

## ‘IFC Midnight’ Features Some of the Best Films on Demand

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 5, 2009 - 2:16pm

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CHICAGO – The great IFC Direct On Demand has an excellent slate of films airing this month called “IFC Midnight” and we got a chance to see them all to give you a heads up on what’s worth a look. Much to our surprise, while none are perfect, they all are interesting enough to warrant an On Demand purchase.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The best of the bunch is South Korea’s “The Chaser,” a film that won seven Korean film awards including Best Picture, Director, Actor and Screenplay last year and was a massive box office hit in its own country. The film also premiered at Cannes in the Official Selection category and we snapped up for a remake by the producers of “The Departed” and Warner Brothers. There have even been rumors of Leonardo DiCaprio taking one of the roles in the remake.



The Chaser  
*Photo credit: IFC Films*

The film has echoes of “Infernal Affairs” (the film that was remade into “The Departed”) but reminds one more of the great “Memories of Murder,” a similar film about a serial killer slipping through the idiocy and bureaucracy of the police force.

Like “Infernal Affairs” and “The Departed,” “The Chaser” tries to play with audience expectations of what defines a hero. The lead in the film is a pimp, a man who chases down the girls who escape his care and try to find a better life. When he realizes that a lot of his girls are becoming harder to track down, he suspects someone is selling them. He soon discovers that their fate is much worse and that there’s a serial killer on the loose.

“The Chaser” could have been a bit more tightly paced. It runs long at over two hours but it is expertly directed, shot, edited, and acted. It is incredibly easy to see what Warner Brothers saw in terms of remake potential and even though the r-word is usually dreaded, if this one is handled like Scorsese’s recent masterpiece, it could have the same award-winning fate. The material is there. Don’t miss “The Chaser”.

“The Chaser” plays On Demand until July 7th.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The second best film in the “IFC Midnight” series is a film I saw at the EU Film Fest a few months back and have had difficulty shaking since then - “Fear Me Not”. From award-winning Danish director Kristian Levring, “Fear Me Not” is about insanity and depression and features a pedigree strong enough to make foreign film lovers drool.



Fear Me Not  
*Photo credit: IFC Films*

It was co-written by Anders Thomas Jensen (“After the Wedding”) and directed by Levring (“The King is Alive”) with an amazing lead performance by Ulrich Thomsen, the very recognizable star of everything from “The Celebration” to “The International” and “Duplicity”.

Thomsen plays Mikael, husband to Sigrid (Paprika Steen). He’s on a sabbatical from work and has descended into deep boredom. He decides to become a part of his brother-in-law’s pharmaceutical experiment to test anti-depressants. At first, it goes well. Then it goes very, very bad. Mikael starts to lose all of his inhibition.

I love the suggestion that perhaps depression and remorse are intrinsically linked. Perhaps we need to feel bad to not DO bad. And Thomsen is excellent. Ultimately, “Fear Me Not” doesn’t completely come together but Thomsen alone makes it well worth a look. Be warned that, like a lot of the “IFC Midnight” line-up, this is not for the faint of heart.

“Fear Me Not” starts on June 10th and plays through September 9th.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Another film in the “IFC Midnight” line-up about experimentation is Jean-Claude Brisseau’s “A L’Aventure,” a daringly sexual drama from one of Europe’s most controversial filmmakers. Unlike the mental manipulation of “Fear Me Not,” “A L’Aventure” is more about physical control. Brisseau is exploring what happens when we truly let our bodies go in search of pure ecstasy.



A L’Aventure  
*Photo credit: IFC Films*

“A L’Aventure” is about a woman tired of societal norms. After her boyfriend finds her masturbating one day, she becomes involved with a psychologist curious about how control plays into sexuality. Pretty soon, she’s watching other people make love, exploring both herself and others.

Brisseau’s film is about how much ecstasy we deny ourselves in the name of a perceived level of control? Ordering women around, sadism, even sex under hypnosis - nothing is taboo. Some of the philosophical conversations go on a bit too long but it’s still an interesting film with some good performances (and some of the most beautiful actresses on the planet).

“A L’Aventure” plays through July 14th.



Rating: **3.5**/5.0

I must admit that I was dreading "Cadaver". I burned out on Asian horror years ago and thought that sitting through another generic ghost story was the last thing I wanted to do. No one's more surprised than I am at how well elements of "Cadaver" work. It's a bit too long, but for Asian horror fans it's a must-see and one of the best entries in its sub-genre in years.



Cadaver

Photo credit: IFC Films

"Cadaver" is instantly atmospheric. I have a low tolerance for Asian horror lately but this one grabbed my attention at the beginning. Derek Son's film is a clever and briskly made ghost story about a group of medical students in a haunted school. After they try to examine their first cadaver, they start to have nightmarish visions and, of course, start dying in mysterious ways.

What dark secrets lay hidden in the medical school's history? "Cadaver" has enough twists, turns, and genuine scares to keep most audiences, especially those prone to pay for something with such a dark title On Demand, entertained for its running time. Just don't remake "Cadaver". Please. I'm begging you. It has been proven over and over again that Asian horror remakes don't work. Don't prove it again.

"Cadaver" plays through August 18th.



Rating: **3.0**/5.0

Paolo Proenza's "Dark Mirror" has elements of "Mirrors" and "The Orphanage," two films that I never thought I'd include in the same sentence. A woman (Lisa Vidal) moves to a new home with her husband and child and starts to see things that she doesn't understand through the windows and mirrors.

There were times when "Dark Mirror" seemed a bit too much like what I like to call a "score response" movie, where the characters appear to be responding to the soundtrack and effects more than anything that would actually scare. But Vidal sells the story of a woman who may just be going insane. She's very, very good, elevating what Proenza misses.

When the story drifts from her, which it thankfully only does a few times, the flaws become more apparent, but I kept wondering while I was watching it why this actress wasn't a bigger star. She's beautiful and does excellent work in "Dark Mirror," a decent but flawed horror movie.

"Dark Mirror" plays through August 4th.



Rating: **2.5**/5.0

Finally, there's "Hush," a film with a strong set-up but weak follow-through. However, if you're a big fan of road movies like "The Hitcher," "Joy Ride," or other asphalt-tinged slices of terror, then British director Mark Tonderai does enough right with his thriller that he will probably satisfy you





Hush  
Photo credit: IFC Films

“Hush” is about a couple (Will Ash and Christine Bottomley) driving to gas stations to put up ads. That's his job. She's just along for the ride. After a fight, she falls asleep. A truck driver cuts them off and the ensuing swerve causes his back door to open and close quickly. In that split-second, our intrepid hero sees a bound and screaming woman.

Of course, no one believes him and when his own girlfriend goes missing after their next stop, he has to take matters into his own hands.

There's a nice twist or two in “Hush” and it's reasonably well-made but it feels like a TV movie or, worse, an extended TV episode of an anthology series like “Masters of Horror”. Like a lot of TV it doesn't so much build tension as move forward toward an anti-climactic ending.

But that glimpse on the road has so much thriller potential and the actors are entertaining enough that “Hush” could be the right choice from “IFC Midnight” if you take the title very seriously and actually watch it at the witching hour when critical faculties are usually a little sleepier.

“Hush” plays through July 7th.



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