




Review: Wasted On The Young

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Directed by:	Ben C. Lucas
Written by:	Ben C. Lucas
Starring:	Oliver Ackland, Adelaide Clemens, Alex Russell, Patrick Cullen, Georgina Haig, Geraldine Hakewill
Released:	March 3, 2011
Grade:	B+

I caught *Wasted On The Young* as part of a huge day at the Brisbane International Film Festival back in November 2010. In my notes, I said that "I hope this gets a chance at a cinema release". My rationale was twofold. Firstly, I thought it was a good film. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I was curious to see what mainstream audiences would think of it.

The story revolves around a high school party which goes horribly wrong. A girl named Xandrie (Clemens) has her drink spiked by a group of teenagers out to cause mischief. As the effects of the drug sink in, Xandrie loses control. She is lured into the basement by members of the popular swimming team who then take advantage of her. At the end of the night, they dump her unconscious body at the nearby beach.

The perpetrator of this crime is Zack (Russell), captain of the swim team and one of the most popular guys at school. I really hated this guy... and that is a big positive for the film. He's an arrogant "prick". He's the kind of person who can manipulate others and will always get his own way.

Someone is looking to bring him down however. His step-brother, Darren (Ackland), has always a crush on Xandrie and is sickened by what happened to her at the party. He knows what happened too. Darren doesn't go to the authorities though. He has his own ideas and wants to use them to shatter Zack's squeaky clean image.

An interesting observation about *Wasted On The Young* is that it doesn't feature a single adult throughout the entire movie. We don't see the school headmaster and what he has to say. We don't see these kids' parents and their reactions. We don't see the police and their own investigations. I admire the director's attempt to distinguish the film in this way but the lack of adults is a slight distraction. You can't help but think – shouldn't someone be stepping in and stopping this madness?

That said, the film is still a very topical one. It touches on the way high school kids can attack each other through text messaging and social network sites. Once upon a time, you got back at someone by getting into a physical fight. Now, it

seems you can just as easily attack through online means. A person's reputation can be destroyed in an instant. It's scary stuff.

I'm not convinced that there's a clear message but this is still a film worth your attention. The editing is sharp and the cinematography is striking. This is a distinctive first feature from director Ben C. Lucas. It may have been shot on a tight budget (like most locally made films) but you can't tell from the impressive imagery that you'll see on screen.

I'm curious to how mainstream audiences react to the ending. Will it leave them with a bad taste in their mouth? Or will it provoke a warranted discussion? The only way to find out what I'm talking about is to see this new Australian movie for yourself.

You can read my interview with star Oliver Ackland by clicking [here](/index.php/blog-59/38-blog/2003-interview-with-oliver-ackland-star-of-wasted-on-the-young) (/index.php/blog-59/38-blog/2003-interview-with-oliver-ackland-star-of-wasted-on-the-young).

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