



Here is the American film NUVO recommends you see during the Indy Film Fest...

IIFF 2010: Jeffie Was Here

NUVO review by Sam Watermeier

Writer-director Todd Edwards takes a risk in his latest independent film by satirizing the very genre that supports such "fresh" interpretations on creativity and creative types. *Jeffie Was Here* is a sneering indie film deftly poking fun at sneering indie films. Thankfully, it does this quite well.

Protagonists Alan and Amanda Mangold (co-writer Peter Bedgood and Alexis Raben), are a young couple that embarks on a cross-country road trip when Alan's grandmother passes away. Alan enthusiastically proclaims the trip a great chance for self-discovery and time to gather inspiration for his novel — two rather self-indulgent motives fully exploited by Bedgood in his performance.

The film unfolds in an improv style that itself borders on indie film cliché. But the episodic structure is fitting in that it mirrors the free-flowing unpredictability of Alan and Amanda's road trip, including the "speed bump" they hit after inviting a hitchhiking drifter along to help pay for gas. That drifter is Jeffie, an eccentric played by writer-director Edwards.

Like many characters of this genre, Jeffie is a smug pseudo-intellectual. He dresses in drab Communist garb and carries around his demo record — a collection of moody hippie ballads about the environment. Edwards' ironic, exuberantly quirky performance is a grandiose parody of the indie spirit.

As the film unfolds, you realize that Alan and Amanda are not too different from Jeffie. Edwards uses the drifter as a fun-house mirror to hold up to their prejudices — and ours too. He shines a light on the detached hipster cool of Alan and Amanda and the hypocrisy of those like Jeffie who judge them.

Jeffie Was Here is refreshing. Rarely do you see filmmakers satirize the genre in which they are working. Especially when that genre is one taken as seriously as the "indie road movie" (i.e. *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Away We Go*, *My Own Private Idaho*).

Bottom line: A dizzying and cathartic comedic spectacle satirizing the often self-important genre we've all been itching to parody.

Director: Todd Edwards

Producers: Katie Hooten, Timothy Hooten

Cast: Peter Bedgood, Alexis Raben, Todd Edwards, Christine Rose, and Ken Marino. (USA)