

All In the Music

By Stephen Montagne

Logline: A coming-of-age story about a female teenage bass player from Seattle whose journey to L.A. reveals the truth about her past.

1994: Seattle. An 18-year-old bass player named NATALIE BELLMONT (nickname “PEPPERS”) bounces from band to band trying to find her musical voice. She has an “open” relationship with a “douchebag” who fronts a wannabe “poser” band. Having been adopted, she has been told by her “parents” that her birthmother died when she was three years old. In walks 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 At the same time, she stumbles upon a time capsule belonging to her adopted father: an unpublished autobiography.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 at the infamous: Highland Gardens Hotel. 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 causes flashbacks to the pain and drama that Frank left behind in the music industry. Now living on a daily diet of Blues and Jazz records, Natalie encourages Frank to finish chronicling his life’s work for publication and shares with him her music from the ‘90s. 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 chronicled in Frank’s autobiography.

Finally aware that Frank is her grandfather, she confronts him and demands answers. That’s when Eva shows up to reveal she is dying of cancer. Utterly devastated from watching her mother die in front of her, 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, the “ex” sobbingly expresses his remorse for treating her so badly during their relationship. From that moment forward, Natalie becomes determined not to allow any man to dictate her future... or 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. Natalie then shares with him a song from the present era of music. As IMAGINE DRAGONS’ “NEXT TO ME” plays in his ears, all those memories come flooding back; his adventures in the music industry, his relationship with Natalie... and finally: kissing his daughter good-bye. Standing beside his wheelchair, we realize that Natalie’s 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*