

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Blood Into Wine ? Review

Written by David on April, 14 2010

Film premiere draws fans from across globe

Movie fans from across the state, nation and the world filled the Strand Theatre Friday night to watch two films, the premier of ?Blood into Wine? and a locally produced award -winning short, ?In the Deathroom.?

Local movie and music aficionados mingled with fans from the Midwest and Belgium in the historic theatre to primarily to witness ?Blood into Wine,? an often surrealistic, yet, realistic exploration of the creative mind, passions and dreams of Maynard James Keenan, the lead singer of several eclectic bands like ?Tool,? ? A Perfect Circle,? and ?Puscifer.? Prior to the intellectually meaty epic of this main course, however, the crowd enjoyed a rather disturbing, yet beautifully crafted film ?In the Deathroom,? by Joe Leavell of Indianapolis.

This 17- minute short was recently voted the ?Aloha Accolade for Excellence in Film ?Making,? by the Honolulu International Film Festival? and Leavell and his supporting cast, several of which appeared at Friday?s showing, will pick up the award later this month in Hawaii.

Based upon a short-story by a Stephen King, Leavell?s work is an enchanting, often spellbinding tale of psychological and physical horror that utilizes imaginative filming techniques in a minimal set that fuses terror with both irony and realism.

After this delightfully thought provoking celluloid expose? the crowd next feasted on ?Blood Into Wine,? a movie that leaves one both physically and intellectually thirsty for more. It is a serious, yet, sometimes comic spoof filled with verbal and visual puns, about the trials, tribulations and travails of two dudes, Keenan and Eric Glomski, chasing, and fighting for and literally digging their dreams into a desert in Arizona.

For each man wine-making is a creative journey and this tale is an enlightening and visually sensuous exploration of the drives, passions and philosophic ruminations of two serious, yet, often whimsical men consumed by creativity and the hard-work, both physical and intellectual, necessary to realize these dreams and transform vision into an art: that of turning the fruit of the vine into wine.

As Keenan and Glomski repeatedly point out in the film, the art of making wine is both a holistic and laborious process that fuses mental, emotional, spiritual and physical elements into a whole. In a strange Gestalt, they note it is grains and grapes, gone bad as wine, which more than likely was the historic reason that cities and ultimately civilizations were founded.

?I?m often asked ?Why do I make wine?? Keenan said. ?My answer is; ?Why wine? Why music? It?s the same.??

In fact, this passionate, compelling curiosity is the leitmotif of the movie, which like its stars often finds levity, irony and sarcastic laughter mingled within the overarching metaphor that life is a journey to be creatively lived amid the chaos and challenges of everyday existence.

This collaborative venture, ?Arizona Stronghold Vineyards,? entailed, among other things reclaiming the soils of a once desolate mine near Jerome, Arizona and by terracing and physically working to transform this arid, volcanic earth into a thriving and lush vineyard. In 2009, after 7-years of intensive labor their grapes bore fruit in the first bottle of ?Caduceus:? a wine born of the desert.

?Great wine doesn?t have to be expensive,? Keenan said. ?It doesn?t have to be pretentious and it shouldn?t be hard to find. It just has to be great and it has to be made by people that care.?

This down-to earth creed is echoed by Glomski, a seasoned vigneron, who relates that art of wine-making is a craft of many important ingredients all well blended, including a blending of visions.

?Good wine is not strictly the esoteric fare of the nobility,? Glomski said. ?Wine is for the people.?

In the end, both Glomski and Keenan agreed that the wine alone should be the ultimate judge of their efforts, even though they did invite several critics to sample their fare

"We let the grapes speak for themselves," Keenan said. "We let the soil and atmosphere speak through the wine."

It was just this down and dirty, hands-on reality, often fused with ironic surreality and visual sensuousness, that makes this movie an intellectually compelling epic that like all art grows into a passion that flows in your blood; like blood into wine.

As an aside, it should be mentioned that Leavell said he plans to bring this comic, yet, serious and passionate film back to Shelbyville for another showing before September. Additionally, he hopes to bring a special guest (currently on tour) to town to see the fruit of his vision on the silver-screen at the Strand.

"A true artist marches to the beat of his heart," Keenan said. "The vineyards are where that rhythm led me."

Images on this post:



SUBMITTED BY: TERRANCE ALDRIDGE

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