

Film Review: X

No fantasy is too obscene at the masquerade balls hosted by Christian King, known to her guests as X. The monthly masked debauchery that takes place at her beachside estate is all fun and games until the arrival of an unexpected guest from Christian's past threatens to bring to light her darkest secret...

The moment the film opens, we are instantly seduced by Christian's sultry & alluring voice, inviting us into an underground world filled with mystery and intrigue. A safe space, a world free of judgement, free of shame...

Transfixed by the hypnotic score and magnetic draw of a shimmering antique mirror, we find ourselves quietly slipping into our most elegant masquerade mask and entering into this world without any hesitation. Perhaps it's the subtle "Eyes Wide Shut" winks and waves from Director Scott J. Ramsey that prompt us to play along. Or maybe it's the specific choice of not using plastic, artificially manufactured actors as the cast of characters. But the moment we step into Christian's perfectly-manicured estate we begin to feel uneasy.

For us, the shining star of this two-hour soirée was lead Actress, Hope Raymond. Her twisted portrayal of Christian, radiated a mysterious electricity, complemented by a complex admiration that gripped the reigns of the entire film.



APRIL 2019
GOLD WINNER
Best Feature - Love is Love



Film Review: cont'd

Hope's uncanny Maggie Gyllenhaal, essence & delivery drew us in from the start, and reminded us of Gyllenhaal's past performances from "Secretary" & "Sherry Baby". You could feel how much the actress cared about Christian, and just like in the film, her freedom is only released when she loses all control.

"X" truly embodies what it means to keep your friends close, and your enemies closer. But how close is too close? What happens when all your dirty little secrets become the viewing pleasure of ones darkest inhibitions?! How do you judge those who did not pass judgment on you? Do you bite the very hand that fed your naughty thirst? Or do you realize, everyone has a signature feast that fulfills their appetite.

Accessorizing this midnight charade of dirty deeds with the "not so cool kids" invites a different kind of bullied trauma that lingers through every high school hallway.

The choice of neon lighting & superimposed edit also help to paint a surreal portrait of the juxtaposition between Christian, a self proclaimed sexual predator whose sexuality is a source of shame, and Stella Marie, a cam-girl and burlesque dancer who is empowered by her sexuality.

For us, "X" marks the spot and seals it with a sultry kiss.

QPIFF RATING: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★