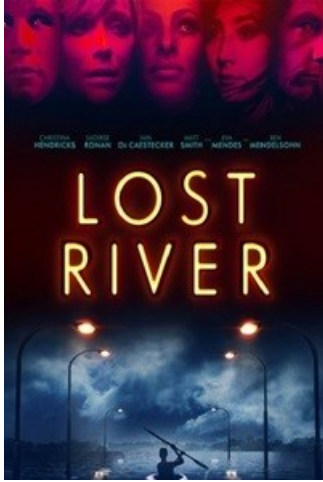


A passionate and masterful Lost River

By  Daniel Derksen

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You will never forget *Lost River*, a consummate masterwork from Ryan Gosling that weaves elements of fantasy noir and suspense into a haunting, modern fairy tale.



Written and directed by Gosling, this dark and brooding drama is set against the surreal dreamscape of the vanishing city of Lost River. As an actor, Gosling has garnered critical acclaim for his choice of diverse film roles (*Place beyond the Pines*, *Drive*, *The Notebook*) and with *Lost River* he continues to create distinct characters inhabiting a multitude of worlds for his debut as a feature film writer and director.

A dark fairy tale about love, family and the fight for survival

"The reason I wanted to direct this movie is because it's a film that I want to see. Like most kids who grew up in the 80's, the first films I watched were family films. The idea of making that kind of story, in a contemporary way, with the language of filmmaking I came to much later in life got me very excited."

It's a dark fairytale about love, family and the fight for survival in the face of true danger.

In the virtually abandoned city of Lost River, Billy (Christina Hendricks), a single mother of two, is lead into a macabre underworld in her quest to save her childhood home and hold her family together. Her teenage son, Bones, discovers a mysterious road that leads into a reservoir, where a once thriving city now lays submerged and forgotten by time. The mystery of this underwater town triggers Bones' curiosity and sets into motion an unexpected journey that will test his limits and the limits of those he loves.



The story behind the story

The idea for *Lost River* had been one that in some ways had been in the back of Gosling's mind since he was a young child. "The story of the underwater town is really the story of the town that I grew up in," says Gosling. "I was walking in the woods when I was a kid and I saw this road that led into the water. I asked my mother and she told me that there was a

town under there. What I learned was that the town I grew up in was part of "The Seaway Project." Developers created a waterway for ships to pass through and flooded several of the towns and villages in the area in order to do so. The idea that I had been swimming in a river with a town underneath me bothers me to this day."

What struck producer, Marc Platt, when he first read the script was that he was immediately caught up in a "wonderful tale of survival and family." Platt notes that, "even as an actor, Ryan Gosling is the consummate storyteller. When he creates a character as an actor he tells a story within a story. So it's really an organic extension that he become a writer and wrote a screenplay as terrific as *Lost River*, and then to have the vision to direct it."

Producing *Lost River*

"This film was, in a lot ways, a gift from the directors I've been working with over the last few years," says Gosling. "I've gone between acting in films completely based in reality with Derek Cianfrance (*Place Beyond the Pines*) to the fevered dreams of Nicolas Winding Refn (*Drive*). I think I've vacillated between these two extremes because my own sensibilities as a filmmaker lay somewhere in-between."

It's inspiring to find how producers Marc Platt, Adam Siegel, David Lancaster, Michael Litvak, Gary Michael Walters and who produced *Drive*, which Gosling starred in, embraced Gosling's passion and joined him in producing *Lost River*.



The film also reunites Gosling with other members of the *Drive* production team, including production designer Beth Mickle, costume designer Erin Benach and sound designer Lon Bender, who truly brings Gosling's vision to the fore.

If you are looking for a film that is definitely one of the highlights of the year, *Lost River* delivers on all levels, artistically and emotionally, with powerhouse performances by the cast, drawing you into a story that is heartfelt and shines a light on the fragile disposition and power of the human spirit. *Lost River* is a rare gem with its singular voice, a powerful story that resonates with the chaos and disorder humanity finds itself in, showing that there is hope in the darkest corners of despair.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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