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Review



MOTHER KNOWS BEST Krich doesn't miss much.

Brand Upon the Brain!

Dir. Guy Maddin. 2006. N/R. 95mins. Sullivan Brown, Erik Steffen Maahs, Maya Lawson, Gretchen Krich, Katherine E. Scharhon, Todd Jefferson Moore, Andy Loviska.



This latest from Canada's lovable neoexpressionist *bricoleur* is ideally supposed to be experienced as a silent film accompanied live by an 11-piece orchestra, choir, sound-effects team and celebrity narrator. But bowing to logistical realities, Maddin (*The Saddest Music in the World*, *Cowards Bend the Knee*) also sanctioned a synchronized version with narration by Isabella Rosellini, the flickering, fevered, black-and-white awesomeness of which convinces us that the full-force version must be a hell of a thing to witness, indeed.

A psychosexually inflamed fusion of childhood reminiscence, Victorian melodrama, Freudian horror film and gender-bending Nancy Drew adventure, *Brand* tells the story of a boy named Guy Maddin (Brown) whose parents operate a "mom-and-pop orphanage" on a coastal island dominated by a lighthouse. His puritanical and controlling mother (Krich) keeps omniscient tabs on her kids from the top of the lighthouse; his distant father (Moore) is an inventor of bizarre technologies and is so dedicated to his craft that not even death can keep him out of his workshop. Both parents exploit their charges by extracting life-giving "nectar" from the kids' necks, but Guy's sexy older sister (Lawson) resists their reign of terror with the help of her secret lover, a cross-dressing teen detective (Scharhon). Majestically strange and intermittently hilarious, it's one of the damndest things you'll ever see on a movie screen. (Opens Fri; [Music Box](#).)— *Cliff Doerkson*

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