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FILM

Art House

Kidnapped Is the Best Movie of SIFF Cinema's Festival of New Spanish Cinema

BY CHARLES MUDEDE



This week's column is entirely devoted to one of the 10 films in this year's Festival of New Spanish Cinema. The other films are not bad or anything like that (indeed, I quite enjoyed the comedy *The Great Vazquez*), but they are not exceptional. *Kidnapped* is an

important work of contemporary European cinema, which is why it deserves our full attention.

The core of this film? It's high on craft and low on intelligence. This is what makes it so dark and difficult. *Kidnapped* begins with an upper-middle-class family moving into a new home. Later that night, masked burglars break into the house, tie the family up, and begin a journey to hell, a journey to "the night when all cows are black." The murders, beatings, stabbings, and screaming in *Kidnapped* happen in an intellectual and spiritual void. Think of Gaspar Noé's *Irreversible*, think of that brutal beating with the fire hydrant and also of the brutal rape in the tunnel. The violence in this film, however, fits into a larger theory about humanity and the consequences of revenge. With Noé, we feel the moral force or weight of the Greek tragedies. Miguel Ángel Vivas, the director of *Kidnapped*, offers us no deep thoughts or message or theory. He takes us into the depths of the night and leaves us there.

Vivas may not be an intellectual, but he is a formidable formalist. The pace of the editing, the handling of the camera, the movement of the actors, the flatness of the dialogue, the thickening of the plot—all of this is done with muscular control. The film has no fat. What needs to be in the story is in the story; what doesn't need to be there is not there. **Festival of New Spanish Cinema, Sept 21–25, SIFF Cinema at McCaw**