



[JOBS](#) [CARS](#) [HOMES](#) | [WEATHER](#) [TRAFFIC](#)
[RENTALS](#) [SHOPPING](#)

HOME
[Site Map](#)

- L.A. Times Archives
- Archives Search
- Saved Search
- Logout
- Account & Purchase
- Knowledge Center
- Trouble Report
- Archives Help & Info
- About the Archive
- Pricing
- Terms of Service
- Search Tips
- FAQ
- Obituaries
- Rights & Permissions
- Other Services
- Research Service
- Back Issues
- Page Prints
- Front Pages
- Books
- Custom Reprints
- Photos
- Other Resources
- Other Archives
- Microfilm

L.A. Times Archives

Document

[Start a New Search](#) | [Previous Results](#)

Other Formats: [Abstract](#) [Full Text](#) [Printer Friendly](#)

Movie Review

Visions of Love, Romance in Delightful 'Still Breathing' [Home Edition]

Los Angeles Times - Los Angeles, Calif.
 Author: KEVIN THOMAS
 Date: May 22, 1998
 Section: Calendar; PART-F; Entertainment Desk
 Document Types: Movie Review-Mixed
 Text Word Count: 850

Document Text

(Copyright, The Times Mirror Company; Los Angeles Times 1998 all Rights reserved)

At the beginning of Jim Robinson's delightful debut feature "Still Breathing," an attractive young woman, Roz (Joanna Going), is walking down a dark Hollywood alley where her car is parked when a man pulls a gun on her, only to be hit by a car. A shaken Roz calls 911 at a pay phone outside the landmark Formosa Cafe.

At that very second a young man, Fletcher (Brendan Fraser), in San Antonio has a vision of fragmented images of Roz and the Formosa's neon sign in the dark of night. At that moment you know it's just a matter of time before Fletcher locates Roz, the instant woman of his dreams. When they do meet, at the Formosa, Roz assumes Fletcher is the super-rich Texan that her pal Elaine (Ann Magnuson, aptly tart) has lined up to con into parting with major bucks for a worthless piece of art.

"Still Breathing" is really Roz's story. We all know women like Roz, attractive and intelligent, who have come to L.A. in hopes of launching a career and finding love only to find disappointment in either or both instances. A woman of apparent, if vague, artistic aspirations, Roz has in desperation become a crook hiding behind her job description as a "fine arts consultant."

Roz has in fact had such lousy luck with L.A. men that she gets kicks out of relieving guys of large sums of money. She has reached such depths of cynicism that we understand why she hesitated to dial 911. The best she can say for herself is that she's "still breathing."

Fletcher is going to throw Roz for a loop. He's this sweet, sensitive hunk, an artist of various pursuits whose principal work is playing a trumpet with a group of street musicians (who include Lou Rawls, no less) who perform on Alamo Plaza. Roz is not above resorting to sex to close a deal, but here's a guy who doesn't want to rush things.

Robinson brings a great deal of passion, humor and good dialogue to these familiar trappings of romantic comedy. There's a depth and caring to "Still Breathing" that you don't find in the usual major studio fare. The point is not that Roz is not what she seems but that she's lost touch with the person she once was, the person Fletcher and his equally free-spirited grandmother (Celeste Holm, radiant as ever) perceive her to be. Holm's Ida, speaking from experience, zeros right in on Roz, remarking how easy it is for a woman who is smart and beautiful, a formidable combination, to become disillusioned with men.

Although a handsome, well-burnished production, "Still Breathing" is not without first-film problems. Robinson has given Fletcher and Ida enough definition and substance so that they don't emerge as merely arty, ethereal types for all their fervent belief in love at

first sight--or rather, vision.

But because money is such a major item for Roz you wonder about Fletcher and Ida's sources of income. Ida has taken a small but elegant cottage, a tremendously inviting place signifying clearly some measure of wealth, for Fletcher to live in. We can only conclude that Fletcher and Ida don't worry about money because they have enough not to do so.

We are also left to understand that Fletcher's parents are no longer living rather than living elsewhere; in this film, vagueness about finances and death are unnecessarily distracting. Also, Robinson's opening sequence is staged with such swift, elliptical virtuosity it can leave you needlessly confused if you look away from the screen for so much as a second.

*

Going has real presence and ability, and you hope that she will break out of the promising leading lady category. Fraser looks to be a big star about to happen. He's physically imposing and has an acting range that encompasses the hilarious shenanigans of "George of the Jungle" to the strong, unapologetically gay son of "The Twilight of the Golds" to Fletcher, an intelligent romantic. Fraser has that knack of seeming to inhabit his characters totally--and he has a sense of humor, a crucial ingredient for a good-looking star.

* MPAA rating: PG-13, for sensuality and a scene of violence. Times guidelines: The film is suitable for mature older children.

'Still Breathing'

Brendan Fraser: Fletcher McBracken

Joanna Going: Roz Willoughby

Celeste Holm: Ida McBracken

Ann Magnuson: Elaine

Lou Rawls: Tree Man

An October Films release of a Zap Pictures production in association with Seattle Pacific Investments. Writer-director Jim Robinson. Producers Robinson, Marshall Persinger. Executive producer Joyce Schweickert. Cinematographer John Thomas. Editor Sean Albertson. Costumes Susanna Puisto. Music Paul Mills. Production designer Denise Pizzini. Running time: 1 hour, 48 minutes.

* Exclusively at the UA Westwood, Westwood Boulevard one block south of Wilshire, (310) 475-9444; Cineplex Odeon Showcase, 614 N. La Brea at Melrose, (213) 777-FILM #175; and Town Center, Bristol at Anton, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, (714) 751-4184 and (714) 777-FILM #086.

PHOTO: An artist-musician (Brendan Fraser) thinks he's found the woman of his dreams (Joanna Going) in the romantic comedy "Still Breathing."; PHOTOGRAPHER: October Films

Credit: TIMES STAFF WRITER

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Logged in as: james f. Robinson
[Log Out](#)

[Buy Accesses](#)
[Previously Viewed Articles](#)

PARTNERS:



Copyright 2006 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Permissions](#) | [Contact](#)