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***Bitter & Twisted*: Potential Festival Sleeper?**



Twenty-four-year-old writer/director/actor Christopher Weekes makes an auspicious debut with his Australian indie *Bitter & Twisted*, about a family stagnating in grief after a son's death, which stands a very real chance of being one of the sleeper hits of the festival.

At its premiere screening last night

at the AMC cinemas on 19th Street, every seat was filled, even though the low-key crowd filing in didn't know much about the film and reversed the name, calling it "Twisted and Bitter." The most boisterous voice in the scrum as people jostled for seats was a bleach-blonde vision in embroidery and lace, wielding a giant motorcycle helmet as she cried, "We got in a motorcycle accident on the way over!"

Her tenacity in getting to the theater was ultimately rewarded—*Bitter & Twisted* is a sensitive and observant drama (with its comic moments) beautifully shot in cool blues. Weekes stars as the dead boy's sexually confused brother, with an ensemble cast of unfamiliar Australian faces playing the sad family and the lovely Leeanna Walsman, a livelier version of Zooey Deschanel, as the mourning ex-girlfriend. Weekes was visibly nervous as he introduced the film, arm slapping against his side as he stammered, "Yeah, I hope you enjoy it." He didn't have to worry; the audience was attentive and most of the theater stuck around for the Q+A, a salient sign of a successful film.

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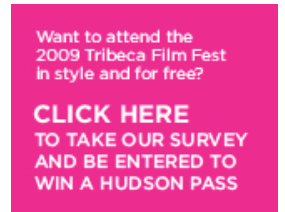
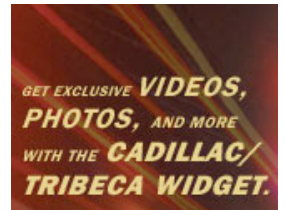
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