



# ADVOCATE *insider*

May 24, 2008

## **Cannes Day Eleven: Spaghetti, I mean "Noodle Westerns"**

The Good, The Bad and The Weird -- I've seen a good to great film during the last three days of the fest and that's extremely unusual. With the market shutting down on Wednesday and the journalists heading out Thursday and Friday, the end of the fest is often saved for space fillers -- movies that round out the fest's lineup (maybe tipping the hat to a region of the world not well represented) but it almost never contains actually good movies unless the film just wasn't ready till then. But I've seen "Il Divo" and "The Class," both of which will be on my best of the year list. And now this fun bit of goofiness as one final gift. It's an unabashed homage to Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns and unlike say Tears of the Black Tiger from a few years ago, this one isn't a sendup but just the best damn western that the Koreans can turn out. Set in Manchuria, it's all about the military and rival gangs of crooks racing to get their hands on a treasure map first. At the heart of it all is The Good, a dashing bounty hunter with a way with a rifle; the Bad, a nasty villain who kills with relish and wants to square off with the others to prove he's the fastest gun around; and the Weird, a goofy ne'er do well who has stumbled on the map and would like the treasure but would like even more to stay alive. It's all done in a lavish, pop style, like Leone crossed with Tarantino. The actors are vivid and fun and the modest mix of martial arts and mostly gunplay is satisfying. The finale is a Mexican stand-off -- just like The Good, The Bad and the Ugly. Lots of humor throughout and fun over-the-top battles (the military gets thrown in for good measure). If the finale were a knockout instead of just fine, I'd praise this even more. But it's certainly a lot of fun and a real delight for the end of the fest.

Tomorrow, they repeat all the films in Competition. But it looks like the scheduling conflicts with my travel plans and I won't be

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able to catch up on the few I missed but heard were good.

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