Review: ‘Raspberry Magic’

Robert Koehler

A bright high schooler’s science project dovetails with her family’s crisis in Leena Pendharkar’s good-hearted “Raspberry Magic.” Though the course of young Monica’s efforts to mend things at home is drawn in fairly elementary terms, the tone and approach are entirely suited to the adolescent and family auds the film expressly targets. Indian-American and Anglo characters in the ‘burbs lend a cultural crossover element that could give pic an angle in theatrical and vid play.

Experimenting with the power of human touch to stimulate the growth of raspberry plants, Monica (nicely cast Lily Javaherpour) vies for a slot in the upcoming science fair with arrogant Zach (Zachary Mills) and his show-offy robot. Dad Manoj (Ravi Kapoor) has been fired from his programming job, mom Nandini (Meera Simhan) is a struggling freelance food writer, and with no current income, the family is materially and emotionally collapsing. Monica’s belief that the family drama will resolve only if her raspberries grow is the leap-of-faith notion that animates Pendharkar’s story, which celebrates kids overcoming odds and grooving on science. The always-fine James Morrison is underused in support.

Raspberry Magic

Production


Crew

Camera (color), Jeffrey Chu; editor, Zack Arnold; music, Jesse Solomon Clark; production designer, Victoria Lewis; costume designer, Karen Lee. Reviewed on DVD, Los Angeles, April 21, 2010. (In Indian Film Festival Los Angeles; Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.) Running time: 82 MIN.

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