

Florida filmmakers offer intriguing program

Is there something different about movies made in Florida, by Floridians? And if there is, is this something different a good thing?

The answers await the Florida Filmmakers' Forum Sunday, during which a Florida-made feature and a program of short films by state filmmakers will be shown, after which the directors will field questions from the audience.

The program was assembled by Florida International University film instructor Corky Irick (who with fellow FIU teacher Mel Kiser made *South Beach*, a short film about Miami Beach).

The centerpiece of the program is Carter Lord's *The Enchanted*, a 90-minute feature on a supernatural theme, and the best example of a film's capturing the sense of place of northern and central Florida since *Gal Young Un*.

The story is simple: Royce Hagen, survivor of a central Florida farming family, has finally returned from his wanderings to re-establish the ranch and re-inhabit the homestead, which for years has been watched over by a long-time friend, Booker T. Robertson. Booker T. is happy to see the "boy" again, but he has to warn

him, too: Those new neighbors, the Perdrys — big family, a whole flock of them — are a mite strange. You can let them work the place for a while, help them out, but it won't pay to get too close.

Royce doesn't listen, of course. It isn't long before a Perdry gal is living in the house with him, and it isn't long after that when the livestock begins to be killed in strange ways.

Any more plot and a mystery — a good one — is spoiled. It isn't even the story that's best about *The Enchanted* anyway, though it does end with a nifty kicker.

What's best is the way that Carter Lord, a Lakeland native here making his directorial debut, gets not just the look but the feel of his location into the film.

Lord's achievement has been to re-create the deep-woods mysteriousness of central and northern Florida, to get the pulse and the sounds of the place into scenes as story elements unto themselves. In *The Enchanted*, we always know where we are, and we always know that where we are is not just any place.

This goes a good way toward compensating for the flaws in this

first film. With the exception of Julius Harris as Booker T., none of the cast is strong. *The Enchanted* works, however. It tells a good, creepy story and it sets that story in the perfect place.

It is not just regional chauvinism that makes me applaud this film: it's the sense that there is talent right here, and that we would do well to see more of what can be done by filmmakers working here and not just passing through.

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"The Enchanted" (PG)

★ ★ ½

CAST

Julius Harris, Will Sennett, Casey Blanton

CREDITS

Director: Carter Lord
Producer: Nancy Rachtman Eber
Screenwriter: Charna Porter
Cinematographer: Michael Levine
Music: Phillip Sawyer
A Castle Hill release

Running time: 90 minutes

Brief sexual situations, brief violence

At Beaumont Cinema, on University of Miami campus, at 7 p.m. Sunday.