

VISITORS

The Live Experience

SODERBERGH: Visitors will be screened in Toronto with a live orchestra for the first time anywhere in the world. This will be the first time anybody has seen the film and the first time anybody's heard Philip's score, his brand new score, and there's not going to be another film around that's going to be able to make that claim. I feel like the Toronto event is going to be pretty spectacular. It's something that we talked about very early and the fact that there's a very significant Canadian component to the production side of the film and the fact that, because of Piers Handling, the head of the Festival, Toronto has been doing live events like this for a while, and that this is such a unique iteration of one of those events because it's an original piece and a new film and, frankly, it's a great festival...it's all very exciting. The TIFF audiences are very, very cine-literate and very enthusiastic. If you could sit down and just take your pick of any of the major festivals to do this event for, it'd be tough to argue that Toronto isn't at the top of the list.

KANE: For all of Godfrey's films, seeing them with a live orchestra is a special event. It's not like when you go to see Dracula or something where they're doing it as a gimmick, "Oh, this is how they used to do it in the movies..." and they're playing along to a narrative film. In Godfrey's films the music and the orchestra, specifically when they're performing live, are part of this sort of hybrid theatrical presentation. It's a movie, but you have this live element to it that's really an integral part of the film in a way that it's not in other films because the music and the orchestra are the voice and the narrative of the movie.

SODERBERGH: I think in the case of Visitors we have a unique situation in terms of what the film is, in terms of its capability as existing as a live piece and the opportunities that it provides for an audience. It seems like it's kind of a win-win in a lot of different directions. If you're someone who likes to go out and see live music performed, you're getting a movie, a pretty amazing movie, on top of it for free. If you're someone who's interested in cinema that in any way goes beyond pure disposable entertainment and you really want to see something, you get that and you get this amazing performance of a new orchestral work by Philip Glass for free on top of it. So it seems to me...I don't know why anybody wouldn't want to show up for this. Also in the world we live in now in terms of distribution, you're looking for a way to sort of just break through the clutter and the noise of all these films that are released every weekend. The ability to eventize a piece like this is really unusual. It just doesn't happen very often. I have no doubt that the live rollout of Visitors is going to be a very newsworthy event. I think it's going to be a real chatter magnet, and it's going to be something that people are going to remember.

KANE: It's like whatever the atmospheric version of 3D would be; the whole experience gets much richer and more spectacular when you see the films performed properly. When it's done properly it's really an overwhelming kind of cinema experience, I think, in a way that it's not with other films that do it as some kind of a tricky special event thing.

REGGIO: It has a full embrace of one's senses in a way that a recorded track, I feel, can't. It has the imperfection, first of all, of the orchestra, which we don't have on the track. Any imperfection is taken off and cued and fixed up. Also, what I guess I'm saying is that it takes the sensorial ante and puts it way up here, so that hearing it live allows you to see the film, I think, in a more complete way. If it's not done well, then it becomes a spectacle and does not work. The key to this is keeping it all in timing with the edit, and that's no small task. Michael Riesman, who is Philip's music director, has done all the films live and remarkably within seconds keeps them completely synced up. That's a hard job.