PRODUCTION
Film Discussion Group
CAST Bay Area Film Enthusiasts
LOCATION
Email:
adedic@pacbell.net
DATE Meet Monthly
Sunday evenings
TIME 6:30 pm

FILM: **THE SKELETON TWINS**

FDG RATING: 3.3 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Craig Johnson: *director*
Bill Hader: *actor, Milo*
Kristin Wiig: *actress, Maggie*

DATE: October 18, 2020

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE SKELETON TWINS**

For some film discussion participants, The Skeleton Twins was a forgettable, sad story about dysfunctional siblings. For others, it was a bittersweet, drama comedy, character driven film, that didn't make any grand statements but was an authentic depiction of people just getting on with their lives in all its imperfections. In the opening scene, we meet Maggie (Kristin Wiig) contemplating overdosing with pills when she receives a call that her twin brother Milo (Bill Hader) is in the hospital after attempting suicide. Despite not having spoken for 10 years, (she had stayed in their hometown of Nyack, N.Y., got married and became a dental hygienist while he moved to Los Angeles with dreams of becoming an actor but instead works as a waiter), she flies to California to his hospital bedside and then reluctantly brings Milo home to live with her and her hubby Lance, a laid back nice guy and fairly colorless character, but a few of us thought he was more sincere and sympathetic than the two siblings. Maggie and Milo are both broken from unresolved issues going back to their father's suicide when they were teenagers. His suicide was followed by their subsequent near abandonment by their self-absorbed mother who retreated into a new age existence as a self-help guru. Her brief appearance at a comical, disjointed dinner one night underscores the emotional distance and awkwardness in their relationship.

As the movie progresses, we learn that Milo, who calls himself a "tragic gay cliche" had a relationship with his English teacher in high school. Evidently, Maggie's discovery and outing of this scandalous relationship caused the twins estrangement. The film treats this subject with sensitivity. When Maggie discovers that Milo has reconnected with his high school English teacher, Rich, she tries to get him to see that this was an abusive relationship. However, we can clearly see there was love and affection between the two as Rich recognized Milo's abilities as a writer and fostered them. Maggie has unresolved issues as well. She appears to be happy, but is unfaithful to her devoted husband and confides to Milo that she has had casual sex with several other men including her current scuba diving instructor causing her to undermine her marriage, question ever wanting children, and doubt her ability to be a good mother. They each seem to share a self-destructive gene. The two characters are heartfelt, broken yet funny as the film touches on these very serious issues with just the right amount of humor.

It was interesting to note that the twins seemed to only experience happiness when they were sharing their eerily symbiotic quirky senses of humor and reminiscing about crazy and funny incidents they had growing up. Our favorite scenes were wonderful comic moments when Maggie and Milo lip sync and dance to Jefferson Airplane's Star Ship Trooper, or when dressed up hilariously for Halloween, drawing you into their fun.

Several discussion participants noted that they love both of these actors as comedians, and it was great to see them in something other than comedy. On the flip side, one participant, would have preferred to see Kristin Wiig and Bill Hader relegate the story to Saturday Night Live skits, rather than a feature film about dysfunctional characters who don't evolve. Most of us agreed that their strength, however, was the eerily in sync strong bond they shared plus their empathy and acceptance of each other's flaws. They both knew in their hearts they could count on each other. The sibling interaction appealed to many discussion participants but for others the relationship was contrived, strained, and not believable.

The "messiness" of The Skeleton Twins was an authentic reflection of reality for some resident reviewers who gave it high scores. Others were less appreciative resulting in a thinly fleshed 3.3 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)

See you at the movies!

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www.filmdiscussiongroup.com