

Review: Boyhood (Richard Linklater, 2014)



I remember when I was six years old; in every sense naive, argumentative and an observer of everything around me. There were breakfast time petty spats and fear of the ground being pulled from underneath you. What makes Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* so remarkable is that it develops like photos from a lost roll of film- unfathomably candid, memorable and reminiscent.

Mason grows up, like we all do; witnessing his family's ever changing bonds, the struggles of school and teenage life in fast succession and, often, simultaneously.

Linklater's groundbreaking technique of choosing one cast and filming the story of their growth over a twelve year period, is what has gained *Boyhood* such anticipation amongst film fans and critics. The immense amount of dedication that has gone into it's creation is evident in the well reined linearity in the editing stage. It runs like a seamless account of human life, not a film portraying it's high and low points. It's beautifully subdued, letting loose only when it's characters have space to roam which, judging by his previous work is Linklater's forté. He has a beautiful understanding of people and thus when he creates them and their situations in daily life, it plays out in a manner that satisfyingly natural. The music that plays in background scenes, whether that's in the car or the grocery store, gives the viewer a sense of the timescale involved, creating beautiful triggers set down to snap like nostalgic mouse traps in your mind.

The performances here are almost uncomfortably good. The innocence of childhood is captured beautifully by the younger

cast's lack of experience in the field. You don't feel as though you are watching child actors, but rather children living out their daily lives. It works in Boyhood's favour, creating a natural development as they reach their elder years. Performances from all, but especially leads Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette, are notably well done. Of course, a mention would have to go to the star himself, Ellar Coltrane. He lets his character build around his own enigmatic, quiet charm; never trying too hard to create something that there isn't a place for.

The collaborative effort of everyone involved in Linklater's gargantuan project has resulted in something surprisingly subdued and halcyonic. Boyhood relies on its ability to set its pegs down early on, and explore outward from the mind of a young boy through times of heartbreak, misunderstanding and the familial issues that everyone faces. Unlike most of today's films, it doesn't rely on a smart, convoluted script to impress the viewer; it knows that a true depiction will suffice. Beautifully told and performed, Boyhood is a sombre, charismatic masterpiece.

Boyhood has a member's preview screening on Sunday July 6th at the Cameo, Home Street.

It opens to all at Cameo on 11 July 2014, and at Filmhouse, Lothian Road on 25 July 2014