

All In the Music

By Stephen Montagne

Logline: At the height of the Grunge scene in the '90s, an adopted teenage bass player leaves Seattle for Los Angeles seeking mentorship from a 70 year old recluse whose unfinished autobiography, about managing rock bands during the heyday of 1970s, arrives in her life at the same time her birthmother resurfaces.

1994: Seattle. A young bass player named NATALIE turns 18 and is bouncing from band to band, trying to find her musical voice. She has relationships and encounters with the various musicians in the Grunge scene – traversing all the hurt feelings and growing pains associated with coming of age as a talented young woman living in the shadow of Kurt Cobain (both literally and figuratively).

Natalie, having been adopted, seeks out her birthmother. Her journey leads her to a woman named EVA who wanders into her life, then disappears again. At the same time, she stumbles upon a time capsule belonging to her adopted father: an unpublished autobiography. As Natalie immerses herself in the pages of this grand adventure, she discovers the life of a battle worn World War II vet music manager who nurtured a dozen or so rock bands from 1975 up until the '80s.

Depressed and disillusioned with circumstances in Seattle, she leaves for Los Angeles to track down this old timer, now in his 70s living in a motel frequented by down on their luck failed actors and other show business wannabes. Reluctant to let this overly enthusiastic pixie from his hometown into his world, FRANK is eventually won over by her enthusiasm for his past exploits.

The drama that unfolds at the motel causes flashbacks to the pain and drama that Frank left behind in the music industry (as illustrated by the flashback scenes of stories found in the unfinished autobiography when he was a younger man). Now living on a daily diet of Blues and Jazz records, Natalie encourages Frank to finish chronicling his life's work for publication. Then, Eva appears to stir up emotional turmoil; this time it is the revelation that she is dying of cancer. So it is that Natalie develops a relationship with a mother she never knew, only to watch her slowly fade away. The reveal of Eva's fate is made even more profound by the realization that she is the "damsel in distress" teenage daughter characterized in Frank's autobiography.

Finally aware that Frank is her grandfather, she confronts him and demands answers. But for Frank, the reality that his estranged daughter, who has again entered his life, will be exiting so soon is too much for Frank to bear. At which point Frank disappears from Natalie's life. Utterly devastated, Natalie returns to Seattle just in time to mourn, with her friends and fellow local musicians, the tragic suicide of the Grunge "messiah." Complicating matters, an ex sobbingly expresses his remorse for treating her so badly during their relationship. From that moment forward, Natalie becomes determined to not allow any man to dictate her future... or her past.

As we flash-forward through snippets of her life in the ever-changing music industry, we arrive at Natalie in her 40s when she receives news that Frank is on his last legs. She visits Frank, now a 90-year-old man living in a retirement community in Hawaii, to say her final goodbyes. Frank recognizes her and, via a flood of memories, recalls all the music the two shared with each other. Natalie then shares with him a song from the present era of music.

As IMAGINE DRAGONS “NEXT TO ME” plays in his ears, his adventures in the music industry appear in flashes – all those bands in concert and in studio that he managed – as well as his loves and loses, his career triumphs and defeats, his relationship with Eva... and finally: Natalie. Standing beside his wheelchair, Natalie realizes that her true purpose in life has always been to share the music that they shared with each other with future generations; that the embodiment of the connection she had with her grandfather was always:

All in the music.

Comparable Films (*based on: themes, narrative devices, cinematic styles, period settings*)

- *Almost Famous*
- *Fried Green Tomatoes*
- *Magnolia*
- *Boogie Nights*
- *Singles*
- *Velvet Goldmine*
- *Stardust Memories*