

Moviehole at Toronto Part 6!

by **Paul Fischer** (Wednesday, September 16th, 2009 at 12:23 am)

Paul Fischer and Melissa Algaze are still in Toronto - and checking out all the latest films!

The Boys are Back

"The Boys Are Back", a Special Presentation at this year's festival, marks Director Scott Hicks return to film making in his home, his beloved South Australia.

Joe Warr, is a witty, successful sportswriter (CLIVE OWEN) who, in the wake of his wife's tragic death, finds himself in a sudden, terrifying state of single parenthood. With chaotic emotions swirling just below the surface, Warr throws himself into the only child-rearing philosophy he thinks has a shot at bringing joy back into their lives: "just say yes." Raising two boys – a curious six year-old (NICHOLAS MCANULTY) and a rebel teen (GEORGE MACKAY) from a previous marriage -- in a household devoid of feminine influence, and with an unabashed lack of rules, life becomes exuberant, instinctual, reckless . . . and on the constant verge of disaster. United by unspoken love, conflicted by fierce feelings and in search of a road forward, the three multi-generational boys of the Warr household, father and sons alike, must each find their own way, however tenuous, to grow up. Their story is not just about the transforming power of a family crisis -- but the unavoidable grace of everyday life and love that gets them through.

Themes of loss, the gender divide and joy of parenting are strong in the skilfully drawn script adapted by Allan Cubitt of Simon Carr's memoirs. Owens' performance is exceptional, showing us a character that is the most vulnerable of his career. Hicks' natural direction beautifully captures not only the subtle moments of pain and pleasure in the Warr's family life, but the stunning colours and textures of the South Australian landscape. It is, in a small way, a love letter to the region. The Boys Are Back has undeniable beauty in its quiet moments and in its scenes of vast panoramas. The rich and gorgeous score of piano and guitar music by Hal Lindes pulls the viewer immediately into the pitch-perfect tone of the film, which is compassionate without being cloying or overly sentimental. [M.A]