

SECOND-HAND WEDDING (G) 98 minutes ★★★½

Directed by Paul Murphy. Starring Geraldine Brophy, Paddy Lewis, Holly Shanahan, Ryan O'Kane.

SECOND-HAND Wedding is like your best mate: local, independent, good natured, generous, funny, and just plain likeable. Filmed on the Kaiti Coast earlier this year, the film was a labour of love for director Paul Murphy and his crew.

Wellington being the little powerhouse that it is; lack of money didn't stop Murphy attracting a talented cast of New Zealand screen actors and a world-class crew to the project. And the finished film — the first feature out of Wellington in far too long — deserves to be a hit.

Second-Hand Wedding is the story of a few weeks in the life of the Rose family. Mum Jill (Geraldine Brophy) and Dad Brian live in what looks like a slightly cluttered version of domestic bliss. Jill is an inveterate garage sale hunter, returning every Saturday afternoon with a yellow mini van full of unneeded and unwanted tat. Brian tolerates it, most of Jill's friends are similarly afflicted, but daughter Cheryl is mortified.

Cheryl is engaged to that nice boy Stewie from down the road, but she is terrified that Mum's "love of a bargain" will be the ruin of her wedding day.

It sounds like the sort of crisis that could afflict any household in the country, and Paul Murphy does the right thing by shooting the film in an unfussy, almost documentary style. Knowing the setup, you won't have any trouble in picking how *Second-Hand Wedding* is going to finish. But, it's the getting there that is the fun.

This film takes a wide selection of detours on its way to an inevitable happy conclusion, and introduces a greater number of characters than were probably really necessary. At times *Second-Hand Wedding* seriously threatens to veer off into caricature and cliché and stay there, but as soon as the action returns to Brophy's Jill, we are in a very safe pair of hands. There's plenty of good work happening around her — Paddy Lewis and Holly Shanahan



Family affair: Wellington movie *Second-Hand Wedding* deserves to be a hit, especially so because of Geraldine Brophy's fine performance as Rose family matriarch.

especially — but Brophy is the secret of this film's success. Her Jill is a rare combination of great dignity and impeccable comic timing; the best single performance I've seen in a New Zealand film for years. Bravo.