



REVIEW: IN LOVE AND WAR (Torsting, 2018): Denmark

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

***In Love and War* Takes Audience Award and Captures Nordic Cinema Competition at Santa Barbara International Film Festival**



In Love and War, from Director Kasper Torsting

and Producer Ronnie Fridthjof, who co-wrote the screenplay together about a soldier in Denmark who returns home after three years of fighting on the front lines in WWI, harks back to Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg's *Dogme 95*, a film movement orchestrated to compete with Hollywood's domination of the industry. *Dogme 95* focused filmmakers on story, acting and theme and away from special effects and MTV style editing. Torsting and Fridthjof's efforts seem to have brought von Trier and Vinterberg's vision to fruition with *In Love and War*, winner of the coveted Audience Award for the 34th Santa Barbara International Film Festival as well as winner of the strong-fielded Nordic Cinema Competition.

The mise-en-scene and production design are at once gorgeous and stunning in this character-driven story that unfolds in dramatic fashion as lead character, Ebsen, portrayed by Sebastian Jessen, after already serving a three-year stint refuses to return to the front in order to renew and rebuild his family life. Consequently, Ebsen's refusal forces him into hiding and to watch as a German Army officer, Gerhard, portrayed by Tom Wlaschiha, woos Ebsen's wife, Kirstine, portrayed by Rosalinde Mynster, while winning the affection and admiration of Ebsen's young son, Carl, portrayed by Axel Homann.



Interestingly enough, this is the first Danish film to address the German occupation of southern Denmark during WWI. Many of the Germans stayed in the area after the war and started families living side-by-side their Danish comrades. And, according to Director Torsting, it's a part of Danish history that is washed over and hasn't been addressed until now. Torsting made the film in an attempt to enlighten the present generation of a largely forgotten past.



With a painter's touch, *In Love and War's* cinematographer, Jesper Toffner, paints a remarkable canvas of landscape scenes coupled with period costuming that invites and encapsulates the viewer into the world of Ebsen and his quadruplegic battle-buddy, Jes, portrayed by Morten Brovn, as both men try to not only survive but to hold on to their sense of self while everyone and everything around them is changing due to the formidable German influence.

Much more than an historical treatment, *In Love and War* digs into the human condition and what men and women do when faced with the difficult choices the cruelty of war posits onto the less fortunate. In addition, the film is in two languages, German and Danish, with English subtitles. Featuring stellar acting from the cast, including Ulrich Thomsen, Thurlle Lindhardt, with Natalie Madueno and a driving musical score from Robin Hoffman that heightens the film's suspense as Ebsen reaches the moment that will decide his fate and the fate of his family.

In Love and War is a highly compelling, emotionally moving film with a run time of 135 minutes and made its North American Premiere at the 34th Santa Barbara International Film Festival presented by UGG.

Highly recommended.

Category

1. Santa Barbara International Film Festival

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Author

hollywoodglee