

## ORPHAN

Boston Phoenix Short Review  
By Gerald Peary

Some of the most creative fiction films made in Boston in the '90s, shorts and the feature *Squeeze*, came out of the collaboration between director Robert Patton-Spruill and his inventive cinematographer, Richard Moos. Moos now has his own first feature, *Orphan*, a low-budget work of visual sophistication and resourcefulness that boasts first-rate performances from a large ensemble. Boston actress Karen MacDonald is a call-in psychic, Sandi Carroll plays an estranged wife, and Robert Wahlberg (older brother of Mark) is not bad as a Southie toughie with an occasional soft side. But the revelation here is Irishman Martin Maguire as Jake McCrory, a baby faced career hit man who becomes an instant good guy when, floating away toward his own death, he finds himself in some sort of purgatorial apartment where the man he's just murdered orders Jake to take care of his orphaned daughter. That Jake does when he returns to earth, becoming a kind of guardian angel to redheaded Anna as she goes from 10 to 20. His wife leaves him: unable to understand why he's always away from home, she suspects infidelity. But Jake is just watching out for Anna.

*Orphan* can get bogged down with self-conscious talkiness, especially in the interminable penultimate scene. But there are so many virtues that the tedious stretches are forgiven. Richard Moos is definitely a Boston filmmaker to watch.