

Wasted on the Young



Queen Adelaide Clemens: not wasted in *Wasted on the Young*

Ben C Lucas directs a searing high-school melodrama. By **Suzanna LOUIE**

Booze, babes and a party gone dangerously wrong set the stage in *Wasted on the Young*, a teen melodrama-thriller. At a high-end high school in WA, Darren (Oliver Ackland) is the quiet misfit who lives in the shadow of his athletic stepbrother Zach (Alex Russell). When the boys become interested in the same off-the-radar blonde, Xandrie (Adelaide Clemens), Zach ends up with a bruised ego, setting the scene for a downward spiral of destruction and violence.

This alarming drama of rumour,

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rape and revenge unfolds over a series of dreamlike fantasies and jaw-clenching realities. Love it or hate it, *Wasted on the Young* is a film that gets under your skin. "I think the worst possible response you can get from someone is indifference," says its writer-director Ben C Lucas. "It's those one-star reviews that I love."

The young director's debut feature had unlikely beginnings. In 2006 Lucas won the ZTudio What If? Award for his zombie screenplay, *All Flesh Must Be Eaten: The Movie*. He was working on a documentary project when he was offered the chance to

direct *Wasted*, his first feature. "It wasn't what I thought my first film was going to be," Lucas recalls. The original script was schlock-horror, but Lucas had his own agenda.

"I kind of took the characters from the slasher film and put them into a new movie. I'm a different kind of filmmaker. I like fables and morality tales so I wanted to create something out of that." The result is a boundary-pushing high-school melodrama with cutting-edge visuals and surreal cinematography. "I think cinema, amongst its jobs, is to show people something new," he says.

Wasted on the Young takes the viewer into the twisted, cruel world of high school a parent's worst nightmare of sex, drugs, booze and violence. But mums and dads, don't despair: Lucas says that realism was never the goal. "It's melodrama. If you treat that kind of melodrama naturally you end up with a sort of TV soap so you need to create a structure where that kind of drama works and it only works if it's surreal."

With his bold filmmaking style it's no wonder Lucas cites as role models Darren Aronofsky (*Black Swan*) and Danny Boyle (*Slovenly Millionaire*). "They make different kinds of films, but they're all unmistakably theirs," says Lucas. "I really aspire to that."

Wasted on the Young Screens from 3 Mar

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