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## Headspace Directed by Andrew Van Den Houten

REVIEWS | DVD | JUL 12 2012



### Glen Hansard

#### RHYTHM AND REPOSE

The Solo Debut from the composer & star of ONCE, and founder of THE FRAMES & THE SWELL SEASON

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By Peter Marrack

For some of us, 2005 feels like just yesterday. For others, not so much. *Headspace* director/producer Andrew Van Den Houten would likely fall into the latter category. Why? Because he's an independent filmmaker and as the years expire so do tired production techniques, which is exactly what makes *Headspace* such a triumph, in both its genre — horror — and independent cinema. *Headspace* was Andrew's very first feature film as a director and producer, yet, astonishingly, he was able to shoot on film, film in Manhattan, and land cult-worthy performances by such names as Udo Kier, Sean Young and William Atherton. These are things you only dream of as a first-time director, especially in today's industry. But apart from Andrew, the star of the movie is a young (at the time) actor by the name of Christopher Denham, who's gone on to work with legends like Martin Scorsese (*Shutter Island*) and Mike Nichols (*Charlie Wilson's War*). In *Headspace*, Christopher delivers an unnervingly astute performance as Alex Borden, the heir to a rare demonic possession where the host acts as a link to the "other side," a place we cannot even dream of. Well, actually we can, because that's how these so-called "beasts" come to inhabit the Tri-state area: Alex dreams them and they come to life. When Alex was still a child, his mother (Sean Young) suffered from the same affliction, that is, until one night her husband (Larry Fessenden) blew a hole through her skull with a double-barrelled shotgun. After that incident, Alex's father put his two sons up for adoption, for their own sake, we later learn, and we don't catch up to them until the present day in NYC. That's when the beasts decide to rear their ugly heads (not coincidentally, of course) and inflict Alex with what to many would appear as an exceptional gift: the power to learn at a super-human rate. But, for Alex, the gift is a curse. Although other "hosts" are able to channel their dreams into something productive, such as a neighbourhood chess player (Erick Kastel) with his art, Alex is unable to control his afflicted "headspace." When he was younger, he learned to stare into one spot and block out all the noise in his head, but as tensions begin to boil in his new neighbourhood in Manhattan, Alex can no longer keep a lid on his inner demons. Essentially *Headspace* is a film about control: a first-time director on a shoestring budget brings to life his demons and then wrestles to control them and craft them into something tangible. Special features include, among other things, "Fractured Skulls: the Making of *Headspace*," a featurette called "*Headspace* Revisited" and even the original audition videos. These extras are as raw, uncut and as oblivious to mainstream standards as this film is. (ModernCiné)

#### DVD HIGHLIGHTS



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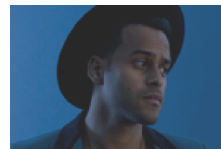
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