

LES TIMES

MOVIES



Strand Releasing

BIG DAY: College buds reunite for the wedding of Mark Feuerstein's and Tara Magalski's characters.

MOVIE REVIEW

Just mid-30s, they sing the woes of growing older

When the friends of 'Sing Now' reunite, they worry that life isn't going as they'd planned.

By KEVIN THOMAS
Special to The Times

Bruce Leddy's "Sing Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" is a lively comedy about a group of college buddies, members of an a cappella group, who reunite 15 years after graduation to sing at one member of the group's wedding. The reunion, at a rambling, shingled Queen Anne cottage in the Hamptons, causes the guys to reflect on the passage of time and illustrates that the world wasn't theirs for the taking, as they believed at the time of their graduation.

Leddy, himself a member of an a cappella group in college, covers familiar territory (think "The Big Chill") with a light touch. "Sing Now" is a familiar type of picture: the sophisticated New York independent produc-

tion featuring a seasoned cast of actors better known from stage and TV than the big screen — indeed, there is a bit of a sitcom "feel" to the film. But it is a breezy, well-paced diversion, amusing rather than scintillating yet clearly personal, showing that Leddy is wise enough not to overreach; he does not lose sight that he is making a comedy even in its more serious moments.

The friends have gathered the weekend before the wedding. Their story unfolds from the point of view of David (David Harbour), a man of 37 overwrought by the discovery of his first gray hair and the possibility of receding at the temples. He and his pals are all overcome by the prospect of looming middle age, and they fret over their professional or personal lives, or both, not being all they expected — like countless other American men who've reached their mid-30s without having grown up.

The women in their lives, being more adult, tend to be hard-pressed. Trish (Molly Shannon,

perhaps the most familiar member of the ensemble cast), reacting to her stale marriage to Ted (Alexander Chaplin), an uptight investment counselor, is given to blunt sexual remarks. But it is David's lovely, intelligent wife, Dana (Rosemarie DeWitt), who puts everything in perspective, telling the grousing males that their problems are nothing when compared with the effects of, say, child abuse or cancer. In doing so, Dana brings a refreshing awareness of the larger world to a group of exceedingly self-absorbed individuals.

One couple brings along a sexy, young Swedish nanny (a sly Camilla Thorsson), who creates quite a stir among the men.

The actors are well cast and effective. As a film, "Sing Now," shot on location, is as attractive as its cast.

"Sing Now or Forever Hold Your Peace." MPAA rating: Unrated. Strong language, sexual situations, adult themes. Running time: 1 hour, 34 minutes. At selected theaters.