



REVIEW of *The Past Has Yet To Begin* directed by William Stancik

Of all the William Stancik films I've come across, *The Past Has Yet To Begin* stands out from the pack. Shot in the form of a narrative by an author discussing a family biography, it is performed almost entirely by Stancik himself. There are definite elements of tragedy, mixed with that Stancik brand of quirky humor we've come to expect. This one definitely has flavors of Steinbeck's *Canary Row* meets Garrison Keillor with its depression era setting and colorful descriptive storytelling.

"I wrote my novel using the three things a novelist usually uses. Alcohol, a dysfunctional family, and alcohol again."

"My grandfather came to America with only the clothes on his back and he made himself a good living selling his Claymouth pancake mix."

This film moves at a slower pace and is less abstract in its focus than the others and definitely showcases Stancik's strong storytelling abilities. I'd say it is probably my personal favorite so far. Although shot in a more simple, monologue style, I felt a little more was put into the editing with some visual tricks to give that turn of the century, 'filmic', jittery projector look. To act out a couple of characters from the tales being spun, Stancik himself put on masks and played multiple roles. For the women in the stories, Wendy Stancik and Luiza Galina also made appearances. Both were great, as you'd expect.

Something I've noticed is Stancik frequently tosses in names and references from one film to another. He's made reference to the Claymouth pancake mix in a couple of films now as well as the significance of a man being charged with watching a chair. Again, it's just part of what makes a Stancik film unique.

The audio is clean and easy to listen to, although to create flavor, an effect was used in parts, to give an old radio or phonograph quality to the story. In the same way, green screen and visual effects were used for the same purpose, to create that dirty thirties, depression era look.

There's never much to talk about when it comes to production in any Stancik film. He chooses to keep things simple and relies mainly on strong storytelling and delivery, which for the most part is kept very deadpan. This approach is effective and has become his trademark. To be honest, to throw in big production to add flair and drama to one of his scripts, would be a disservice and would detract from the writing. The truth is, the first time I sat down to watch a Stancik film, I didn't know what I was looking at. I had to retreat to a quiet room and lock the door to concentrate on what was being said. Only then do you truly appreciate the style and creativity. Which I believe will continue to grow in popularity.



I've worked in entertainment my entire life. As a film reviewer, thousands of projects cross my desk every year and rarely do I run into anyone with anything new to say. Stancik is one of the few exceptions. I don't gush or blow steam up anyone's dress, but I do see William Stancik as a true original. His quirky blend of storytelling and delivery is nothing short of comic genius.

"Wars come; barns burn down; turpentine gets drunk in copious amounts. And, sometimes, hobos get themselves shot, just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, on the wrong end of a gun, in a wrong part of the universe that lends no ear to our pain and sufferings." Nonsensical, but in a profound sort of way... as only William Stancik could put it.

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