



SXSW Recap : Feature Films

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Review from the 2005 SXSW Film Festival

Josh Jarman

Marcus Graham, Kestie Morassi, Damien Richardson, Daniela Farinacci, Kim Gynell

The first half hour of “Josh Jarman” is decent enough—familiar and comfortable like an old friend. There’s Josh the struggling playwright, his bumbling roommate, a wild, new girlfriend whose father is a big time theatrical producer and whose mother attempts to seduce Josh. But, in one manner or another, we’ve seen it all before.

Then, suddenly, the girl next door has an interesting, very personal experience with a cello while playing Brahms Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G Minor. The roommate is robbing convenience stores—badly. Josh’s dark and serious play is turning into an extravagant musical production.

Add some sharp and witty dialogue with terrific comedic timing by a well performing cast and you’ve got a film that is actually more than comfortable. In fact, for his first feature film, writer/director Pip Mushin has made a very impressive debut.

Although the picture was produced and filmed in Australia, there is an American feel to “Josh” with noticeable influences from successful comedies like “When Harry Met Sally” and “Tootsie”.

Australian actor Marcus Graham plays Josh with an aw-shucks Clark Kent/Buster Keaton charm as he attempts to get his play to the big stage. His dream appears to come true, but at the expense of his own integrity when a producer and director make drastic changes to his script.

Damien Richardson is hilarious as Josh’s friend and roommate, especially as a hapless criminal with a phony knife. The “VH1-We Are The Eighties” soundtrack was less impressive, and the movie’s biggest weakness.

Australia’s film industry is sometimes criticized for failing to put out consistent, quality productions. But if films like “Josh Jarman” are a sign of the industry’s future, there is much to look forward to down under.