

Note from Roger â?? Closet Monster

Description

Dear Cinephiles,

Itâ??s rare that I find a film so entrancing and hopeful that makes me feel excited about the future of cinema. Itâ??s a most auspicious film debut from director Stephen Dunn which won Best Canadian Feature at the Toronto International Film Festival. Youâ??ve seen coming of age stories before, but Dunn has a completely unique and theatrical language.

The film was reviewed by the New York Times and it was a Criticâ??s Pick. It plays tonight at 5:00pm and tomorrow at 7:30pm at the Riviera Theatre.

See you at the movies!
Roger Durling

Click here for tickets.

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In â??Closet Monster,â?? a Teenagerâ??s Self-Discovery Is Tinged With Danger
By Ken Jaworowski â?? New York Times

You may find yourself hoping that â??Closet Monsterâ?• fades to black during one of its few cheerful scenes â?? that way, the conflicted young man at its center will get a happy ending. This affecting film prompts that kind of concern for its characters. You want them to be safe.

Still, as with all of us, happiness isnâ??t guaranteed, a fact made clear in Stephen Dunnâ??s script. Mr. Dunn, who also directed, has created individuals who defy easy branding. Outcomes are far from assured, and thereâ??s a constant sense of danger. That threat, as Saul Bellow said of death, becomes â??the dark backing that a mirror needs if we are to see anything.â?•

We first meet Oscar as a boy struggling to comprehend his parentsâ?? breakup. Soon he witnesses a sadistic assault against another boy. Those events echo years later when, in high school, heâ??s desperate to escape his home and understand his sexuality.

As in â??Mysterious Skinâ?• or â??Boyhood,â?• this coming-of-age story can feel entrancing, particularly with its surreal touches. Oscar talks to his hamster, which speaks back (voiced by an actress â?? no spoilers â?? who knows something about the surreal). And Oscarâ??s imagination occasionally takes flight, and we ride along.

Connor Jessup wonderfully inhabits the teenage Oscar, who observes others while trying to find himself. Aaron Abrams, as his father, and Aliocha Schneider and Sofia Banzhaf, as friends, are just as multilayered. Jack Fulton is heartbreaking as the younger Oscar.

Near the end of â??Closet Monster,â?• Oscarâ??s mother recalls his difficult birth, explaining that he has rarely been fortunate. Itâ??s a tough scene that may portend his future. Of course, we donâ??t know if Oscar will be safe, and neither does he. In this film, and in life, that uncertainty is both deeply scary and greatly exciting.

Category

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