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Review: Zemeckisâ?? Bound by Flesh

Description

Bound by Flesh, directed by the affable Leslie Zemeckis, tells the story of conjoined twins who were fused at the hips and buttocks, shared circulation but shared no major organs yet, shared almost every conceivable aspect of their lives together from birth to marriage and finally even death.

The girls, often referred to as the â??Hilton twinsâ?• were sold by their mother/guardian into the entertainment industry and thus began a long eventful and full life as the girls were hugely successful in vaudeville, somewhat successful in burlesque and not quite so successful in film. The girls were quite attractive and had stage presence and attracted large audiences with a minimal of talent. The girls knew how to entertain. Yet, despite their huge success as performers the girls wound up pretty much penniless and at the kindness of church members at the end of their lives due to managers taking advantage and exploiting the girls for financial gain. The girls fought back as girls will do and won an emancipation lawsuit and were awarded $100,000 in their attempt to have normal lives. They were successful in court and began to manage their own affairs. Unfortunately, while the girls knew how to entertain, they didnâ??t understand the business of entertainment and fell into several business deals that bore no fruit. Despite themselves, the girls continued to entertain and began performing at supermarket openings and at community events. While, their earnings fell off markedly, the girls ineffable spirit of being together always shone forth much like the spotlight from their younger years performing together in vaudeville.

Zemeckis tells the Hilton twins story in a mostly compelling manner. During the conversation following the viewing during he AFI Film Festival, Zemeckis revealed her three state, fifteen day whirlwind shooting schedule. Her flawless use of present day interviews revealed as much about the characters being interviewed as it did about the girls and the time period in which they performed. With her exquisite use of the interview of primary sources I felt as though I had taken a step back in time as I watched playwright, John Bramhall of â??Daisy and Violet,â?• provide a testimony of the girlsâ?? dynamic stage presence with his long mutton chops and an Old West medallion placed on his breast giving a spit nâ??image of lawman Wyatt Earp. In addition to the primary interviews, Zemeckis added recorded sound bites of the girls in their youth, a multitude of black and white photographs, and eye pleasing modern day graphics. I thoroughly enjoyed the Zemeckis documentary, Bound by Flesh and recommend the film to any film buff and to anyone interested in the history of vaudeville and burlesque.

Zemeckis knows how to tell a story and not just on the screen.

Highly recommended!

Category

1. #AFIFEST
2. Documentary

Tags

1. Actor
2. Bound by Flesh
3. Cinema
4. Director
5. Film
6. Hilton Twins
7. Leslie Zemeckis
8. Vaudeville

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