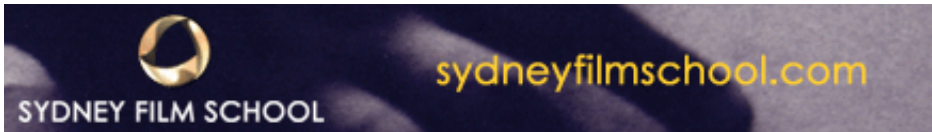


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Bitter And Twisted (Film)

by Erin Free | September 15, 2008 15:10 | Edited September 15, 2008 15:22

Rating: M

Running Time: 85

Country: Australia

Director: Christopher Weekes

Cast: Noni Hazlehurst, Rhys Muldoon, Matthew Newton, Steve Rodgers, Gary Sweet, Leanna Walsman, Christopher Weekes

Distributor: AFS

Film Worth: \$12.50

Release Date: September 18, 2008

“...brutally honest and emotionally affecting...”



The subject of grief has proven to be particularly fertile ground for filmmakers, with its dark possibilities providing the springboard for projects as diverse as the TV series *Six Feet Under*, the acclaimed feature films *In The Bedroom* and *The Son's Room*, and many, many more. Death and the pain that it can bring can hover like a big, black cloud, and with the cutting drama *Bitter & Twisted*, debut writer/director Christopher Weekes practically luxuriates in the shadows that it casts.

Three years ago, teenaged Liam Lombard died. His family has never recovered. His father, Jordan (Steve Rodgers), has overeaten to the point that he is now morbidly obese, and everything - work, home life - is suffering because of it. Jordan's lack of interest in his wife, Penelope (Noni Hazlehurst), leads her to hit the bars in search of a little affection. Second son Ben (Christopher Weekes) is living in his brother's shadow, and trying to catch his essence by romancing Liam's ex-girlfriend, Indigo (Leanna Walsman). Indigo, alternatively, is involved in a destructive relationship with a married man (Gary Sweet) who is trying to give her the shake. Meanwhile, Ben is being pursued by his amorous best friend (Matthew Newton). It's a tangled web, and everyone is stuck...

Imaginatively and inventively shot on a low budget by cinematographer Sam Collins, and with a fresh, probing script courtesy of Weekes, *Bitter & Twisted* heads fearlessly into deep, dark territory while never losing grip of its mordant sense of humour. This is, above all else however, a performance piece, and the entire cast is superb. Hazlehurst truly shines in her best role for years, and Steve Rodgers (though perhaps a little too young for the role) is consistently moving. Weekes, Newton and Walsman are all impressive, and Gary Sweet again proves himself to be one of this country's most underrated performers. With its brutally honest and emotionally affecting portrayal of a family in crisis very slowly beginning to heal itself, *Bitter & Twisted* is a winning combination of glowing hope and battering despair. When those moods meet, the results aren't always pretty, but they're never less than absolutely absorbing.

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[FAMILY TIES](#) (feature)

September 17, 2008 at 12:18

With his debut feature BITTER & TWISTED, actor/writer/director CHRISTOPHER WEEKES announces himself as a major talent to watch.

[Bitter and Twisted](#) (video)

September 09, 2008 at 14:35

Have a look at this exclusive making-of footage from the new Aussie film Bitter and Twisted. Thanks to Australian Film Syndicate for this clip.

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