‘Silver Linings’ is beautifully honest

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By PATRICK HALL
***Special to* The Wilson Post**

Best Picture nominee “Silver Linings Playbook” is a genuine and emotional look into the lives of two individuals, mostly described as “crazy,” but the truth is, the film succeeds in pulling back the curtain on all our lives and the truth that we all have flaws and depend on those around us to love, forgive and accept our particular brand of “crazy.”

Pat (**Bradley Cooper**) is bipolar, and in a psychiatric hospital thanks to him nearly beating a man to death when he found his wife having an affair. But really, what’s the big deal? After all, his father, Pat, Sr. (**Robert De Niro**) is banned from Philadelphia Eagles football games for fighting too many people in the stands.

But at home, Pat struggles to accept his condition and overcome it, with the help of his family and an unlikely companion, Tiffany (**Jennifer Lawrence**). She’s not without her own emotional baggage. Tiffany’s husband, a police officer, was killed, and she was fired from her job for sleeping with “everyone in the office.”

Pat has no filter when speaking. Tiffany is angry, lonely and struggling to cope with her life. Together, Cooper and Lawrence are fascinating and mix together in a beautiful play of emotional tension, hilarious outbursts and heartbreaking struggles.

Obsessed with getting back together with his wife, Pat agrees to help Tiffany compete in a dance competition, in exchange for her delivering a letter to his wife. As they prepare for the

competition, it’s obvious both of them are slowly drawn from their problems and learn to accept life and work through it together.

“Playbook” is truly a celebration of the characters within it, and each cast member is outstanding. Cooper, largely stuck in comedy roles thus far, shines as Pat. He’s totally convincing and Pat is wonderfully broken and painfully trying to piece himself back together. It’s Cooper’s best performance to date.

Lawrence continues to rise, as she moved from teen-hero Katniss in “The Hunger Games” to a complex and enigmatic character in “Playbook.” She’s all grown-up here and shows that she will be around for many years to come. Tiffany flashes with moments of brilliant strength, vulnerability and always with a rush of emotion.

Supporting characters orbit Cooper and Lawrence, creating a phenomenal network of individuals, each with their own problems lying under normal facades, or obviously on display. De Niro is fantastic as Pat’s father. His Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is a point of contention in the house, especially when his own conditions clash with Pat’s.

Between them is Pat’s mother Dolores (**Jacki Weaver**), who holds them together, rolls with the punches (sometimes literally) and gives the family a sometimes solid voice of reason, but always an unwavering source of love.

Popping in and out is a wonderful performance by **Chris Tucker** as Pat’s friend Danny, trying desperately to free himself from the psychiatric hospital where he met Pat. He escapes multiple times, is searching for legal ways out and looks for ways to cope with his anxiety and overcome medication addictions.

While the cast isn’t necessarily “star-studded” as other films, each player gives an honest and authentic performance and Writer/Director **David O. Russell** crafted a truly magnificent script, an adaptation of **Matthew Quick’s** novel of the same title. Dialogue is phenomenal all around, and isn’t filled with superfluous musings on addictions, depression and family.

Rather, each character is a real human being, who says real human things and deals with problems often violently and stupidly, but genuinely. The film proves that few, if any of us, have all our ducks in a row, and most have to deal with unbelievable struggles every day.

As Pat tells his therapist, “I was white-knuckling it,” trying to hold his disorder in and deal with it internally, without the help of others. “Playbook” shows how silly and pointless that is, and that the best cure for what ails us emotionally and mentally, is love, and the many forms it takes in life.

“Silver Linings Playbook” is a triumph.

“Silver Linings Playbook” is now playing in local theaters and is rated R, with a runtime of 122 minutes.

Patrick Hall may be contacted at This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it .

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