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Song One

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Song One

Abstract

This is a film review of *Song One* (2014), directed by Kate Barker-Froyland.

Author Notes

Rubina (Ruby) Ramji is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Cape Breton University. After serving as a Chair of the Religion, Film and Visual Culture Group for the American Academy of Religion and then the steering committee, Rubina continues to serve on the Executive Committee for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion as President and is the Film Editor of the *Journal of Religion and Film*. Her research activities focus on the areas of religion, media and identity, religion in Canada, and religion and immigration.

Song One
(2014)
directed by Kate Barker-Froyland
U.S. Dramatic



Song One is a story of family, of tragedy, of inspiration and of redemption. Franny (Anne Hathaway) has distanced herself from her family; her

brother had decided to undertake an unorthodox career and she did not approve of this path. Rather than pursuing a college education like herself—Franny is working on her PhD in Anthropology and doing fieldwork in Morocco—her brother Henry desires to be a musician. When a devastating car accident leaves Henry in a coma, Franny comes home to New York and delves into her brother's life – to better understand what he loves, what inspires him, and what makes him tick. Franny meets her brother's musical inspiration, James Forester; James is suffering himself, from the inability to write new music. Through a journey through the New York music scene, together they learn to lean on each other and see the world in new ways. Franny sees the passion, drive and emotion to be found in music. James finds a new melody in his head while trying to help Henry heal in a hospital room. Henry awakens from his coma at the moment that both

Franny and James awaken to see the world in a better way – their connection allows them to grow and heal in ways that make them more complete.

Like many Hollywood films, this one is filled with a lot of superficial drama and happy endings. Yet it also shows us how people can be inspired by tragedy, and how redemption can be found when one learns to see others the way they truly are, and not the way we expect them to be. Franny learns to love her brother's passion of music, and asks for his forgiveness. It's a movie that shows us how we tend to trap ourselves on paths we believe are the right ones to take, but also allows us to see the beauty and happiness that comes from the road less traveled—the road that has no guarantees, but is lived with passion and dedication. Henry is a great song writer – he has already written song one of his yet to be completed album. Although we may not all excel at our dreams, they are worth pursuing, even when they clash with the notion of proper decorum.

— Ruby Ramji