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**Madison at the 2008 Wisconsin Film Festival**

Amelia Cook on Sunday 04/06/2008 5:30 pm , (6) Recommendations

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I *wanted* to like *Madison*. The plot sounded relevant and interesting -- a war journalist returns from Iraq and heads back to his college town to figure things out. The film is set in Madison and is homegrown through and through from the cast to the beer -- you'll never catch anyone drinking a Budweiser in this film. The Chazen was packed on Saturday night, and I was nearly unable to get a seat.

A few minutes in, though, I knew something was wrong. It took me a while to pinpoint the problem: dialogue. The characters in *Madison* are rarely allowed any interjections in their speech. There was nary an "um" or "well" or "hmm" in the entire 80 minutes. At one point, the dialogue seemed so forced and overly sentimental, that few muffled chuckles escaped from somewhere behind me.

The plot had potential. It was real and tried to articulate the horrors of war. Unfortunately, *Madison* didn't accomplish much in stirring the viewer in *any* direction. It did, however, offer a visual trip through the city with visits to late night haunts Mickey's and The Plaza Tavern, and lovely winter shots of a nearly deserted State Street.

The highlight of *Madison* was Sophia DeVita, the young daughter of actor and the film's star Jim DeVita. Sophia played her role with authenticity and sweetness and brought light to the film.

As I was leaving, I overheard another audience member say, "That was hard to watch." I'll never really know precisely what she meant, but I (sadly) had to agree.

*Madison* opens locally at Sundance Cinemas on Friday, April 25.

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