)

C Cal, A-IV (R) Cannonball Run II, A-III (PG) Careful, He Might Hear You, A-III (no rating)

Cheech and Chong's The Corsican Brothers, O (R) Cloak and Dagger, A-II (PG) Conan the Destroyer, O (PG)

D Dreamscape, A-III (PG-13)

E Electric Dreams, A-III (PG)

G Ghostbusters, A-III (PG) Gremlins, A-III (PG)

I Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, A-III (PG)

J The Jigsaw Man, A-II (PG)

K The Karate Kid, A-II (PG)

L The Last Starfighter, A-II (PG)

M The Muppets Take Manhattan, A-I (Recommended) (G)

N The Natural, A-II (PG) The Neverending Story, A-I (PG)

O Once Upon a Time in America, O (R) Oxford Blues, O (PG-13)

P Phar Lap, A-I (Recommended) (PG) The Philadelphia Experiment, A-II (PG)

R The Pope of Greenwich Village, A-III (R) The Prodigal, A-II (PG) Purple Rain, O (R)

S Red Dawn, A-III (PG-13) Revenge of the Nerds, O (R) Rhinestone, A-III (PG) Romancing the Stone, A-III (PG)

S Sheena, O (PG) Sixteen Candles, O (PG) Splash, A-III (PG)

T Star Trek III: The Search for Spock, A-II (PG)

T Tighrope, O (R)

W The Woman in Red, O (PG-13)

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