



IMTA ALUMS JOSH DUHAMEL & MILES HEIZER STAR IN *LOVE, SIMON*

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Love, Simon opens nationwide on Friday, March 16

“The movie is about acceptance, tolerance, love...and it’s funny. I really liked that it is funny!”
– Josh Duhamel

In his review of *Love, Simon* for *Variety*, Peter Debruge wrote: “It takes enormous courage to come out in high school. It’s a period marked by peer pressure and bullying for most teens, and one can’t blame most adolescents — gay or straight — for wanting to keep their heads down. ... But let it be said: *Love, Simon* is precisely the kind of movie its main character so desperately needs — which means, *Simon* is about to become the model for an entire demographic that has had to do without, until now.”

It’s very rare for a major Hollywood studio to produce and distribute a coming-of-age story centered on a closeted gay teenager. These kinds of stories are nothing new to independent film, but major studios have long avoided putting a gay protagonist front and center. That drought has ended with the 20th Century Fox feature *Love, Simon*, a film adapted from Becky Albertalli’s young adult novel “Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda.”

Nick Robinson plays a closeted high school student who must deal with typical senior year struggles with friends and family, all while battling the emotional turmoil of not coming out. IMTA alums Josh Duhamel and Miles Heizer co-star in a cast that includes Katherine Langford, Alexandra Shipp, Logan Miller and Jennifer Garner.



Duhamel plays Simon’s rather clueless father. “He’s that dad that always takes the joke one step too far,” Duhamel said of his character. “I can really relate to that, because I do that myself. It’s where you go just one step past the line, and while some people think it’s funny, others might find it offensive. He means no harm, but I find that it added a lot of tension to the family dynamic, which was fun because there’s no ill will...it’s just a little awkward.”

Duhamel said that what makes the story so relatable is that Simon is going through what everybody else is going through in high school, but he just happens to be gay. “That’s what I loved about it. This guy, he has no idea that his son is gay. In fact, he’s always making little jokes about women. So, when he finds out his son is gay, he’s totally ashamed he said some of the things he did. But he also found that it doesn’t really matter: you’re still my kid and I wouldn’t change anything about you.”

Heizer, who plays Cal, Simon’s classmate, thinks it’s important to be part of projects such as *Love, Simon* and “*13 Reasons Why*”— the Netflix series in which he currently stars — which deal with messages of self-identity, mental health, and sexuality. “We’re just now coming into a time when these sorts of projects are being made... especially for teenage audiences,” Heizer said in an interview with *Teen Vogue*. “But those are the people who are watching these things the most, and I think it’s important for them to have something to look at and maybe help them figure out the things that they’re feeling and figure out ways to talk to people about it when they feel like they can’t. I feel like these TV shows and movies allow them to maybe relate to these characters and figure out what they’re dealing with. I think that they affect people at any age.”