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TIFF 2016: Woody Harrelson in One More Biopic of LBJâ??This Time a Good One

Description

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By George Prentice

Beneath a mound of makeup and fake proboscis, Woody Harrelson performs the hell out of Lyndon Baines Johnson in ***LBJ***, yet another dramatization of the 36th president of the United States.

The subject of President Johnson has been well trod. There have been four magnificent books written on LBJ by Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert Caro; the Tony Award-winning 2012 Broadway play *All the Way* by Robert Schennkan; and the 2016 HBO adaptation of the play, which will most certainly win its star, Bryan Cranston, another Emmy Award this Sunday.

Now comes director Rob Reinerâ??s *LBJ*, which has yet to set a release date in North America but made its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival.

â??You got your show horses and you got your workhorses,â?• LBJ says to an aide early in the film, referring to then-President John F. Kennedyâ??s popularity versus his vice presidentâ??s respectability. â??And when the field needs plowinâ??, you need the right one leavinâ?? the barn.â?•

LBJ chronicles Johnsonâ??s reluctance to accept the vice presidency from JFK, followed by his taking of the reins in the shadow of the latterâ??s assassination. Harrelson plays the irascible yet sly Texan as a tough SOB who still obsessed over not being liked.

â??I could walk on the Potomac River and the next dayâ??s headlines would say, â??Johnson canâ??t swim,'â?• he complains.

Expectations were low for the film. Reiner has had his share of hits (*When Harry Met Sally*, *A Few Good Men*), but heâ??s had more misses of late (*Being Charlie*, *Rumor Has it*, *The Story of Us*). Considering Reiner also directed the widely-popular 1995 film *The American President*, this is territory heâ??s comfortable withâ??and it shows.

Harrelson, whose dramatic turns increase with every project (one recent highlight being HBOâ??s *True Detective*), mines his own Texas roots to uncover subtleties in LBJ than many other actors havenâ??t been able to deliver. For that reason alone, *LBJ* is worth seeing and goes a long way to making it Reinerâ??s best film since *The American President*.

(Source: http://www.boiseweekly.com)

Category

1. #TIFF
2. World Premiere

Tags

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