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Descendant Rocks the Boat at Sundance

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Another full day at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival with second screenings of Cooper Raifâ??s *Cha Cha Real Smooth*, a far-reaching, exquisitely cinematic effort, and *Descendant*, a documentary from Margaret Brown delving into the Clotilda, a renegade slave ship from 1859 that ensnared 150 Africans and brought them up into the Mobile River then was burned to hide the illegal run. Efforts were made to keep any and all references to the voyage hidden. The descendants from the Clotilda settled into an area known as Africatown and managed to keep their story alive primarily via the oral tradition.

Brown also reveals the enduring power imbalance that persists between the descendants of Timothy Meaher, the man who chartered the illegal expedition, and the descendants of those who were enslaved aboard it.



Cooper Raif, left, and Dakota star in Cha Cha Real Smooth premiering at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute)

Cha Cha Real Smooth, like its central character, Andrew, portrayed by Raif, struggles to find its footing. Nevertheless, it is a sweetly sentimental story with a strong production design with a bountiful color pallette. Raif writes, directs, and stars with significant support from seasoned pros Dakota Johnson, Leslie Mann, and Brad Garrett. Raif is a remarkable talent comparable to the young Canadian filmmaker extraordinaire, Xavier Dolan. Of note, this is Dakota Johnsonâ??s third film of the year (*Lost Daughter* premiered at the 2021 Telluride Film Festival) and her second Sundance film, following the highly compelling and well-executed story, *Am I OK?* from Tig Notaro and Stephanie Allyne. Stay tuned for more on *Am I OK?*

So many films, so little timeâ?¦

Until next time, Iâ??ll see you at the movies!



Larry Gleeson/HollywoodGlee at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah.

Category

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1. Brad Garrett
2. Cha Cha Real Smooth
3. Cooper Raif
4. Dakota Johnson
5. Leslie Mann
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