

See Rebellion Dog, See Rebellion Dog Blog July 2014



Boyhood

Cues for recovery, values, maturity and life come from everywhere.

A boy says, “Mommy, when I grow up, I want to be a songwriter.” The Mother smiles and replies, “Now darling, you know you can’t do both.”



“Rebellion dogs our every step” in our constant quest of self-improvement. Sometimes it’s time to put the pop-psychology books aside and look for answers elsewhere. In this blog-post we visit the music, film, comedy and art festival, North By North East to see what we can see. NXNE was stoked to host Richard

Linklater’s 12-years-in-the-making, *Boyhood* with Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette (June 14th, 2014). It was set for theatrical release in July. We are introduced to Lorelei Linklatter who plays sister/daughter, “Samantha,” and Ellar Coltrane as son/brother “Mason.” The story follows two kids from a broken home. The movie is filmed with the same actors over a series of shoots spanning twelve years—the *boyhood* of Mason who grows from age six to eighteen before our movie-viewing eyes. Rotten Tomatoes fans treat this three-hour epic to a better than nine out of ten rating.

Honestly, my first impression (reaction) was that while *Boyhood* is a movie of heart-warming moments, I felt *that* guilt. *That* guilt is the white, male developed world privilege guilt that comes from passively nodding along with another Hollywood movie whereby female roles are props that support a well crafted male character’s tale. Why wasn’t the movie called, *Childhood*? Wasn’t the experience happening to the boy the same for the girl over twelve years?

Director Maximón Monihan, was in Toronto for NXNE to screen *La Voz de los Silenciados* (*The Voice of the Voiceless*). Having seen *Boyhood* for the second time, he offered me these clues. “Linklater is a bit of a jock so maybe he is isn’t as comfortable writing female parts. Maybe he just writes what we knows best. And the girl was played by his daughter so maybe he thought it would be gauche to portray her character in a more dramatic way.” Still, I thought, making a movie over 12 years, you get all the second chances you could ever dream of. What was I missing? I followed the markers in the story and it took me until the next morning to add them all together.



La Voz de los Silenciados
(*The Voice of the Voiceless*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrJ1NLNFrgE>

Setting aside my guilty conscience, I came to see this movie as being about *malehood*. Manhood is a hard role to pull off with unanimous approval. Ethan Hawke’s character was a boy-father, under-developed and finding himself on the wrong side of the Patricia Arquette character’s underwhelmed report card. He became the classic absentee father. He returns to his kids’ lives but is unwelcome in the role of second-chance husband. He becomes Disneyland-dad, doing what he can to enrich his kids’ lives with encouragement, camping, roughhousing, bowling and *important* talks. Hawke’s character is still chasing the dream of a singer/songwriter, resisting the sell-out of a paper-pushing day job. Still, he takes some courses, gets his actuarial license and settles into a job with an insurance company because, “life is expensive.”

Arquette's character introduces the audience to a small parade of second and third choice father-figure partners that go from Prince Charming to over-controlling drunkard over a series of scenes. As with the lead male characters, none of the males in the movie ever ace the role of manhood in the eyes of those whose judgment matters. The male characters are more akin to aging boyhood. It's a movie of tragic flaws. Like the *Goldilocks* story, everyone's too rigid or too chaotic—no one's just right. It's a movie of donkeys chasing carrots they never get to taste. It's a taste of real-life.

Boyhood is a movie about the days in the life of a boy, looking for clues from what promises remain from the American dream. As a sociology project it is all this and more. We explore the incompleteness and imperfection of our own humanity. The audience is complicit, watching with the same lofty expectations of manhood. In an era of super-hero movies this ain't one of them. The movie poster is so obvious—once the penny drops. We see a boy looking at his father through a magnifying glass—how cute; how telling.



As a first run movie it will do what it does; I wish it all the success. As a lesson in sociology, this film will have the shelf life of a *Catcher in the Rye* or *Gulliver's Travels*. The kids grow into adults in this movie, learning their lessons from both mom and dad. Hawke's character grows into the man—the father—that Arquette wanted him to be. Ethan Hawke played a guitar pickin' songwriter who must have had some appeal to Arquette's character for the purposes of breeding, didn't meet the standard from her expectation as a provider. How could he grow up and be a songwriter at the same time?

The movie is called *Boyhood* because it is as much about Hawke's character's perpetual boyhood, as it is about Mason's evolution. Parenthood is something we catch up to; we don't prepare for it. Manhood comes as boyhood wanes but without the clarity of values and purpose that we expect. Hawke's great fatherly

advice comes with love and humor throughout the move. Later in the flick, as Mason is learning to drive, we are treated to this pithy philosophy for life. “Be aware of three cars ahead and two behind you. Remember, it takes two bad drivers to cause an accident.”

Boyhood: See it with someone who matters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiDztHS3Wos>

Other notable films and documentaries to consider from NXNE courtesy of www.indiecan.com

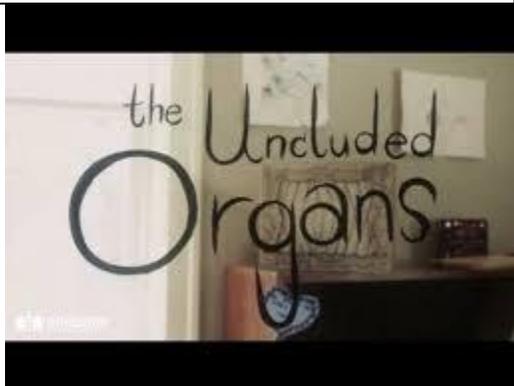
	<p>Vann “Piano Man” Walls was a composer/piano player working for Atlantic Records. Walls song credits are legendary even if he never became a household name. The documentary follows Walls’ history, the story of African American (Race music) musicians and includes cameos by Ry Cooder, Johnny Winter and Leon Russell. <i>Vann "Piano Man" Walls - The Spirit of R&B</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCQAYcUo8_I</p>
	<p>This gothic comedy out of the UK is a tale of an accidental serial killer born of black-comedic clumsiness. It’s quirky; it’s worth it http://www.whoopsthemovie.co.uk</p>
	<p>Let’s Ruin it is the tale of the RVIP Lounge, a mobile karaoke bar and the people who keep the party going. NXNE was the international debut for the movie. Kestrin Pantera, the writer, director and star is no stranger to Toronto as she has been a cellist for Beck, Weezer and emerging indie rock bands. http://letsruinit.com/</p>



Riot on the Dance Floor is a must see as part of any music enthusiasts rock 'n' roll education about Do-It-Yourself work ethic. This story of Randy Now and City Garden (Trenton NJ) is a seminal expose of how punks and metal heads pioneered the music scene of the 21st century.

Nirvana, Dead Kennedys, D.O.A., But Hole Surfers, Ween, R.E.M. The Ramones and Black Flag all played there.

<http://www.citygardensfilm.com/>



The Uncluded is an American alternative hip hop group, formed by rapper Aesop Rock and singer-songwriter Kimya Dawson. Their animated video *Organs* considers the painful process of grief and grace surrounding organ donation. See *Organs* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixOd1MUOxQU>



Director and musician (Hot Panda) Chris Connelly had two quirky animated shorts at NXNE. Two back up dancers from the Van Halen video for *Panama* reunite 30 years later, only to find out that their lives have gone in two very different directions.

<http://vimeo.com/93787035>

Actor Ryan Beil attempts to get into the Guinness Book of World Records by listing all twenty two Canadian Prime Ministers in three seconds.

<http://vimeo.com/84623284>



Frankie Banali and director Regina Russell were onsite at Hot Docs Theatre in Toronto for the debut of Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back - The Quiet Riot Movie.

You don't have to into the band or the scene to appreciate this story of sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, the consequences and the compulsion that drives both addiction and creativity