

## 50/50

By Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Festival

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Call this film, revenge of the character actors! Sure, maybe some of stars of the new film 50/50 would not call themselves characters actors, but they do tend to play the same type of character from part of blessedly familiar part. Some actors resist being called a character actor for fear it limits their role choices. But could Clint Eastwood ever play in a Woody Allen movie? Some roles are just meant to be, and the Cape May Film Festival reveres and celebrates the destinies of some of the county's leading character actors.

In the comedy 50/50, Jonathan Gordon-Levitt, who was in Inception and 500 Days of Summer but you may best know him as the sassy teen from the TV series 3<sup>rd</sup> Rock from the Sun, plays Adam, a normal guy who has just been told he has cancer. Right, I did say cancer and I did say this film was a comedy. This is the story of one very young man's struggle to fight a very rare form of cancer. If the subject matter hits too close to home, maybe you should see the film anyway.

Seth Rogen plays Adam's best friend, Kyle. Now this part is no stretch for Rogen (who considering all of his success at the box office would probably never consider himself a character actor). He plays his usual rude, off-balanced, off-color character role—and I usually find him annoying but in this film he works perfectly. Anna Kendrick, who was nominated for an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her wonderful job as a squeamish, awkward assistant to George Clooney in Up in the Air (2009), plays a... well... squeamish awkward doctoral candidate who is Adam's assigned therapist. And she is wonderful here too. Who doesn't love Anjelica Huston, here playing Adam's mother? And Bryce Dallas Howard (Ron's daughter) turns in an equally impressive performance as Adam's reluctant girlfriend.

You won't be able to see this movie for nearly two months, but when you get the chance, take it! This film's funny moments are laugh out loud, yet what will stick with you are the deeply moving moments that are as much a slice of life as they are a great commentary on it. The dialogue is subtle, sometimes words are replaced by brilliant expressions from this amazingly talented cast. Right down to Adam's "chemo buddies," the casting in this film was equally as brilliant as the performances. Kudos to relative newcomers Will Reiser (writer, and cousin of actor/comedian Paul Reiser) and Director Jonathan Levine. Don't let the subject throw you or worse yet scare you. Add this film to one I just recently reviewed, Another Earth, as Oscar-worthy on several fronts.