



FILM: **THE VAST OF NIGHT**

FDG RATING: 3.2 ☺☺☺○○

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

Andrew Patterson: Director/writer
Sierra McCormick: Actress, Fay Crocker
Jake Horowitz: Actor, Everett

DATE: July 19, 2020

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE VAST OF NIGHT**

The Vast Of Night is a fun sci-fi blast to the past with all the nostalgia of a Twilight Zone story. "There's something in the sky" in 1950s Cayuga, New Mexico, as 16 year old Fay, managing the town switchboard as her nighttime job, hears some strange sounds and alerts the just slightly older teen Everett, hosting a nightly radio show across town, while almost everyone else is gathered in the high school basketball stadium for the game. Interference in radio signals, calls are being dropped, something weird is going on and the two techie nerd teens are determined to figure it out. Everett asks his listeners to call in if they hear the sounds and one caller tells them it's happened before.

Those of us who remember the UFO buzz in the 50s and 60s and the popularity of sci-fi films about spaceships and aliens landing, will feel a sense of déjà vu. The story is familiar but the young film maker has combined an enormous amount of ingenuity with creative cinematography using unusual camera angles at foot level as the two teens briskly walk down the deserted dark street under an eerie glow of ominous night lighting. Another fast tracking camera shot that must have been 20 seconds, swoons swiftly across the gymnasium, up the bleachers, out the window and down the street like a force from outer space. It's a captivating, impressive debut feature film on a scant budget of \$700,000, and filmed over 4 weeks, (plus 1 year in editing). One resident reviewer noted The Vast of Night delivered more quality for less money than probably any film in years. Except for one unfortunately long scene with an elderly woman recounting the night her son was abducted, the story continuously builds in tension, with fast snappy dialog punctuated with youthful slang of the time. The lead actors were excellent. Another discussion participant commented that the innocence of the main characters and their growing intensity of finding similar interests in each other and in outer space was a treat to watch. Yes, there was a hokeyness to the plot and hardly a thriller, but there was such simplicity and charm to it all.

We really liked Fay's curiosity, spunk and savvy sense of science. A bit of humor was added as Fay recited for Everett, futuristic snippets from her science magazine and many are actual Elon Musk and Apple inventions of today.

True to the sci-fi movies of the 50s lacking sophisticated special effects, The Vast of Night accomplishes more atmospherically. For some discussion participants, that wasn't enough. One commented that the film should have been much shorter. Another opined that it was a blast from the past that should have never left the launch pad. Another recognized the exceptional accomplishments of a debut feature film made on tiny budget and in that context thought it excelled, but compared to other indie films by experienced film makers, it seemed more like an excellent student film. Others noted that it is not an original theme or plot, and seems like the film is out dated. It would have been very compelling in 1960 when everyone was talking about UFOs. A piece of Americana is how another described the film.

The Vast of Night landed an earthly 3.2 on our cosmic scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

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