

FOUR OF A KIND

Australia, 2008, 115 mins, Drama. 16x9, (M)

Directed by Fiona Cochrane.

Stars: Peta Brady, Nina Landis, Leverage McDonnell, Gail Watson.

Four women, each with a well-hidden secret they are coaxed, tricked or forced into revealing. There is a lot happening here between the main protagonists and the outcome is a very satisfying film.

Filmed in and around Melbourne.

IMDb score 6.8

FVFS panel voted 4.5 stars (out of 5)



So often I find that an otherwise promising film is let down by its script or actors, but FOUR OF A KIND ticks all boxes for me. The well-polished script is clear and the actors' dialogue very believable, with light touches alternating with strong scenes and crisp and clear dialogue. The acting is spot-on, with all the main characters showing up as strong characters yet revealing their weaknesses as the film progresses.

The film is in four parts – each dealing with a different issue, two of which are murder investigations – revolving around the four key women. Each story is set in a single location but any sense of claustrophobia is avoided by intelligent use of brief flashbacks to other locations as the story unfolds. The four stories are separated by interludes by Joe Camilleri and the Black Sorrows, whose songs make wry comment on the situation developing in the film.

The result is a very intelligent, pleasing film with real feeling at its core, which has just the right balance of lightness and tension. The first three stories are straight forward enough, with overlap between the characters and their situations, but the last story will leave you thinking – although I believe there are enough pointers along the way to explain the final outcome.

Highly recommended. 4 ½ stars (out of 5)

Has been screened at over 21 International Film Festivals in 2009 and 2010 and won over 5 Awards in that time.

Notes by Ian Davidson

Review by Paul Harris, Film Buffs Forecast:

Here's a welcome surprise - a low budget Australian film that is not another dysfunctional family saga, does not wallow in suburban grunge or self-pitying youthful rebellion .

Fiona Cochrane's debut feature is a genre thriller, relatively simple on the surface but relying on sharp verbal interplay and an intangible, yet menacing atmosphere which recalls SLEUTH in a plot twisting tale of a bourgeoisie who lack any discernible discreet charms . The icing on the cake is the participation of Joe

Camilleri and the Black Sorrows who provide a fitting Greek chorus to the main event.

Review by David O'Connell, Filmsight:

Tightly plotted and marked by authentic, riveting performances from its primary leads, *Four of a Kind* is a compelling argument for never judging a book by its cover; though shot on video with an ultra modest budget, its strongest attributes are those fundamental to the creation of any dramatic work: the intrinsic strength of its screenplay and the performers who vividly bring it to life.

Review by Louise Keller, Urban Cinefile:

Circular in structure, this beguiling drama links four stories in which truth, honesty and deception play a vital part. Murder, infidelity, blackmail are all woven together in a fascinating tale that is as compelling as a whole, just as each of its self-contained components... Universal in its appeal, but with special resonance to women, this seemingly simple film is deceptively complex, and lingers accordingly.

Review by Philippa Hawker, THE AGE:

The actors — Louise Siverson, Leverage McDonnell, Gail Watson and Nina Landis — make the most of strong but demanding roles. There is something naturalistic about the surface of *Four of a Kind*, but it is also quite stylised, with a quietly dark vision of human capacities.

A dialogue-driven work made on a low budget, there is nevertheless something effective about these constraints; Cochrane has used and embraced them to bring out the disturbing implications that underpin the tales.

Review by Madelaine Swain, Time Out:

With *Mary and Max*, *Samson and Delilah*, *My Year Without Sex*, and now this film, 2009 is shaping up to be one of the most interesting and diverse for Australian film for some time

" ... beneath its deceptively simple surface lies an emotionally lacerating psychological whodunit of unusual complexity"

Paul Harris, FILM BUFFS FORECAST

'Not far off being a hidden Australian gem that you should race out to.'

Ben McEachen EMPIRE MAGAZINE

'The performances shine in Fiona Cochrane's feature debut....'

Tom Ryan, THE AGE

' Fine performances from four frankly middle-aged actresses – Nina

**Landis, Leverne McDonnell, Gail Watson and Louise Siversen...
...the performances.... are all excellent.'**

David Stratton, THE AUSTRALIAN

'...impressive performances...'

Margaret Pomeranz, THE MOVIE SHOW

'Tingling' with adult tension!'

John Flaus, THE MELBOURNE REVIEW



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