

# Klaus at Gunpoint Issue 10 - Cinequest 2014

And so, Cinequest, the Features! I've seen a lot more screeners this year than the last few and on the whole, they're excellent! While viewing for the Short Program this year, I could tell that we were getting an incredible amount of amazing films, and now I know, and I guess always knew, that the general quality of Cinequest submissions is really, really high all around.

There are some films I would put right up there with the best I've ever seen at Cinequest. *Victoriana* is one of those. *The Divorce Party's* right up there too. *APP* is one of the best science fiction films Cinequest's ever shown. It all makes me very very happy.

The next issue will look at Cinequest in all its glory - films, parties, interviews, fun. You name it! It's gonna be fun!

Also, we're sad to report the loss of one of the greatest filmmakers in the Comedy genre - Mr. Harold Ramis. *Groundhog's Day* is on the National Film Registry, as is *Animal House*. He was a genius, and I'm glad I own every one of his films on DVD!

Comments? [journeyplanet@gmail.com](mailto:journeyplanet@gmail.com)

*4Q: Festival audiences often have to make hard decisions about what to see, and the catalog descriptions sometimes run together. In your own words, why should people see your film?*

Because it's the best!

I might be a little biased though.

When we set about making *LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS*, it was with a simple goal in mind to make the most awesome love letter to the movies that we loved so much while we were growing up. We wanted something with that was as big on crazy action as it was on heart, that's fun to watch over and over again. And I promise that you'll never see another movie quite like it.

*5Q: Time to pre-plan: You just won an Oscar for LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS. Give us your acceptance speech.*

Clearly all my bribes have paid off.

I'd like to thank everyone involved, from our crazy dedicated production crew and everyone in the Crescent City/Gasquet area who helped us out to everyone in post who opened their living rooms up to me to hang out in for months, for making the movie possible. Andy, Allison, Rob, and Mike, without you guys there'd be nothing for us all to work on, so thanks for that. And finally, I'd like to thank my wife, Katrina, who has been the absolute best for putting up with the movie for the duration of it's journey, allowed it to take me away from our wedding planning (we were married in March 2012, 5 weeks before we went to go shoot) and kept things rolling through the post process as our Pos Supervisor. She's everything!

Now, let's go see how much we can pawn this thing for!

(This fine interview first appeared on Popcorn & Vodka at <http://popcornandvodka.com/2014/02/17/matt-jackson-director-love-in-the-time-of-monsters/>)



Then we started on the hard part.

*2Q: Cinequest is hosting the World Premiere of LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS. Explain to us how it feels to bring this film before audiences for the first time, and what do you think their reaction will be to your film?*

I am SO STOKED to finally get this beast out in front of people! And I'm so excited for Cinequest to be our world premiere venue.

It's been such a journey from script to screen that I can't wait for people to experience it. And I think the audience is gonna love it! It's funny, brash, scary, exciting, with a dance of romance: It's got something for everyone!

I have a good feeling about our screening.

**I am SO STOKED to finally get this beast out in front of people!**

*3Q: What was your best and/or worst experience while making LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS?*

Well, the worst experience was either our setback before we shot (which ended up being a major positive for us) or the massive rainstorm that hit us during our last few days of shooting... the days where all the action took place outdoors.

While we all pulled through as a group (the crew was especially great rushing equipment in and out of the rain during the small shooting windows we had), to be honest, there was a span I was really worried we'd end up with a movie without an ending. Ultimately, we shot the last chunk of the movie over the course of 4 days crazy out of order with me keeping track of everything in my head and ended up with my favorite sequence in the entire film.

My best experience though was either the first day of shooting or the last. Our first day was at the Trees of Mystery, where the producers surprised me by securing a 30 foot jib so I could get the opening shot I had wanted since our first scout up there. Initially it became a sacrifice to the budget, but the guys figured something out and sprung it on me over breakfast. It was the perfect way to start the journey.

And then the last day should be pretty obvious. After years of work, setbacks, and triumphs, I had finally achieved my goal of directing my first feature. It was a little overwhelming, but calling cut on that last shot and knowing that no matter what else happened, I had made a movie was the best feeling in the world. Definitely a lifetime highlight.

## The Man Behind The Mask

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## A Is For Alex

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## The Divorce Party

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## Victoriana

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## Blood Punch

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## Sex(Ed)

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## Friendened to Death

Reviewed by Chris Garcia

## Eternity - The Movie

Reviewed by Derek McCaw

## APP and the Second Screen

Opinion/Review by Chris Garcia

## Interviews

Edy Soto - Director of The Divorce Party

Jadrien Steele - Director of Victoriana

Matt Jackson - Director of Love in the Time of Monsters interviewed by

Cynthia Corral

**To understand El Hijo del Santo**, you have to understand El Santo. El Santo was the biggest star in the history of Lucha Libre. El Santo was a major movie actor, largely in films where he would play a part-time spy, scientist, or monster hunter who also worked as a wrestler. He was the second biggest comic book character in Mexico. There is no equivalent to El Santo anywhere in the world. He is Hulk Hogan, only when Hulk dies, there won't be hundreds of thousands of people alighting candles in front of his photograph around the world. He was James Bond, a holder of box office records in Mexico, and through the efforts of K. Gordon Murray to re-dub and release them in the English-speaking world, an international phenomenon. El Santo was Batman, with a comic that often released more than one issue a week. El Santo was the embodiment of Lucha Libre, and as time has gone on, his legend has grown.

Now, what would it mean to be his son?

That is the central question of the incredibly personal documentary *The Man Behind the Mask*, directed by Gabriela Obegon, who also happens to be the wife of El Hijo del Santo.

The film starts off introducing us to the life of El Santo, not only as a character, but as the father of our hero. He is shown as a good father, maybe a bit distracted by his life in wrestling, but it is obvious from the beginning that El Hijo del Santo is his father's son, the most beloved of the legend's children. We are shown some incredible footage from the early days of Lucha Libre's existence. I've only seen a little of this, almost entire as a part of Santo films. The footage, both of wrestling and of family life, is an incredible document, and totally understandable. I can remember my grandmother saying that the way you can tell a rich Mexican from a poor Mexican is how many pictures they have, and if any of those pictures move, then those are the REALLY rich ones! 8mm films and some video shows this point from where I am sitting, and while not all of it is in great shape, particularly the video, it's all rare gold.

When we hear El Hijo del Santo telling the story of his father, his mother, and especially his relationships with his brothers, you can tell that he is a man who is conflicted. The family holds the Santo ideal as the foundation for their family's identity. While it's only touched on briefly, the family has had fights over the use of

*IQ: Tell us a little about the origins of LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS, from concept to financing.*

I started working on LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS sometime in 2008. Andy Gunn and I were just finishing a festival run with our previous short film, Background(ed), and were looking for something fun to follow it up with. So, we put out the call for scripts and Mike, who has been a friend of mine for years, answered with the craziest, most awesome script I'd read in a long time. By page three I knew it was the movie we had to make.

From there began the arduous process of notes, planning, funding, and more notes. It was a constant fixture in my life, even when there were times that it didn't seem like it was going to happen. But through it all, we stuck to it, refining the draft into something that was both exciting and viable for us to shoot.

Our first step into actual preproduction began in December 2010, when we got a collection of actors together for a read through. Because it had been such an insular project up until that point, we just wanted to make sure that it was as funny to other people as it was to us. Clearly, it was a big hit and starting in 2011, LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS went from this back burner idea to something that we were really working on.

Things were moving at a pretty decent clip, but ultimately we hit a bit of a setback in August of that year, as we weren't able to secure all the funding that we needed to pull the movie off. At the time I was devastated, but ultimately it was the best thing for us because, in retrospect, we weren't nearly as ready as we thought we were to shoot.

We pushed our shooting dates back six months and re-attacked the movie with a newfound vigor. The following six months was a blur of producing fund raising tools, taking meetings, and generally spreading the gospel of LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS everywhere we could. Ultimately, we ended up shooting LOVE IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS over the course of three weeks in May of 2012 with a third of the original budget we thought we needed.

It was a certifiably insane idea, one that we never should have been able to pull off, but by the time we hit Memorial Day 2012, we had shot the craziest horror-comedy that we could imagine.

Tim and Sophie. Who they imagine themselves to be doesn't jibe with the reality, so when faced with this horrific choice they have to make, they quickly become unmoored.

It's dangerous to judge the characters though, and as an actor, you need to constantly be on your guard against that. They are damaged people, even before the film begins and the pressure of the situation simply exposes the flaws that were hidden underneath the surface. And not just in themselves, but in their marriage.

*Talk to us about that final shot. It was an incredible way to end an excellent movie. How'd it come about?*

From my original conception of the film, the house itself always became a tomb for Sophie and Tim and I wanted the final shot to reflect that. Overall there's a shift stylistically in that final scene – we're shooting profiles, no over-the-shoulders – so we're never getting to see into their eyes, because as far as I'm concerned, there's nothing left to see. Their inner-lives are dead. They're soulless.

*Finally, what do you hope viewers will walk out of the theatre thinking?*

I've always been attracted to stories that have a moral question at their heart. Before going to film school I studied creative writing as an undergrad – I write novels as well – and the work of writers like William Styron and F. Scott Fitzgerald have long been touchstones. When I finish those books – or a film by, say, Michael Haneke or Krystof Kieslowski – I feel that I have been exposed to a truth in the human condition, one that even has left me disturbed or unsettled, but still elemental. Often the decisions we make in life aren't clean, and perhaps don't reflect the people we should or want to be. Good people make bad choices all the time, and we'd be lying to ourselves if we didn't acknowledge that we could as well.



the Santo name, including the famous Santo Negro angle in 1993 which was the hottest in all of Mexico before lawsuits started flying. It is obviously a very loving and large family, but it is also one that is comprised of seemingly isolated individuals. El Hijo del Santo is separated from the rest of the family; he is the one who got to be the second Santo. This is touched on briefly as well, but it's also one of the most powerful segments in the entire film

The use of rare footage, combined with intelligent editing and very well-done interviews, gives a visual style to *The Man Behind the Mask* that is completely compatible with the subject. There is a sort of framing device, a running feud Santo had with Hijo del Sicodelico and Angel Blanco, shown without explanation throughout the film. We see at least three (and probably more like five or six) different matches between these folks. The Santo flying around the ring in those sections is not the Santo of 1993-6, when I'd argue he was top twenty in the world in the ring, but an older, more injured, still revered but a step-slower worker. He's good, but the polish isn't there any more. Of course, having to work with Sicodelico can't be much fun, either...

These seem to be a mixture of footage shot by Obregon and some televised footage. It's all edited in a way that makes it work with the general visual concept of the film, but it also goes another step and places the life of El Hijo del Santo in exceptionally crisp contrast. For everything that is the emotional, human Jorge Guzmán Rodríguez, we have to remember that so many more are connected to him as El Hijo del Santo, and many of those are really in reverence of El Santo.

The weakness of the film? Well, that's an interesting question. To me, it is the lack of attention paid to some of his career highlights. Nothing is mentioned of his feud with Negro Casas or Los Vatos Locos, both of which were among the best feuds of their day. They talked a bit about AAA and EMLL/CMLL, but not much context is given for what Mexican wrestling was when he came up, and when it exploded big time. There's no mention of his time with the WWF as a part of their SuperAstros program, and while there's some nice footage of him in Japan, and of a European tour, it barely touches on the fact that he was such a great wrestler, or how he was so much better than his father ever was a worker.

Of course, I can also see that my knowledge of 1990s Lucha would also color my desire to see that covered by one of the most important players of the time and that the lack of a lot of that stuff doesn't actually hurt a film that is telling the story of a human/symbol. While films like *Gaea Girls*, *The Backyard*, and *Beyond the Mat* focus on the toughness of the life of a wrestler, *The Man Behind the Mask* focuses on a man whose identity is one-part superhero, one part human. It's fascinating and beautiful to see the way Obregon has focused everything into a single documentary that brings us into El Hijo del

Santo's world, and we find the original El Santo standing there staring down at us in so many different ways.

There are some absolutely amazing moments covered. Two of my favorites are a hotel room wrestling match between Santo and his son, who is dressed in Rey Mysterio mask and gear. It's an awesome segment, and it plays so well with all the footage we're shown of El Santo and his son in a ring for a television crew from the late 1970s and early 1980s. The other is the section about El Hijo del Santo's pushing of the El Santo brand. The number of branded and licensed items with El Santo's image on them is huge. It's one of the best examples of exactly how far Santo has pushed into the popular culture of Mexico.

El Santo, I should say, because no matter how much better in the ring, or how loudly crowds chant "Santo! Santo!", it is always the father who is the Greater Star. It is no fault of the younger Santo; El Santo was simply the biggest name in the days when wrestling was first appearing on television, as well as being a big movie and comics star. El Hijo del Santo never quite managed that level of fame, largely because Mexico changed, but he is still an icon, and he still draws crowds.

In the history of wrestling, there is only one El Santo, just like there's only one Hulk Hogan, one The Rock, one Stone Cold Steve Austin, one Gorgeous George. Hulk Hogan probably came the closest to being America's El Santo, but he has never shown his human side to the public, which is something El Santo managed to do while still wearing his mask. This documentary does so much to humanize El Hijo del Santo, and it really makes me wish this was done as a longer piece, because I wanted more, so much more, about the man behind the mask.

*(This Review first appeared on FanboyPlanet.com - <http://fanboyplanet.com/movies/2014-cinequest-man-behind-the-mask.php>)*



were shooting in a brownstone that was actually being renovated, we would shoot for a couple of weeks, and then shut down production. Once enough work had been done and the house was at a new stage, we would bring everyone back and start shooting again. That may sound like a nightmare, but it actually created a great organic process for both the actors and the crew because every time we returned to the location after a few months, so much had changed. This really helped inform the changes going on within the characters as well. For me the house, itself plays such a role in the film – as a visual element, as a metaphor – and that's one of the elements that makes the film special for me.

Post-production – as it inevitably does – ended up taking longer than we had anticipated. For one thing, the weekend after we finished principal photography my first child was born. As you might imagine, it's not easy to edit with a newborn in the next room! In terms of the film itself though, we shot hours and hours of footage of the renovation itself, and creating those montages – which for me gives a rhythm to the film – was time consuming as there were endless possible variations ... to say nothing of having to log all the footage first.

Needless to say, key to the montages was also the score. I spent a long time trying to find the right composer to capture the spirit and energy of the film and was ultimately really thrilled with Jago's work. His budget was infinitesimally small, but like me, he has a group of collaborators with whom he works who got as excited about the film as he was. It's pretty much unheard of to have live musicians playing real instruments on a score of this size on this budget scale, but he pulled it off. I think it's really noticeable and adds a great aural depth.

But in terms of a timeline for Cinequest – we're actually still not done! We're doing the final color timing this week. Cutting it tight, but we'll be ready!

*The series of compromises/attitude shifts throughout the film by your characters are so deftly handled. Can you give us some insight on how you work with your actors to get so incredible performances?*

Virtually all of the lead actors in the film come from a theatrical background and I believe that was a big help. Both Corey and Sean, for instance, I first saw perform on stage and that's what excited me to work with them.

I directed Marguerite in a production of "Romeo & Juliet" a few years back, so there was already a great level of trust between us. We spent a lot of time early on talking about self-deception, and what an easy trap that is to fall into. There's a Tolstoy quote which, loosely translated, says that it's worse to deceive yourself than it is to deceive others, and that's what is at play with

*Director/Writer/Actor Jadrien Steele's career stretches back a LONG way. He's a fine writer, having written two books for Young Adult readers, and an excellent filmmaker. He not only wrote and directed Victoriana, but he starred as Tim Becker in the film as well.*

*Let's start with the obvious - have you ever renovated a brownstone?*

Growing up, my parents renovated a few brownstones in Park Slope, so I got to see firsthand the process – and the expense. It was a much different time in Brooklyn then – I think our car got broken into at least seven times – but there was something special about these grand old houses that had been carved up, and rediscovering them. Now it's old news, but at the time it was something quite unique, and daring.

As you might imagine,  
it's not easy to edit with a  
newborn in the next room!

*Early in the film, the idea of gentrification is brought up. Have you personally experienced the pricing-out, on either side?*

As an artist living in New York, I think it's always an uphill battle trying not to get priced out of neighborhoods. We've been lucky so far, but you never know. It feels a bit like a gold rush in the city right now.

*Can you walk us through your production timeline - Concept to Cinequest, as it were.*

The film itself came together fairly quickly; I came up with the premise in November and then we were in production by February. I'd worked with many of the key people in the production before – my producer, my DP, Marguerite French (who stars) – and everybody was like, great, let's do it! But while it all began quickly, filming itself in fact went on for nearly 14 months. Because we

**I was utterly thrown** when I watched *A is for Alex*, the latest from Atlanta's Fake Wood Wallpaper. These are the same folks who put out *Blood Car*, one of the best horror films I've ever seen a Cinequest, and also *Congratulations*, the absolutely genius surrealist cop work from last year's festival. So, I had an idea of what to expect from *A is for Alex*.

Only, I was not prepared. Not in the slightest.

Alex Orr, our director, is making a movie with his pregnant wife, Katie. The movie's about Alex Orr, our director, who is making a movie with his pregnant wife, Katie. That Alex is also an inventor, who has set out to replace the bees that have been dying off with much larger robotic bees. He's also full of existential angst about the impending arrival of their first child, so much so that he spends a great deal of time crying. As time goes by, his film takes some turns for the worst, as his actors start to question his vision and rebel, and his bees, well, they're not great either.

He's also full of existential  
angst about the impending  
arrival of their first child

This film is just so damned weird. It's a wonderful study in what soon-to-be-father's feel when they are thrown into the situation of having their first kid. Katie Orr, who is amazing in this film, is so rock solid, even when going through the ups and downs, and it seems that Alex is replacing the expectations of what her anxieties should be. At the same time, Alex does rise to the occasion sometimes, which only makes his failings feel more painful. He's not ready for this at all, and he's put so much on it, possibly because of his relationship with his father. We don't see any actual interactions with Alex's father, but an actor playing his father blows-up at him before Alex actually gets to say what the issues with his dad were. It's a nice touch, and the kind of thing that set me off my anticipation seat.

And then there's Alex's mother, who is obsessively posting videos of Alex from his youth. Sadly, she's not discriminate enough about what she posts and gets pinched for posting child pornography of her son getting blown as a fourteen year old. This thread is so weird, but it's also a bit telling of why Alex has this vision of a movie of his life, as it is really happening, and his desire to push the direction of it.

Of course, Katie Orr was actually pregnant, and we even get to see the young 'un as soon as he's born. The way the film is constructed is so smart. It plays with your expectations, especially for those who are so familiar with the filmmaker film you find in works like 9. It's all the artist's insecurities, showing that cinematic competence is so often masking emotional incompetence. It's a great film for that, and when it swings from one reality to another, it's jarring in a good way.

I can't recommend *A is for Alex* enough, though you have to come to it with a will for the weird. It rewards those who come to it with perfect faith that they're gonna be fucked with!

## A is for Alex - Directed by Alex Orr

### Screenings

March 8th at 4:30pm

March 9th at 6:30pm

March 14th at 4:45pm



*You have such a great, and varied cast. What's your approach towards working with your actors?*

For a film such as this, your cast is the most important element. The chemistry between the characters has to intoxicate the audience and make them want to go along with whatever they do. It was important for us to get enough rehearsal time. We scheduled a solid 5 days with 2-3 hr rehearsals to work the scenes, block and rewrite if needed.

*And finally, the obvious question - have you ever been to a divorce party?*

I have NEVER been to a divorce party myself. My guess it would be very awkward! Just like the movie I'm sure it would be a good show! *You have such a great, and varied cast. What's your approach towards working with your actors?*





*Director/ writer Edy Soto was kind enough to answer a few brief questions about The Divorce Party. Soto's worked on many projects as director, producer, and writer, including the exceptional short Reservado!*

*You've created such richly layered characters. How did you approach creating the scenario?*

The idea struck my cowriter and I several years ago after reading a magazine article that detailed mega rock star Jack White's divorce from his second wife. They threw a big elaborate divorce party to prove to all their friends (and children) that they still cared for each other and were still going to be involved in each other's lives. The concept was ripe for comedy and drama and I wanted to explore how a group of characters would interact in that setting.

## The concept was ripe for comedy and drama...

*Can you walk us through your production timeline, from conception to seeing it in its final form?*

It took my co writer and I one month to have a finished first draft of the script. Pre Production took three months and we were writing simultaneously. Production lasted 12 days, with 6 day week and multiple 15 hour days. We were shooting 11-12 pages a day which was very difficult on every one involved.

*There's a theme of economic inequity among the characters running through The Divorce Party. How did that concept work into the development process?*

It was important to highlight Kip's economic struggle as important conflict that affects his marriage to Leena. Many young adults empathize with Kip's position. Kip like much of America is saddled with college debt and underemployed. Added to this Leena's medical bills build pressure on the relationships. The film is very much a humorous coming of age story showing characters entering adulthood facing an uncertain perhaps and bleak economic future.

**The party film.** It's a classic as far as I'm concerned. They date back to the 1920s and 30s; they were perfected early by the legendary director Erich Von Stroheim. As time has gone on, we've seen so many exceptional party films. The classics, *Dazed & Confused* or *Can't Hardly Wait*, have been in heavy rotation in my collection for years. One of my favorite festival films of recent years was *The Lather Effect* (featuring Connie Britton and Eric Stoltz) which was about what happens when a high school party happens to folks in their 30s. For that reason, I was quite excited about *The Divorce Party*. Of course, often our excitement is rewarded with disappointment, but sometimes these films go so far beyond our expectations that it doesn't matter how hyped they are.

*The Divorce Party* is an incredible example of the latter.

The concept is simple - a young married couple, Leena and Kip, is nearing the completion of their divorce. They have received the separation papers, and they're a day away from moving out of their apartment. Leena, played by Ashlynn Yennie (of *Human Centipede*), is recovering from multiple surgeries following an automobile accident. Kip (Colin Owens) lost his job as a special ed teacher. The financial strain, along with very different outlooks on the world, has driven them apart. Leena is ethereal; Kip is sardonic. Leena feels that her only option is to move back in with her parents in Arizona; Kip doesn't want to have to depend on any one to support him. As their marriage is coming to the end of the track, Leena has decided that she wants to throw a party to signify the transition out of wedded bliss.

More than anything, Kip doesn't want to lose Leena. It's hard to say what Leena wants. One reading would almost certainly be that she wants security, stability. One theme that keeps popping up, often in subtle ways, is that these days of financial instability and conspicuous consumption leave no possibility for security for the young, the idealistic, the artist. There are a couple of potshots taken at the Baby Boomers, which is fine (since it's all their fault), but at times I worried that this was about to become a film more about the message of inequality and less about these beautifully drawn characters.

Of course, it's not just Kip and Leena. There's also the friends. The incredible Marikah Cunningham plays Stef, a driven

social media-type with her own assistant. Cunningham is a real eye-opener, as I'd never seen her in anything, but instantly she establishes her character and as the night of the divorce party sails on, she is trying desperate to stay above-deck. Akeem Smith plays Kip's friend Saul. He's pretty slutty, but he's also the target of Stef's affection; even though he's an absolute dick about his interactions with her. Sometime hot, often cold. It is their relationship that plays near-perfect contrast to what we see in Leena-Kip. Saul has money from his parents that he lives on. Stef has enough money to have her own assistant. They're set, and they can't seem to connect enough even to have sex. Kip and Leena are so connected that they still want each other as much as ever, make sweet love as easily as any couple in their honeymoon phase, and clearly still love each other. These are the two extremes, and it's nearly as painful to see the failure of connection as it is to witness the dissolution of such an obviously loving relationship.

## Things get dark, accusations fly, truths are told, and there's an epic musical performance

And then there's Adam, played by Zoran Korach. He's the ultimate example of young and rich and stupid. It seems like everything he says is soaked in douchebaggery. He's terrible, but Zoran plays the role so well. He even floats between the poles of absolute jackass and sweetheart. Of course, he's only the later when trying to score with a chick, but it seems real, and it works.

The story is beautiful, and as the party goes on, it becomes evident that this party is not going to end well. Things get dark, accusations fly, truths are told, and there's an epic musical performance by a character you do not expect to be as awesome as he turns out to be. This is the second-best example of that last trope behind only *Can't Hard Wait*. The party is only a setting, a swirling mass of drugs and dancing and drinking and screwing, every bit as decadent as von Stroheim's 'orgies', but here the action that floats on top of that is so much more layered, the characters so thoroughly enlivened by the performances, and especially by a script that is full of hammer-lines by Smith, and snark from just about every other character mixed in with the actual emotions of young, damaged, unsteady Millennials. It's a powerful combination.

And that's the impressive thing about *APP*. It makes the second screen important, but not required. I watched it first without a SmartPhone, and it was a very good viewing experience. The paranoia was still there, the story-telling and acting driving the movie along along with pinpoint direction, editing, and cinematography. When we watched it with the SmartPhone, it turned out to work even better as an event, though the same story was told. It happened to play up some moments, which ended up slightly modifying how I viewed the entire film. That's not a bad thing, but it's the difference between watching and enjoying a MOVIE and being a part of and enjoying an EXPERIENCE.

And *APP* is an experience that you should go out of your way to have, because it's a lot of fun. The Slippery Slope argument that if you invite people to use their phones in a movie theatre setting, it'll bleed over into all movies and >bam<, there goes the night out at the films is an interesting one, but one that I think lacks a bit of teeth. With current television options and surround sound becoming an more and more available option, you've already seen the Movie Watching concept move more and more into a home environment, and thus the only reason to go to the theatre is to have a Movie Experience with others. Now, I completely agree that cell phones should be thoroughly discouraged in regular theatre settings, but when they are used as a part of an experience, that's completely different. The key is setting the expectations from the audience. If you advertise "Live Tweeting Encouraged During the 7pm Screening of *Greek Fishermen in Love*", then I think that's a fine thing. If you announce that you're allowing Cell Phone usage during the film, that's cool, but you should also try and balance that with non-Phone screenings. That's key because neither the No Cell Phone nor All Cell Phone screenings will appeal to everyone.

All in all, *APP* is excellent viewing with or without your iPhone out and ready.

**APP - Directed by Bobby Boersman**  
**Screenings**  
**Friday March 14th 11:59pm**  
**Saturday March 15th at 4:30pm**

led to brawls in some areas, and loud complaints from film fans. I understand, and get annoyed once in a while myself, but now we're seeing filmmakers attempting to bring this technology into the theatre as a part of the viewing experience.

At Cinequest in 2012, showed *Twittamentary*, a wonderful little documentary about how Social Media, and Twitter in specific, has changed lives, created new forms of interaction. During the film, there was a large, vertically oriented second screen off to the side of the big screen that ran live Tweets using the hashtag #twittamentary. It was an interesting film, and you could certainly enjoy it without the Twitter stream. With the stream, it did seem a tiny bit distracting. You had a second screen to try and integrate into your viewing, and a second screen that was entirely text-based, which is a very different experience from watching a film, even if it has subtitles. I saw *Napoleon* not long after, which famously ended with *Polyvision*, featuring three screens, sometimes showing three different images. But they were all right next to each other, all showing images, and all able to be reconciled within my head easily. Since almost all the Tweet on that screen came from inside the theatre, it did lead to a bit of a sense of community among the viewers. Still, I'd say that it was only an 80% successful experiment, but still a good little movie.

Now, *APP*, as a film, is a lot of fun. It's incredibly well-made, features some very good performances, is shot smartly, and has that *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* sense of intense danger closing in around the edges. The science fiction element is subtle, and it never goes too extreme in any direction. There's not a lot of blood, only a touch of sex, a bare behind in the nudity arena, the three principal markers of a 21st century horror film. Still, it manages to tell its story so well. What they do with the second screen is fascinating from both a storytelling and technical aspect. You download an app (called IRIS) and you start it when the movie starts. First, they do don't bombard you with call out to your phone. In the first twenty minutes I think they do four, each preceded by a buzz so you know when to look. The first one, less than a minute into the movie, is a simple point to a fake website. The second, and where I think *APP*'s second screen really felt wisely used, was an alternate shot. On the big screen, we follow on her motorcycle down a road and into a carpark. We seem to get the same shot on the second screen, only to have it veer up and into the building above the car park. It was a different shot, and it sorta set up the idea that the two screens are deeply tied, but not completely the same story. Other shots we get are from the point of view of IRIS on her phone, what the phone captures. That works well, and in one sense actually improves on the story by showing us a rather key plotpoint before it comes to the Big Screen. That's a nice touch, though it completely works when viewed without the second screen.

The ending is difficult. Read one way, it is the ultimate surrender by a character to the forces that are trying to drag them down. Looked at another way, it is the only satisfying ending for a film with two characters so likable. And read the other other way, it is the ultimate acknowledgement that there is an entire generation that might never be able to take care of itself: either finically or emotionally.

The cinematography is solid, the editing strong, the music very much setting the mood. In fact, I'd argue that the music, which is largely not intrusive in the way that it is in so many indy flicks, sets mood and tone so perfectly. While the technical aspects do not distract from anything, they feel secondary to an exceptional script and actors who hammer everything so perfectly, first swing.

*The Divorce Party* is an incredible film, plain and simple. It is worth not just one, but many viewings. There are depths in the characters and the situation that can be mined over many, many viewings.

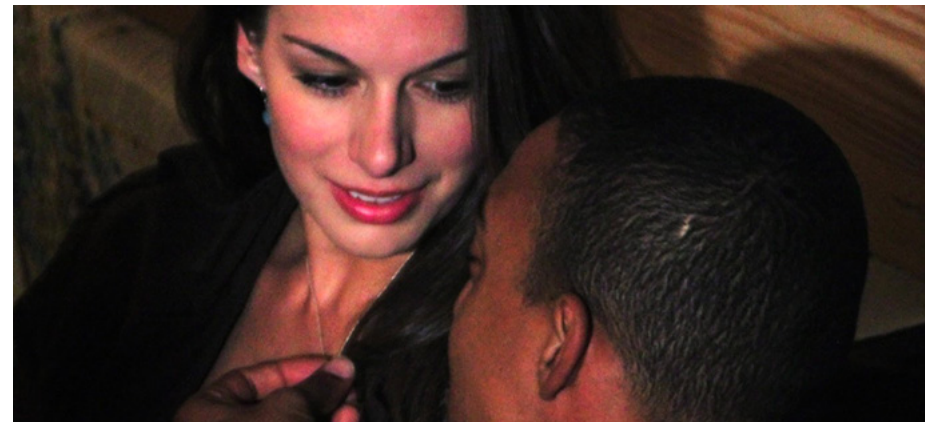
## The Divorce Party - Directed by Edy Soto

### Screenings

Saturday March 8th at 9:30pm

Monday March 10th at 7:00pm

Tuesday March 11th at 4:00pm



**Victoriana** doesn't bother even trying to be that story you keep hearing - young people facing a difficult problem, sticking to their ideals and triumphing. Instead, what *Victoriana* does is work magic by giving us one-part tragedy for equal parts victory. Here, where lesser films would insist on the the characters growing and learning, director and writer make a much more realistic, and cynical, choice. Yes, they change, almost universally for the worse, and it's a good thing. A very good thing for those of us viewing it through the pinhole. I get tired of the feel-good ending, and here, it's not at all a feel-good; it's far more of a "Yeah, that's how it would happen."

Sophie Becker has a trust fund. She convinces her writer husband Tim that they should buy and renovate a brownstone in Brooklyn. Now, they start out with high ideals- they're not going to throw out the current residents of the brownstone because they don't want to be a part of the gentrification that has often priced-out so many long-time residents. They set about remodeling the house, turning it into five apartments, only to see troubles pop up in every corner. There's an elderly tenant, Louise, who's been there since the 50s, who also happens to be a total jerk. The renovation costs keep going up and up, and the money's running out. Tim, an author, is let go by his agent, but he decides to lie to Sophie and say that everything's great. The money isn't flowing, Tim's creative juices are equally dried up, and the strain it's putting on their marriage is considerable.

As the film moves forward, both Tim and Sophie make massive mistakes in dealing with their situations. It seems as if every time they make a choice, it's consequences lead to more pain between them, and even further complications outside. They start to let themselves change. The couple that would not assist in the gentrification of their little part of Brooklyn become cold, heartless. Tim faces reality and takes a job with a cutthroat real estate company. Sophie doggedly pursues the renovations, and an affair with the renovator. There's also the problem of the police snooping about due to the disappearance of Louise. Every choice they make is almost certainly wrong, morally speaking, but every one is the one I'd probably in the same circumstances.

We all hate when it happens. You plunk down fifteen bucks to see Liam Neeson as Mad Punchington III in *The Large Irish Fist of Doom* at the local AMC and within ton seconds of the first throat-ripping hammer fist some jackass in the row in front of you starts texting, his screen somehow incredibly bright. No matter how many warning videos they show during the pre-show cash-grab commercials saying 'Turn Off Your Phones!', it still happens. You hate it, it pulls you out of the movie, puts you right back in the Real World, where you need to answer that text where your boss asks if you remembered to have the office's fire extinguishers refilled last year. You're at the movies to get away, to find new stories, in new worlds, even if those worlds are inhabited by wolves attacking the angry-caldest man in the world. You don't need another screen invading on your viewing. All you need is the big one out in front of the auditorium, not a second one in your lap.

But what if the filmmaker decides to make that second screen a part of the world they're creating on the Big Screen?

*APP*, by Bobby Boersman, is a fantastic little present day science fiction/horror film. I watched it first in a very cold room, surrounded by films in cold canisters. It tells the story of a young college student, Anna, played with exceptional clarity by Hannah Hoekstra, who has acquired an app on her phone called IRIS. IRIS seems to be an AI that tries to be very helpful. It wants you to ask it questions, and it wants to answer you. Of course, as is true with all technologies, it goes over the edge and turns psychotic, but what are you gonna do?

Now, as Anna discovers, the cell phone has become attached to each of us. IRIS won't let her go, making terrible things happen every time she tries to get rid of the APP. In our world, we have a feeling that if we let a single message go uncommented on, we're out of the conversation, no longer mattering to the world outside our physical presence. That's a big change in our thinking and it's less than fifteen years old. We're constantly able to be connected, and we've somehow mentally metabolized that concept as we NEED to be constantly connected. It has led to so many problems, with movie theaters, a Sacred Place to so many, being one of the places most affected. The invasion of phones into theaters has

Off course, even just talking about his inspirations sparks music videos that perfectly mimic the vibe of the eighties, right down to the film stock.

Yet like *This Is Spinal Tap*, the music works not because it's directly parodying hits, but because you can imagine talented yet clueless songwriters turning these songs out. Kudos to Kevin Brough and Nicholas Faiella, with help from Staley -- this soundtrack has stayed in my car. If you don't pay attention to the lyrics, some of these could easily pass as legitimate hits of the eighties -- really, is "I Want To Make Love, Not Just Sex" any more blunt a song title than "We Don't Have To Take Our Clothes Off (To Have a Good Time)"?

And that song led to drinking cherry wine. Eternity prefers to indulge in "Sambuca & Cider." Yes, a double entendre can be found within the lyrics -- within most of them -- but it's just this side of plausible that Todd doesn't realize it.

The masterpiece, though, is "Don't Let Go," which is straight up out of the days that Hall & Oates ruled the charts -- no joke, just perfectly listenable pop pretending to be R&B. If only Eternity's album "Rhythm & Hues" could truly sit on my CD shelf next to "Rock & Soul (part one)," they would be indistinguishable.

Thorpe sprinkles in a few cameos from '80s actors, too, but not too heavy-handedly. Eric Roberts chews through his brief moments, but Martin Kove and Jon Gries really create characters -- still over-the-top -- that fit in knowingly without winking at the audience. It's great to see that for Gries in particular, one of those rock solid character actors even from his youngest days that never quite broke out of "oh, THAT guy" status.

As for that glamorist status, let's just say that costumer Nicole Abi-Loutfi got it down cold, and for the sake of my dignity, we'll leave it at that. Yes, I had a single cross earring.

And so *Eternity: The Movie* strikes just the right chord, reveling in its cheesiness yet getting it right, with even a title card that reflects off of Xanadu. Those eighties, those were times that had best been seen to be believed, and so, I believe in *Eternity: The Movie*.

(Review first appeared on Fanboyplanet.com - <http://www.fanboyplanet.com/movies/2014-cinequest-eternity-the-movie.php>)

Eternity: The Movie - Directed by Ian Thorpe

### Screenings

Saturday March 8th at 9:30pm

Sunday March 9th at 9:15pm

Friday March 14th at 4:45pm

All along, one can tell that this story will not end well; the outcome is obvious from the time the first choice is made. The problem is they are flawed, they're humans, and they have started down a path. They make moves that can only end in one thing, and they change, not growing, but learning how to deaden parts of themselves to move further down the path. They abandon those morals and become people, not crusaders. That's a difficult matter when it comes to acting. You can lean into it, play it for comedy like in the film *Life Stinks*, but here, Jadrien Steele and Marguerite French play these situations perfectly. French's Sophie, in particular, is amazing. She plays remorse in equal portions with resolve, all while managing to get across the idea of a woman caught in a bear trap. Tim becomes completely unlikeable, not that Sophie is all that likable as time goes on, but he really does turn into a dirtbag.

And in the same situation, so would I.

Perhaps the best way to look at *Victoriana* is through the lens of compromise. Almost from the first scene, the characters making bigger and bigger compromises, to the point that at the end, there's nothing left of their original characters: but they've won. The material goal of the characters from the beginning is achieved, but they are no longer themselves; they are the compromised versions of themselves, which are deplorable, but completely understandable. The Grand Compromise that comes as the finale of the film must be so disheartening to any viewer who wants a happy ending. What we are given is merely another compromise, and that is actually what happens in life. There are no bows, there are no real endings. There is compromise after compromise until the moment when you have no remaining compromises to make. THAT is the ending of all of us, and that is the ending of *Victoriana*.

Victoriana - Directed by Jadrien Steele

### Screenings

Saturday March 8th at 4:00pm

Monday March 10th at 9:00pm

Wednesday March 12th at 12:00pm

**There is a saying** - only the darkest moments are worth re-living. I never quite believed it until I saw *Blood Punch* - a film so dark, you gotta live it twice... well, actually a lot more than that.

*Blood Punch* opens with one of the best scenes in the history of film. It's so simple: a beautiful young woman shows up at an NA meeting, looking for someone to cook-up some Meth. A LOT of Meth. In one day.

The scene itself is pure brilliance, played right down the middle and with just enough fuss to make it completely and totally memorable. It starts things in a way that not only hooks you, but it sets up that sort of world where strange things happen. Dark things. VERY DARK things. The basic idea combines the visceral quality of Tarantino, Fuller, and Preminger at their best with the surrealist comedic application of the premise of *Groundhog's Day*. These are characters who are trapped in their situation until something changes.

And that's where it gets really good.

The acting is pretty solid, especially from the great Milo Cawthorne as Milton and Olivia Tennant as Skyler. Their relationship, and the near constant betrayals and murders of Skyler's pretty much psychotic ex, Russell (Ari Boyland), is well portrayed, and at times kinda heart-breaking. There's a lot of dark commentary just bubbling below the surface on the nature of coupling and the ways you can move on, and how so often things just keep coming back and back and back again. The way this plays makes us care for Milton and Skyler, often against the logical assertion of the fact that these two are both killers at various times, shows how smart writer Eddie Guzelian and director Madellaine Paxson are!

## Screenings

Friday March 7th at 11:59pm

Sunday March 9th at 9:30pm

Saturday March 15th at 11:45am

**Like a lot of fluffy-haired young men** in the eighties, Todd Lucas (Barrett Crake) moved to Reseda from the midwest armed with a dream -- to play rhythm and blues the way it was meant to be played.

If the thought of being in L.A. is your first hiccup on that whole "meant to be played" journey, then you're a step ahead of Todd. Yet sometimes the Lord takes care of fools, and of course, Los Angeles is a city of dreams.

Within one day of settling in, Todd has a job as a glamorist at BJ Maxx's selling "high quality fashion at affordable prices," not knowing he should avoid the girls at the clearance rack. And then he meets saxophonist B.J. Fairchild (Myko Olivier), equally wide-eyed but about different things, and somehow they can't help but click -- but only after a montage.

A rags to riches to rags to artistic fulfillment story, *Eternity: The Movie* isn't just about how many strange bands rose to the top during the eighties, but also how much cheese made it into movie theaters. Director Ian Thorpe sticks every New World Cinema comedy into a blender with a helping of *Mannequin*, then dumps the soundtrack of my college years into the mix. It's strangely satisfying to watch now, but embarrassing to admit that's what we watched then. I suspect that Thorpe, along with screenwriters Joey Abi-Loutfi and Eric Staley, know that it's not as painful as we pretend.

It's note perfect in the over-earnestness of Crake and Olivier, playing broadly and yet coming across as completely sincere. For Olivier, that makes a tricky balance, since B.J. has to straddle between that eighties staple of the obnoxious horndog and the true blue best friend.

Though the two make up the Hall and Oates-like band *Eternity*, they also form an uneasy romantic triangle with Gina Marie (Nikki Leonti). Like them, she writes songs, though Thorpe spares us her process, and helps Todd get his feet on the ground. Romance isn't really in the cards, because as B.J. points out, Todd can only write good songs when he's heartbroken, which leads to subtly hilarious song titles matched with B.J. steering Todd into bad relationships.

And it's pretty ridiculous.

Of course, this is a comedy, and while there can be no over-looking of the message. It's a powerful message, that some of use are coo-coo-banana pants over Twitter and Facebook, or maybe that we're all nuts for not being able to look at our real world, IRL, and see what's there for us. There's also a huge "Hey, nothing on the internet is real" theme which kinda bugs me when I think about it, but also I completely understand it. These are BIG THOUGHTS, but at the same time, it's not over-powering of the comedy.

And that's why people are gonna come to see it, and that's why they're gonna leave entertained and happy!

Friended to Death - Directed by Sarah Smick

## Screenings

Friday March 7th at 7:15pm

Monday March 10th at 7:15pm

Friday March 14th at 12:00pm



I've become somewhat jaded when it comes to documentaries. There are a lot of Docs these days now that there are a great many places to get them seen, but so often they feel like they're doing the same thing. You get an interview, a piece of stock footage, the music is sparse, often minimalist, and very violin-plucky or flute-tooty. It's an easily defined format, and one I see over and over again. You get tired of things when they keep appearing, despite your best intentions, but once in a while, something will pop up and use the same format as everyone else, but go so far beyond that it turns out to be amazing.

That's *Sex(Ed)*.

First off, it's brilliantly paced. When cutting between such a large amount of found footage and interviews, *Sex(Ed)* comes off as one of the most thoroughly researched documentaries of all time; lavishly appointed with footage from almost a hundred years of sex education films.

In particular the inclusion of a strong bit of John Ford's *Sex Hygiene*. It was the most impressive example of a government sex ed film of the time. The section on Loose Women and VD was really good as well, and perhaps the most important as explaining the way we teach men that they're not the real problem is a significant point that needs to be made. And even making points like that, at points it briefly gets political, which is good, and it does so much more because it makes a point that is so impressive and not at all veiled, but also not over-powering. I loved the look at films I had no idea about. *Are You Popular?*, a film from the 1950s that tries to put forward the proper form of dating for teenagers, gives a great platform for the presentation of theories about how these ideas played out in real people's lives.

Or not, for that matter.

And there's a moment of Johnathan Banks bowling in a 1970s film!

If there's a downside, it's the occasional review of events in the sexual revolution that don't quite match up with the times that they're focusing on. It's the problem with doing both chronological and thematic approaches simultaneously, which is something I understand from working on various exhibits over the years. It does put a slight disjointed feeling on to things, but it only jars briefly, and the content bubbles up and makes things better.

In the end, it's far more about the world of sex than just about how we learn about Sex in America, and that's a good thing because the message can be so easily transformed into something beyond. The films like *Perversion for Profit* (which features the covers for several novels by my late friend Dick Geis) and various other footage that try to show the ways in which the more conservative elements tried to control the messages of sexuality. These are presented so smoothly, so well-edited and cut into a narrative form that makes every point well.

*Sex(Ed)* is a great documentary for fans of those films that just don't get the attention they deserve. These films are a significant part of the story of the evolution of American Sexuality.

Sex(Ed) - Directed by Brenda Goodman  
 Screenings  
 Saturday March 8th at 6:45pm  
 Sunday March 9th at 4:45pm  
 Tuesday March 11th at 5:00pm



**I'm a social media guy.** I spend a lot of time on Facebook, post to Twitter, enjoy what used to be Get Glue, tribe.net, even used the dead ones - MySpace, LiveJournal, and Friendster. Sometimes, I worry about the amount of time I spend on Social Media. I try not to be one of those assholes who spends all their time asking for stuff, but I'm probably one of those guys who spends too much time using Facebook as a surrogate Open Mic Night of sorts.

And so, *Friended to Death* cuts a little close to home.

Ryan Hansen (Veronica Mars) plays the sadly Addicted Michael Harris, a parking enforcement douche who is constantly on Facebook, worrying about how many likes and shares he's getting. He's got a few hundred friends, a great many of them he doesn't know, and a few actual friends. He can barely make the distinction between them in his mind. After a particularly bad moment with a friend, Mike forces his friend Emile to use his Facebook to fake his death.

Now, here's a really interesting point- Mike wants to do it to see who will mourn him, in essence to see if his friends are actually his friends, or just the faceless mass on the other end of a computer network. Isn't this something we've all done, to a degree. Aren't we making this exact move in miniature when we post "Someone post something funny. It's been a rough day" or even if they you just post a picture with the caption "Cute, don't you think?" That entire concept is not at all foreign to me, and watching Michael go through his journey, as he entangles Emile more and more with his scheme, I am afraid that I could completely understand it, right down to hating talking on the phone. Michael is obsessed with being Public, with not having Private, at least when it comes to his Social Networking. He's more interested in being loved widely instead of deeply, and while here it's abstracted for laughs, how many do I know (or may myself be) for whom that is truth?

The comedy is well-paced, the timing perfect, the final adaption of a *New Order* by our hero actually rather realistic. The comedy is partly played out because we all recognize the parts of our own Social Media lifestyles being shown to us. And if you're not a Social Media nerd, you're laughing at how ridiculous it all is.