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MOVIE REVIEW

'Eden': a gay film of unbiased charm

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Just how homophobic is the modern West? Not very, if Thomas Bezucha's folksy, fablelike "Big Eden" is to be believed.

This charmingly laid-back movie stars Arye Gross as an unhappily single New York artist who goes home to Montana to take care of his grandfather. He also figures he'll run into his high-school crush (Tim DeDay). What he doesn't count on is the attentions of an enigmatic Native American (Eric Schweig) who runs the general store. The triangle works itself out with a surprising boost from friends and neighbors.

"Big Eden," which made its local debut at last year's Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, is not quite like any midlife-crisis gay film we've seen before. What really sets it apart are the setting and the characters, who tend to forget their prejudices when they're dealing with people they care about. And the actors are just low-key enough to pull it off.

The script was inspired by the fears of Bezucha's New York friends. He had considered moving to Montana; they were worried that a gay man couldn't survive "outside the exit of the Holland Tunnel." Whether or not you buy the fairy-tale ending Bezucha created to answer them, it's a sweet movie.



Arye Gross and Tim DeKay star in the romance "Big Eden"