EVENTS

SXSW Film Festival 2013: Sean Gallagher's "Good Night"

Austin-based writer/director Sean Gallagher's feature-length directing debut **"Good Night,"** starring his long-time friend and fellow Austinite and co-producer Jonny Mars (who I randomly saw at Royal Blue Grocery in Austin, after we had technical difficulties during our previously scheduled phone interview), made me cry as I watched it on my laptop while sitting on the floor of Old Main. It's the story about Leigh and Winston Rockwall, a couple who throws a dinner party to both celebrate Leigh's 29th birthday and to tell their closest friends that her cancer has returned. Austinite Adriene Mishler's performance is subtle and graceful, even in the movie's most serious moments. The movie's two-story house outside of Austin, where Gallagher says the majority of the cast lived during the shoot, including himself, becomes a character in its own right: the whispered bedtime conversations it's heard, the shadowy footsteps it's felt, and the dreams it's seen grow help centralize the ensemble cast, which includes sometimes Austinite Alex Karpovsky from the HBO series "Girls" and Austinite Chris Doubek (who I ran into on the street during SXSW). The house becomes a catalyst for pivotal events in each dinner guest's lives, including the viewer, who has been invited to sit at the dinner table to witness these raw, personal and often times funny events play out. As each character deals with the fact that this might be the last night they see Leigh, I began thinking about how I would react if my best friend told me they were dying. I'm pretty sure it would be a cross between "Charlie," played by Todd Berger, and "Jake," played by Karpovsky. You'll have to see the film to know what I mean. Eventually, Leigh and Winston are left to face the future in the house they worked so hard to get and maintain, leaving the viewer to to wonder if the film's ending is something the couple had planned from the beginning. "Good Night" had its North American premiere at this year's SXSW FilmFestival.

"Good Night" Trailer

Listen to my full interview with Gallagher: **GoodNightInterview**

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