

Demons of Celluloid Reviews From Hell



Tuesday, July 29, 2014

A Measure Of The Sin



A MEASURE OF THE SIN

Writer: Kristy Nielsen, Jeff Wedding

Director: Jeff Wedding

Starring: Katie Groshong, Stephen Jackson, Starina Johnson, Dale Rainey

Availability: DVD available at www.brinkkdvd.com or mvd2b.com/

Rating:



You can call Jeff Wedding's *A Measure Of The Sin* a lot of things, but one thing you can't accuse it of is being a traditional horror film. It's a beautiful, haunting, mesmerizing piece of art. I first saw this film several months ago, and I remember being absolutely blown away by its simple beauty. Re-watching it now, it occurred to me this isn't simply a refreshing breath of fresh air in indie horror. It's a modern day indie masterpiece.

Contributors

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Katie Groshong gives a note perfect performance as Meredith, a girl living in seclusion with two other women and a charismatic head of household, known only as the Man (Stephen Jackson, crafting a perfect balance of warmth and menace.) The Man convinces all these women that they must never leave, because the world is far too dangerous. Flashbacks show that it was Meredith's mother who envisioned this as the type of "freedom" she wanted for her daughter. They exist in a world that almost feels out of time. They are not burdened by modern life. They enjoy a quaint, peaceful existence. That is, of course, until Meredith keeps being attacked by this bear who everyone is convinced is only a figment of her imagination. Meredith decides, against the Man's wishes, that she might want to see if she can survive out there.

In a lot of ways, this is a movie that hit close to home for me. I grew up in a cult. Before you ask, I am not making this up. I have pictures. It was a very strange environment, but at the same time, when you are a child who knows no other life, it seems perfectly normal. This is the dilemma Meredith is forced to face. She has no frame of reference to realize that this is not how "normal" people exist. These people are her family, and this is the only life she has ever known. Her curiosity is no different than the curiosity any of us have. We are always wondering what else is out there for us.

First things first, I have to seriously commend Wedding for deciding to shoot A Measure of the Sin on super 16mm. Not only does it heighten the beauty of the film, but it gives the entire thing an almost dreamlike, fairy tale quality. The shot compositions are exceptional, and can rival the camerawork seen in a lot of Terence Malick's films. That's right. I just compared Jeff Wedding to Terence Malick. Between the elegant, fluid camerawork and the film's heavy use of inner monologues, the comparison is more than valid. This is a movie that recalls the great independent films of the 1970s, a time when people cared more about the art of film, than the amount of money they can make with it.

Every performance in this film is a small miracle. The movie is not heavy on dialogue, yet these actors and actresses are still able to carry the film. It's not a movie that's going to be for everyone. Sure, there's an insane amount of nudity on display. That's really about the only exploitative element to be found there. This is much more of an arthouse, avant-garde mood piece. It's deliberately paced, yet the final act, which I refuse to spoil here, packs a true wallop. After the credits started to roll, I had goosebumps, and very few films are able to move me like that.

A Measure Of The Sin is the type of film that reminds me why I fell in love with the movies in the first place. With its haunting score, piercing performances, and captivating visual look, it's something you may not love, but you will never forget it. Jeff Wedding could very well end up being one of the greatest directors of his generation. We'll just have to wait and see.

Until next time, my fellow freaks and weirdos...

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Posted by **Denver Johnson** at 7:31 PM

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