

Movie Review: *Cyrus*

THREE'S A CROWD

By Erin J. Smith / CASA

WHO KNEW THAT BEING HONEST COULD BE SO FUNNY? The Duplass brothers may be on to something with their new film *Cyrus*, which screened recently as part of the SBIFF Cinema Society kick-off to the 2010/2011 season. Jay and Mark Duplass, the writing/directing team behind the film, joined Roger Durling in a conversation following the screening.

Shot in a documentary style using two cameras from different angles, the Duplass boys capture the raw, intimate performances

of their actors, who are encouraged to improvise – a winning combination when the cast includes Academy Award winning actors like John C. Reilly and Marisa Tomei coupled with the unpredictable comic timing of Jonah Hill.

Cyrus opens to find John, a desperately tragic, divorced man who, at the urging of his ex-wife, goes to a party. While there, he experiences all the pains of social awkwardness and skips right past small talk into full disclosure. The miserable combination of Red Bull and vodka only serve to render John more honest. But then

he meets Molly, who joins him in a round of impromptu karaoke, and the two belt “Don’t you want me, baby?” into the night.

Everything goes swimmingly until John meets Cyrus, Molly’s 21-year old son with a serious case of failure-to-launch. Suddenly, even a pair of dirty tennis shoes take on a symbolic power of their own as Cyrus and John battle it out in their attempts to out-wit each other.

“Cyrus was a grown-up since he was five years old,” said Mark Duplass, who described Cyrus as a middle-aged man in a sexless



Jonah Hill, Marisa Tomei, and John C. Reilly in *Cyrus*

marriage. “His mother raised him as a peer and he views himself as her equal, which is uncomfortable and incredibly funny.”

For more information about the SBIFF Cinema Society, visit www.sbiFF.org.