# The Seattle Times

# 'Voice from the Stone' review: a riveting tale within haunted-castle walls







Originally published April 27, 2017 at 1:03 pm Updated April 27, 2017 at 1:07 pm

Exquisite visuals and a delicately shaded performance by Emilia Clarke as a nurse trying to unlock the emotions of a pathologically withdrawn boy living in an isolated castle in Tuscany are the picture's great strengths. Rating: 3.5 stars out of 4.

By Soren Andersen

Special to The Seattle Times

An ancient castle, its crenulated tower looking out onto woods shrouded in mist. A crypt, the final resting place of 40 generations of castle inhabitants.

A heavy door, creaking open to reveal the craggy, glowering face of a disapproving old man. A mysterious master of the manse, darkly brooding. A pathologically withdrawn boy, rendered mute by the death of his beloved mother from a wasting illness. A dewy young nurse, arriving at this isolated place, given the task of somehow helping the boy to overcome his trauma and speak once more.

This impressive first feature from director Eric Howell is remarkably assured and elegantly mounted thanks to the cinematography of Peter Simonite and the production design of Davide De Stefano — who make the most of the castle in Tuscany where much of the picture was shot.

Adapted by screenwriter Andrew Shaw from the novel "La Voce Della Pietra" by Italian writer Silvio Raffo, "Voice from the Stone" is a genteel mood piece rather than a full-on fright fest.

Restraint seems to have been Howell's guiding principle as he creates a mood not of fear, but of growing unease on the part of the young woman (played by Emilia Clarke in a role very different from her "Mother of Dragons" character in "Game of Thrones").

As the nurse, Verena, she is self-assured, tender but determined to persuade the boy Jakob (9-year-old Edward Dring) that "the dead do not speak" and that he must stop listening at the castle walls in the hope of hearing his mother's voice murmuring in

the stones. As she does so, her relationship with the boy's formidable father (Marton Csokas) gradually shifts from one of cautious reserve to one of growing passion.

Isolated in the castle and with the encouragement of a white-haired grandmotherly figure (Lisa Gastoni), she delves into the background of the boy's lovely concertpianist mother (Caterina Murino). And the deeper she goes the more she begins to believe

She implores the spirit, "let me care for him (the boy). Let me care for them both (father and son)." And her own persona begins to change as she starts to take on the characteristics of the dead woman.

PUBBLICITÀ

With her wonderfully expressive face, Clarke carries the picture, navigating her character's gradual transformation with grace and conviction. She and the movie's exquisite visuals make "Voice from the Stone" a classic genre piece.

# New Times°

# Rich With Atmosphere, Voice From the Stone Can't Transcend Horror Cheese

BY APRIL WOLFE TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017 AT 9 A.M.



Emilia Clarke: From mother of dragons to nanny to naifs.

Momentum Pictures

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**A** A

**In Eric D.** Howell's adaptation of Silvio Raffo's ghostly 1996 novel, *Voice From the Stone*, a timid woman finds employment as a nanny with a rural family ravaged by grief. The longer she stays in their cavernous, stone-and-stucco villa, the more she comes to act, talk and look like the family's dead matriarch.

Few vintage literary devices translate to film as well as the Gothic doppelgänger: An unsuspecting character finds a hidden, often darker, side to herself when her double advertisement



### RICH WITH ATMOSPHERE, VOICE FROM THE STONE CAN'T TRANSCEND HORROR CHEESE

SIGN UP



Offerings, The Tenant, Darling, Something Evil,

The Shining and many more, but the concept stays fresh through original character development. Here, Howell hits some

serious Gothic tones, shooting in a shadowy

natural light with elaborate candelabras

illuminating stale, yawning parlors whose

colossal windows seem more for peering

through than for opening. But as evocative

as the production design and cinematography are, multiple cheesy scenes with one-dimensional characters undermine Howell's efforts to spook, let alone redefine a genre.



**SCOPRI** 

#### **FILM DETAILS**

Voice from the Stone

Rating: R

Genre: Suspense/Thriller Running Time: 94 min. Showing Today In: 1 Theater

**MORE INFO** 

**TRAILER** 

**ALL FILM & TV COVERAGE** 

Emilia Clarke plays Verena, a 1950s Mary Poppins type who roams the Italian countryside, nannying emotionally damaged children back to mental health. Normally a goodbye gal who has no trouble bidding farewell to her wee wards, Verena meets her match in little Jakob (Edward Dring), who mourns the death of his gorgeous pianist mother, Malvina (Caterina Murino), by putting his ear to the quarry stones around the family property to listen for her voice. Flooded with black water, the quarry and its jagged shadows offer a haunting locale for Jakob's search, as does the surrounding forest, which seems a double of Dario Argento's in *Suspiria*, complete with the eerie gossamer mist.

The young nanny uses treats, punishment and her dry wit in her attempts to get Jakob to break his silence. Meanwhile, the lingering presence of Malvina – in her portraits, her clothes and her piano – begins to take hold of the impressionable Verena. And then Klaus (Marton Csokas), Malvina's tempestuous sculptor husband, seduces Verena in a love scene that's more silly than sexy – that unfortunate cheese. Klaus wielding his chisel is a nearly hilarious caricature of an artist so passion-struck that he must have his subject immediately: It's tacky, romance-novel fare. Howell often demonstrates formidable control of atmosphere but bogs his doubles down in the muck of cliché.

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### The Washington Post

# **Voice From the Stone': Hitchcockian chills, stylishly delivered**

By Michael O'Sullivan April 27

The elegantly spooky atmosphere practically drips from "Voice From the Stone," a romantic-supernatural thriller based on the acclaimed 1996 novel by Silvio Raffo (shortlisted for Italy's Strega Prize). Set in a Tuscan mansion in the 1950s and centering on a young woman (Emilia Clarke) who has been hired to care for a child who hasn't uttered a word since his mother's death 7 ½ months earlier, the film looks handsome and expensive, building up a nice head of suspense before sputtering to a less than wholly satisfying conclusion.

Clarke's Verena is a peripatetic practitioner of the therapeutic arts — although, as the film makes clear, she lacks a formal nursing degree — moving from one concerned family to another to treat their sick children. But Jakob (Edward Dring), the boy whose morose and wealthy father has just hired her, isn't ill. He simply hasn't opened his mouth to speak since his mother (Caterina Murino) passed away, leaving behind a grieving widower (Marton Csokas) and a deathbed that has been left untouched, like a museum exhibit, ever since her demise. If that ghoulish touch — along with the prominent display of the late woman's portrait, and the fact that Jakob claims to be able to hear his dead mother's spirit calling to him from the walls — doesn't remind you of "Rebecca," it's through no fault of the director, Eric D. Howell. The first-time feature filmmaker lays on the Hitchcockian overtones with a mason's trowel, constructing a solid, if slightly derivative, movie melodrama of the kind they don't make anymore.

For much of the film, this is enough. Although the horror touches are kept to a minimum — mostly in the form of the estate's creepy groundskeeper, game warden and jack-of-all-other-trades (Remo Girone) — the film nicely leverages the eerie qualities of the setting: a crumbling, centuries-old stone building, complete with mausoleum, that lends the film's title only the most explicit level of meaning. Other interpretations of "stone" refer to the seemingly mute Jakob, as well as to the father, a sculptor who drags out an unfinished marble portrait of his late wife — in the nude — that he asks Verena to sit for, after he notices an uncanny resemblance between the women.

Yes, Dad's initial coldness to Verena thaws considerably over the course of the film, taking the story in a direction that, while not surprising, may be something of a letdown for those hoping for a more paranormal outcome. Although there's a haunted-ness to "Voice," it has more to do with its characters' psychological states, rather than any literal poltergeist.

And that's not entirely a criticism. There's a smartness and realness to the film that keeps it grounded, despite some Edgar Allen Poe-like moments of the macabre.

"Voice From the Stone" is a handsome, old-fashioned film. Fans of haunted-house movies may be disappointed. But anyone who knows the depth of grief — and who recognizes the seemingly insurmountable wall it seems to build around you and the rest of the world — will feel the chills that this movie delivers deep in their bones.

**R.** At the Angelika Pop-Up at Union Market. Also available on demand. Contains sexuality, nudity and some images of dead animals. In English and some Italian with subtitles. 90 minutes.



Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Michael O'Sullivan has worked since 1993 at The Washington Post, where he covers art, film and other forms of popular — and unpopular — culture.

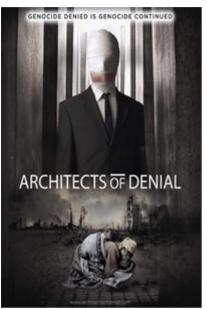


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# VOICE FROM THE STONE (R)

**Genre:** Suspense/Thriller

Running Time: 94 min.

Release Date: April 28, 2017

**FULL REVIEW** 

**TRAILER** 

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http://voicefromthestone....

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By April Wolfe

In Eric D.
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But the longer
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advertisement



cavernous, stone-and-stucco villa, the more she comes to act, talk and look like the family's dead matriarch.

Few vintage literary devices translate to film as well as the Gothic doppelgänger: An unsuspecting character finds a hidden, often darker, side to herself when her double shows up – and sometimes assumes possession. Here, Howell hits some serious Gothic tones, shooting in a shadowy natural



Christmas Gets Ruined Earlier Than Ever This Year in the Ace Horror Film Better Watch Out

By April Wolfe

**SLIDESHOWS** 

**TRAILERS** 

Emilia Clarke plays Verena, a 1950s Mary Poppins type who roams the Italian countryside, nannying emotionally damaged children back to mental health. Normally a goodbye gal who has no trouble bidding farewell to her wee wards, Verena meets her match in little Jakob (Edward Dring), who mourns the death of his gorgeous pianist mother, Malvina (Caterina Murino), by putting his ear to the quarry stones around the family property to listen for her voice.

The young nanny uses treats, punishment and her dry wit in her attempts to get Jakob to break his silence. Meanwhile, the lingering presence of Malvina – in her portraits, her clothes and her piano – begins to take hold of the impressionable Verena. And then Klaus (Marton Csokas), Malvina's tempestuous sculptor husband, seduces Verena in a love scene that's more silly than sexy. As evocative as the production design and cinematography are, multiple cheesy scenes with one-dimensional characters undermine Howell's efforts to spook, let alone redefine a genre.



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APRIL 28, 2017 (/BLOG/2017/4/VOICE-FROM-THE-STONE-MOVIE-REVIEW-BY-JEFF-MITCHELL)

### Voice from the Stone - Movie Review by Jeff Mitchell (/blog/2017/4/voice-from-thestone-movie-review-by-jeffmitchell)



'Voice from the Stone' speaks with its stunning visuals, mysterious performances

Directed by: Eric D. Howell

Written by: Andrew Shaw

Starring: Emilia Clark, Marton Csokas, Edward Dring, and

Caterina Murino

"Voice from the Stone" – Jakob (Edward Dring) is hurting. Seven months and 16 days ago, his mother, Malvina (Caterina Murino), died in her home, and Jakob was by her bedside when she passed away.

He is about 11 years old, and from the moment that she passed, he has not spoken a word to anyone, not even his grieving father, Klaus (Marton Csokas). Klaus is beside himself because of the loss of his lovely, talented wife but also because of Jakob's silence.

He hired several nurses to hopefully find a way for his son to speak but to no avail. One day, a nurse without a university degree, but with a special gift of connection, Verena (Emilia Clarke), enters their lives. Verena, without a husband and kids of her own, enjoys a fruitful, successful career and a long track record of healing dozens of kids over the years. She believes that she might be the key to reaching Jakob and helping him speak, and hence, Verena attempts to find a "Voice from the Stone".

Director Eric D. Howell's picture is aptly named for a couple reasons. First, in the classic story "The Sword in the Stone", a boy becomes the only one in the kingdom to pull a sword from a stone. In this film, Verena could be the only one to help Jakob rediscover his very lost voice. Second, Malvina's family is beyond exceedingly rich, as they earned their wealth – for over 1,200 years - through mining in the adjacent quarry. Hence, "stone" has a literal meaning in this picture.

Literally, this film – told in a 1950s Tuscany setting - is visually beautiful. Howell found a gorgeous setting - Castello Di Celsa in Siena, Italy – which serves as Klaus and Jakob's home. Hiding in the sometimes-gray fog, the property is a luxurious wonder. With lush patterns of thick avocadocolored hedges and acreage in every direction, the carefully manicured land accompanies its massive stone castle-master with a towering crown. The interior is just as impressive, but Howell filmed all of the indoor scenes in Montecalvello Castello, as the small, selected cast weave in between notable rooms steeped in massive amounts of history.

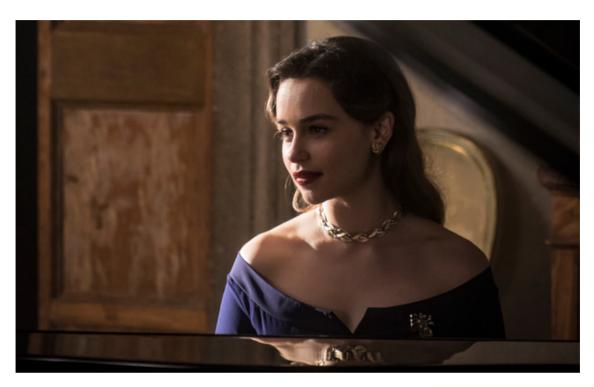
Nearly everything feels wrapped in a shroud of mystery and secrets, as we see Verena walk in both light and shadows. Much of the time, she is looking for Jakob. The boy might not have his voice, but he certainly owns a mind of his own. Verena continually attempts to reach a boy who does not wish to be found – both emotionally and physically - and keeping his distance seems to be his primary skillset. Jakob is not stupid, because he knows very well that his silence breeds frustration with his dad and one starts to believe that it has a specific purpose.

Clarke's Verena is very sympathetic, especially after a reveal of her past and plays an effective protagonist, as we hope for her quick success. With humility, grace and patience, she wins over the audience but struggles to warm up to a cold, distant Klaus and a confused boy, who appears to be in limbo of actually accepting her tutelage. Verena is an honest broker, but this quality leaves her vulnerable to the unknown, which is in a heaping supply with 12 centuries of life, love and death in one place with one family. The family has generated an uncountable amount of memories on this site, and along with wind, rustling leaves and creaky gates, Jakob swears that he hears something else, a voice.

"Voices from the Stone" is a mystery, but through most of the picture, it is a subtle and slow one. Running at a thrifty 1 hour and 34 minutes, the film does feel longer. With just a few lead characters in a nearly empty house and very few times when anybody connects, the slower pace is noticeable, but it is also offset by a picturesque view in nearly any direction.



BY CHRIS ALEXANDER ON APRIL 23, 2017



# Voice from the Stone Review: Emilia Clarke gives a solid performance in this beautifully-crafted romantic horror film

If you're a fan of Roger Corman's first few entries in his classic series of '60s films based on the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, you know that writer Richard Matheson was fond of marrying those opulent tales of dread with Henry James' influential ghost story **The Turn of the Screw**. In 1960's **House of Usher**, 1961's **Pit and the Pendulum** and in the "Morella" segment of 1962's **Tales of Terror**, a hero would travel for whatever reason to an impossible Gothic European manor or castle, nestled in the middle of nowhere and soon be swept up in a supernatural psychodrama of some sort. And it was true that — especially in regards to **Usher** — like in the James tale (and the film version, 1961's **The Innocents**), it wasn't the twists of plot that left viewers spellbound, it was the remarkable way in which Corman and production designer Daniel Haller created an immersive, haunted world, where every creak and whisper hit the nerves like a dagger.

Stuntman and pyro FX artist-turned-director Eric D. Howell's delicate new ghost story **Voice from the Ston**e (based on the novel by Italian writer Silvio Raffo), similarly mines that Corman/James marriage and ladles on plenty of creamy pulp paperback intrigue, creating a distinctly feminine fright movie that is more in love with baroque architecture, swirling mists, broken statues, intricately-designed costumes and suffocating supernatural mystery than it is jump scares or genre cliches. It's a beautiful horror movie, truly, one made for patient grown-ups and with every technical element refined and buffed to a high gloss.

**Game of Thrones**' Dragon Queen Emilia Clarke doffs her platinum wig and dials down her amazonian warrior act to play Verena, a gifted teacher and nurse who, like a non-fantastical **Mary Poppins**, drifts in and out of the lives of a myriad European families, assisting children in need and drawing the previously-fractured units together. And though her young wards are devastated when she checks out to go to her next gig, Verena never takes it personally. She walks away and doesn't look back. Work is work.







One day she's summoned to the estate of a widow (Marton Csokas) and his young son in the Tuscany countryside and, as she wades through the dense fog surrounding the home, she immediately feels something is off. So do we, but Peter Simonite's handsome photography makes every image a masterpiece worthy of framing, so we don't mind much. Turns out the boy hasn't uttered a word since the death of his mother and the grieving patriarch is so shell shocked by his loss, he hasn't had the energy or ability to reach him. But Verena is up for the challenge, gently bonding with the mute boy, day by day. But when first the boy, then Verena, hears harsh whispers coming from behind a stone wall of the house, Verena becomes convinced the dead woman is haunting the house and that somehow she is slowly, surely becoming the mother.

Voice from the Stone is a gorgeous bauble of a chiller, with a sensual, minimalist cello and piano-based score by Michael Wandmacher (Underworld Blood Wars) that aids in building an ambiguous, romantic and melancholy world for the emotionally-troubled characters to inhabit. The cast is just as on point, with Clarke reveling in her role, playing a woman who unlocks both her sexuality and primal maternal instinct in the face of the arcane; and she's matched by Csokas' work as the broken husband who becomes smitten by the new woman in his home and Italian genre film legend Lisa Gastoni (War of the Planets) who creeps around the peripheral as the steely, elderly matron who passive aggressively steers Verena more and more to accepting the fact that she's "becoming" someone else.

Not for horror fans seeking a quick in and out, **Voice from the Stone** is a slow burning, absorbing and carefully-crafted Gothic gem. With its rich cinematography, bodice-heaving sensuality and grandiose sense of decay, it's a film admirers of this sort of thing will want to eat, slowly... so slowly, savoring every shivery second.

Voice from the Stone opens in theaters, VOD and Digital HD on April 28th from Momentum Pictures

# MOVIE REVIEW: 'Voice from the Stone' is a gripping, slow-burn descent

Bolstered by Emilia Clarke's powerful performance and some absolutely beautiful production values, Eric Dennis Howell's period thriller satisfies, even in its messier parts

HUNTER HEILMAN | MAY 3, 2017

#### **Hunter Heilman**



Hunter is the current editorin-chief for The Niner Times. He is a senior Communications major who wishes he were a dog and wants to pet your dog if you have one. Hunter has been a

Sometimes, I miss seeing some key movies in theaters, whether it be a large blockbuster like "The Fate of the Furious," or smaller indie films like "Your Name," I often find myself with too little time and/or money to catch every single movie I want to see in theaters. Yet, strangely, I find myself reviewing more video-on-demand (VOD) movies more than my theatrical track record would suggest. While I might not always have the time to head to Ballantyne to check out the latest indie fare, it's becoming increasingly easier to catch many movies at home, albeit not of the same notoriety. "Voice from the Stone" is one of those films, but this one shares the clear distinction of being the first film I've ever watched on a plane; more specifically a flight from Charlotte to St. Louis (I'm writing this review on a Caravan flight from St. Louis to Jackson, Tenn.). It's easy to scoff at VOD movies if you watch the wrong ones, but if you seek out the right ones, you can find some hidden gems.

"Voice from the Stone" is a hidden gem; a gem with flaws, but a gem.

In 1950's Tuscany, Verena (Emilia Clarke), a children's nurse is called to live with a wealthy family in the Tuscan countryside after the death of the family matriarch (Caterina Murino). Headed by the intense patriarch, Klaus (Martin Csokas), Verena is called in reference to the only child of the family, Jakob (Edward George Dring), who has become mute since the tragic passing of his mother. Tasked with improving Jakob's health and state of mind to get him to speak again, Verena soon finds Jakob speaking to the wall, verbally insisting that his mother speaks to him. While Verena writes this off as mental trauma from his mother's death, she soon begins to realize that Jakob might not be so wrong after all.

Okay, so I have a little bone to pick with "Voice from the Stone," if only due to the complete mismarketing of the film. While the film does feature a ghost story at is core, most of the film is actually spent with Verena as she seeks to get Jakob to speak again. Much of the film focuses on the mystery of Jakob's condition and the enigmatic nature of the house and family surrounding it. For someone entering the film expecting more of a traditional ghost story, I was surprised to find it being more slow-burn than one might expect. If you're going to go full "Personal Shopper," own it.

Yet, don't misconstrue this, I actually enjoyed "Voice from the Stone" quite a bit. It's not perfect in any regard, but for a VOD thriller, it's quite lush and interesting. While Clarke is a well-known actress, known for her role as Danaerys Targareyan on the smash HBO hit "Game of Thrones" and as Sarah Connor in the failed reboot that was "Terminator: Genisys" (though she holds blockbuster hope in the Han Solo origin story at LucasFilm), I would go so far to say that this is Clarke's best performance to date, and easily is the best part about "Voice from the Stone." While Clarke is among the horde of pretty white British girls that pervade media today, Clarke brings a certain darkness in her presence that someone like Felicity Jones or Emma Watson don't quite bring in their performances. Clarke really handles much of the dark material and physicality that this film calls for with a really powerful prowess that I don't think another actress would've been able to pull off. Also impressive is her use of the Italian language in the film. Rather than the film simply refusing to acknowledge that the language exist so the characters can speak English, the English-language element of the film is an actual plot point that gives Clarke and the rest of the cast the chance to flex their Italian language skill impressively.

Supporting cast pale in comparison to Clarke, but still do nice work. Csokas is a nicely deep, if a bit cliché patriarch trope seen before. Still, I was surprised at the level of sensitivity that the film gave to Csokas rather than just sitting around as a bitter patriarch.

Directed by Eric Dennis Howell (typically a stunt coordinator on bigger films), the film is an incredibly lush and beautiful film that uses just as much of its atmosphere as a resource as it does Clarke. Set in a massive Tuscan manor, the film doesn't seek to constrict the characters inside the stone walls of this haunted (figuratively and literally) house, but expands to the massive grounds of the entire estate, with a sense of overwhelming scale that makes you feel just as small and helpless as Verena. Everything from the production design, to the costume design, editing, cinematography and color grading is all simply fabulous and creates a lush, beautiful and charismatic environment that feels just as much as a character as Verena.

Not everything in "Voice from the Stone" is perfect. While the film is a slow-burn, it does spend quite a big chunk of the film in what seems to be a build up to some sort of event that doesn't really ever happen. In fact, the final 10 minutes of this film were a bit confusing, at least on the choices made by the writer in the conclusion. The lead up to the final sequence felt a bit rushed, as if a scene had been cut out from the previous scene to that one, and then the final resolution of the film felt a bit muddled and messy, even if its distinction was clearly made. It just felt unnecessary and a bit droll. The film also introduces a romantic plot that doesn't really hold much relevance, and it's been so long since I've had to deal with an unnecessary romance that I'm a bit unsure what to do with it.

Call it "Jane Eyre" meets "The Haunting of Hill House," whatever you want to call it, "The Voice from the Stone" works surprisingly well. Clarke is an absolute vision as Verena and the film's production values are second-to-none when it comes to European period pieces. I'm a bit surprised that the film wasn't released into more theaters by a bigger distributor, but even with its release now, many are finding the film polarizing, possibly due to the film's final act. Nevertheless, it's hard to complain with a few plot points when the film surrounding it is as carefully tailored as "Voice from the Stone" is.



# 'Voice from the Stone' both sluggish and overacted

By Robert Horton
Friday, April 28, 2017 1:30am ▮ LIFE GO-SEE-DO

You get to your new live-in job, and a few things jump out at you. A room full of taxidermy birds. A flooded quarry nearby. A white-haired lady who wanders into your space, wanting to comb your hair.

Frankly, the dead rabbit tacked above the bathroom mirror should've been the last straw. But this appears less than 30 minutes into "Voice from the Stone," and the new nanny, Verena (Emilia Clarke), appears determined to stick around despite these obvious movie omens.

She's come to this rambling old villa in Tuscany in order to care for a little boy, Jakob (Edward Dring), who has been mute since the death of his mother eight months earlier. His father, a brooding sculptor (Marton Csokas), is desperate to get the boy talking again, and leaves the job to the crisply professional Verena.

This gothic set-up takes place, rather vaguely, during the 1950s. It carries heavy echoes of "Rebecca," with the figure of the dead wife looming over poor Verena's every action.

The dead woman's voice is around too: Everybody in this movie, at one point or another, crouches next to a wall and puts their ears against the stone.

The walls, and the spooky rooms, are extremely handsome. So are the grounds of the villa. This is a good-looking movie, with lots of eye candy to go along with the general feeling of dread.

But man, it's a slog. Something like 20 minutes of action is spread out across the 90-minute running time, and the thing feels sluggish even unt of article wifeing of Thrones," watchers know that Emilia Glacks chas expressive eyebrows, and she keeps them busy throughout the many chialled gess for \$0.99 Verena must face. Clarke's heavy-breathing approach to the role gives us a

fair idea that Verena may not be quite as level-headed as she thinks she is.

Director Eric D. Howell has helmed short films and racked up credits as a stuntman and a special-effects technician. In all that work, he hasn't solved the tricky business of pacing, nor the touch needed to moderate actors' performances.

The story comes from a 1996 novel by Italian author Silvio Raffo. It's easy to imagine the material working better on the page than on the screen. Words could bring Verena's interior fears to creepy life. Images bring them crashing to the ground.

#### "Voice from the Stone" (1 1/2 stars)

The new nanny (Emilia Clarke, from "Game of Thrones") ignores a lot of classic movie omens in this gothic-style suspense picture. Handsome to look at — it's set in an Italian villa in the 1950s — the film is sluggishly paced and generally overacted.

Rating: R, for nudity, subject matter

**Showing: Varsity** 



April 26, 2107

In a horror film so brilliantly subtle, I almost didn't realize that this could be considered a horror film. The amount of suspense, agony, sadness, and thrill that comes across in this film is absolutely incredible. At points I genuinely felt sad for the characters, and it's hard to get me to react at all to most films these days.

The imagery and coloring of the film is interesting as well - it's a bleak, depressing, but beautiful representation of Italy with broken statues, greyish colors, offset by a stunning wardrobe to accompany all of the sadness and decay. It's as if the costumes of the characters bring to life all of the death and destruction surrounding them - their wardrobes evolve with their characters.

**VOICE FROM THE STONE** truly is an interesting film that is one part psychological, one part thriller. Not riddled with jump scares like most horror films, and with a score that consists of mostly strings, it's a welcomed change from the horror scene's predictability. You question yourself, the motives of characters, the sanity of Verena, and the end is undeniably creepy, without having to brace yourself for loud sounds and graphic imagery. There is nothing startling about this film, but it still holds intrigue, which helps it stand up against most of the horror films today that have been so bogged down with the usual filler crap.

Another aspect of this film that absolutely blew my mind: AMY LEE IS BACK WITH A NEW SINGLE! You know Amy Lee...Evanescence Amy Lee, I KNOW, RIGHT?! You missed her too?!Her stunning tribute to the film, SPEAK TO ME, rolls during the credits and it's nothing short of breathtaking, as things by Amy Lee usually are.

With that, I'm able to conclude an absolutely stellar review of **VOICE FROM THE STONE**, a film that should be enjoyed by both horror-buffs and horror-haters alike. There is something in this film for everyone - something so different from most films that are targeted towards a very specific audience.

**VOICE FROM THE STONE** is set to release on April 28th and I highly suggest you give it a watch!

Until next time, ghosts and ghouls! Taylor Terrible <3



### **VOICE FROM THE STONE**





April 28, 2017 | • 1

A young woman lost in thought walks through a forest, not knowing what awaits her and unaware of her surroundings. On the side of road is the surreal sight of an immense disembodied sculpted head of a goddess. Could there be any clearer omen that something is not quite the way it should be in her universe?

Duly drenched in Gothic atmosphere but disastrously drained of any solid suspense, "Voice from the Stone" is a stillborn exercise in the type of supernatural romance found in such classic tales as "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Rebecca" and "The Turn of the Screw." The photography and production design of this '50s-era yarn, which occurs in and around an ancient Tuscan castle and is adapted from a book by Italian writer Silvio Raffo, does almost all the heavy lifting by casting a ghostly visual spell. But while misty fog, wind-strewn leaves, a shadowy crypt and crumbling statues work overtime to strike the right macabre tone of decay and disruption, the hazy narrative is about as compelling as one of those overwrought designer perfume commercials starring an overdressed brandname actress.

ADVERTISEMENT

As for the scent given off by this novice directing effort by stunt coordinator <u>Eric D. Howell</u>, let's call it Eau de Jane Erred.



**David Crow**, Apr 25, 2017

f

grounded (and more affordable) take in *Voice from the Stone*. Still, even with Emilia Clarke on hand to provide her well-known fire and blood fury from *Game of Thrones*, the picture is a rather cold viewing experience.



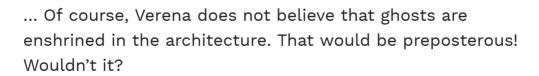
Comment

Set in 1950s Tuscany during a chilled and perpetually overcast autumn, *Voice from the Stone* makes the best of its Italian backdrop. Draped in the decaying grandeur of a medieval villa, the picture follows Clarke as Verena, a depressed nurse/nanny hybrid with a gloomy disposition. She appears to be running from something, although the film curiously never really explores what that something is. No matter, she is a bit of a cross between Mary Poppins and Joan Fontaine's Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca* when she arrives at a remote home deep in the wilderness of rural Italy.



She has been hired by a permanently sneering Klaus (Marton Csokas), the lord of the manor if not its master. For Klaus, as it turns out, is a frustrated artist who's been further aggrieved by the death of his aristocratic wife (Caterina Murino) from about a year ago. In her absence, their son Jakob (Edward Dring) has elected never to speak again—he fears if he opens his mouth, the long dead mother will stop speaking to him from the walls. The same walls that are built from the thousand-year-old quarry stone in which his mother's family made their money... and which lines her tomb in the crypt below the house.







Soon enough, Verena starts hearing the voice too. She also is increasingly encouraged by servant Lilia (Lisa Gastoni) to try on the dead mother's clothing, almost as if to challenge the spirit to a custody battle. And even if Verena finds unexpected resistance in convincing young Jakob to let go of his mother's specter, Klaus has no problem letting rotting





# DENOCETA











The best aspect about *Voice from the Stone* is its relentless and often evocative atmosphere. Whereas other modern filmmakers have toiled at making breathtaking fantasies removed from our reality, there is something to be said about letting an old spooky house (or castle) stand for itself. Just as Hammer Studios in another lifetime mined the English countryside for its most grandly ghoulish vistas, *Voice* turns a picturesque setting into a land swimming in ghosts, whether they be in their running waters or atop battlements on which Jakob (and mama?) have some fun at Verena's vertigo-induced expense.

Unfortunately, it is the film's actual narrative shade where **Voice from the Stone** fails to enunciate its ideas. The picture certainly conjures some amusing echoes, creating a foundation that the likes of Edgar Allan Poe might have treasured: long lost raven haired beauties; art which drains the soul; and more than one allusion to the concept of being entombed alive.

Indeed, the third act is the perfect kind of capper to an exciting short story enthralled by the *danse macabre*. But this is more of a narrative bob than a waltz. Clarke is primarily serviceable as the expressive Verena, donning the right emotion to match the character's evolving attire—she





this caregiver role than her overeager earnestness in the faux-weepy *Me Before You*. Still, her film roles continue to leave something to be desired, and in this case it is a true character instead of a series of manic reactions.

Albeit, she fares better than poor young Dring who is left to stand idly by as the blank child, or Csokas' Klaus, who seems as disinterested in his part as viewers may be with the film by its third act.

Further, the filmmakers never approach the kind of heady sense of spiritual dysequilibrium that the ending builds toward, and rather seem more preoccupied with titillation than terror. Even at only 94 minutes, the movie fails to propel toward its climax, preferring to instead amiably stumble into a fairly decent one.

In the end, **Voice from the Stone** is a pretty looking movie that has a commendable old school touch, but all that simmering atmosphere never once risks coming to a boil; it's content to merely curdle into its lukewarm grave.



#### Voice from the Stone: Call from the Hereafter

by **FREEMAN** • JUNE 27, 2017

Original title: Voice from the Stone\_\_Country of production: USA\_\_Year of release: 2016\_\_Director: Eric D. Howell\_\_Starring: Emilia Clarke, Martina Csokas, Kate Linder, Lisa Gastoni, Remo Girone, Giampiero Judica, Nicole Cadeddu, Antonella Britti and others

After the death of his mother, little Jakob retreats completely into himself and refuses any emotional reaction to his environment. His father, Klaus, is committed to Verena, a child-care girl specializing in difficult cases. She accepts the boy and from now on everything tries to react again with his environment.

But Verena does not really get along well with the boy. Her father also proves to be a rather stubborn, inaccessible man. And in the walls where Jakob and Klaus live, things do not always seem to be right. One day, Verena Jakob catches a crouching of a wall and listening to her. Just as the stones of the wall would speak to him. At some point, Verena begins to listen more closely to the stones of the estate ...

In the first few minutes, "Voice from the Stone" - aside from the setting and the basic tone - reminds us of Emilia Clarke's "A whole six months". Here and there, she is a protector of a rather difficult character and tries to help her back into life. Here and there the approach is difficult at first, but in the course of time Clarke's character is gaining access to man.

#### Watch the mystery thriller "Voice from the Stone":





Game of Thrones Favorite Emilia Clarke as a child girl in "Voice from the Stone".

But these parallels do not last long. "Voice from the Stone" goes very quickly, and focuses on a dense, impressive atmosphere. Director Eric D. Howell focuses on concentrated, long settings and camera rides, on washed-out colors, tipping over into the pastels, and on the visual effect of the few, always slightly barren acting scenes. At the same time he renounces too many cuts or camera games. In his best moments, this gives almost exemplary scenes for gothically inspired creep pictures (the arrival of Verena at the estate of Jakob and Klaus is absolutely exemplary).

Both the ultimately somewhat thin story and the partially pale-abiding characters have to be subordinated to each other. It also lacks the film clearly tension and a concrete threat would definitely not hurt him. Instead, "Voice from the Stone" gradually slips into the madness - and lets itself be all the time in the world. What makes the one or the other length stand out.

In addition, it is already early to recognize elements of the point to which the film is heading. Accordingly, this is then also in its effect. At least she is plausible within the reality established by the film and completes the story. At the same time, however, underscores the rather unspectacular orientation of the entire film, which partly slips too quietly - but still draws the viewer into his world.

The most important reason for this is certainly the total-engaging game of the leading actress Emilia Clarke (" <u>Terminator: Genisys</u>"). In the course of the film, she can change from the gray mouse to the self-conscious woman and whether she walks through the walls of Klaus' and Jacob's estate, the confidence of the two householders is worked out, or towards the end perhaps a little too daring in the life of Jacob she is always a top identification figure, with which one can be drifted through the film.

In addition, the pretty Mimin has recognized that two textile-free scenes in the screenplay underline the transformation of her figure and are therefore imperative. Wow, I have probably never described nude scenes. And although Marton Csokas ("Into the Badlands") is the one who is allowed to look at the physical qualities of Mrs. Clarke, his performance seems to be displeased and disinterested. I have already seen clearly impressive performances of the mime.

The third in the league of this comedy-like mystery play, based on the novel "La voce della pietra" by Silvio Raffo, is the child actor Edward Dring as Jakob, who has a lot to do with his figure. A person who renounces any emotions is rarely a projection screen for sympathy or empathy.

The "Voice from the Stone", made in Italy, turns out to be a quietly narrated, deliberately flowing mystery thriller, which is mainly influenced by the captivating performance of its leading actress, the appealing action site (a stately Italian property), the impressive atmosphere and a pretty, though not surprising, point. The audience is mainly an audience, which does not expect the X-th haunted house and / or ghost movie and can engage in a slow narrative without creepy pictures and the always same JumpScares. In the end, however, even these viewers will have to be confessed that "Voice from the Stone" would not have hurt a few exciting moments at least. A real highlight is the film at least for fans of the band "Evanescence".



The German DVD / Blu-ray to the film will be released on June 30, 2017 by Ascot Elite, is uncut with a FSK 12 release, and has a "Behind the Scenes" alongside the trailers.

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What do you think about the film?

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# Frightfest 2017: Voice From The Stone Review: Dir. Eric D. Howell (2017)

By Kat Hughes - Aug 25, 2017

As Verena, Emilia Clarke gives a great performance, one that is far removed from 'The Mother of Dragons', and gives audiences a chance to see her out of her comfort zone. Gone are the big-budget productions, **Voice from the Stone** is much more stripped back and Clarke has nowhere to hide. Here Clarke is captivating and commands the viewer's attention. She plays Verna with a perfect balance of innocence, intelligence, repression, passion, and towards the end, she literally sizzles with sensuality.



**VOICE FROM THE STONE REVIEW** 

Voice from the Stone is a strange, slow-burning supernatural thriller. You might think that from reading the synopsis you've got the film pegged, but it goes to some very unexpected places. This is a very Gothic, Others-esque story full of intrigue. It's beautifully shot; the locations are fantastic, and with such rich sources, the cinematography is simply stunning. The movie is full to bursting with sweeping scenic shots of the castle, surrounding quarry and meadows. The soundtrack too works great, it's all haunting pianos and additionally features Evanescene's Amy Lee on vocals. Her voice works perfectly in this chilling period piece.

Voice from the Stone moves at an incredibly slow pace which works well within the Gothic ghost story genre. However, after moving so slowly for the majority, it suddenly races to the finale. This loses some of the tension and also results in muddling some of the story. You've become so used to being drip-fed information, having a bucket-load dumped on you all at once is strange and confusing.

Although it runs out of steam towards the end, **Voice from the Stone** is a haunting Gothic ghost story held together by a captivating turn by Emilia Clarke.

Voice from the Stone review by Kat Hughes, August 2017.

Available on DVD from Monday 28th August, Voice from the Stone is currently playing as part of the Horror Channel Frighfest 2017 programme.



MOVIES

# Emilia Clarke's 'Voice From the Stone' is an eerie guessing game

REVIEW: Is "Voice From the Stone" a romance, ghost story or family tale? Yes, yes and yes — maybe. | 1/2 out of 4 stars

By Colin Covert (http://www.startribune.com/colin-covert/10644681/) Star Tribune

#### MAY 4, 2017 — 12:23PM

Deep in a dark Tuscan forest is an isolated Gothic castle where the overgrowth of ivy turns as red as a butcher's floor each fall. It's the sort of haunting place where a gentle, unmarried nurse might seek employment as a live-in caregiver back in 1950s Italy.

In the visually superb romantic thriller "Voice From the Stone," Verena (Emilia Clarke) does exactly that. A specialist with a gift for taking troubled children under her wing, she arrives to help Klaus (Marton Csokas), a brooding sculptor, with his son Jakob (Edward Dring). The boy quit speaking after the death of his beloved mother Malvina (portrayed in flashback scenes by Caterina Murino), whose spirit still occupies the manor through photographs and journals.

Having lost his muse, Klaus has ceased chiseling life-size nudes. Surely it would be an easy, simple task for Verena to tend both son and father at once, wouldn't it? Since that act of compassion might help lighten her somewhat heavy spirit, surely it would be a gift for all.

Playing a more-mature character than she has done before, Clarke gives a convincing performance as the sturdy but vulnerable heroine. Verena is a woman whose commitment to being a healer is matched only by her mix of attraction and disquiet in her new home.

The morbid, lived-in looking mansion is one of the movie's main stars, telling us more about the characters than mere dialogue can convey. In lean, mean style, Csokas plays a blocked artist who married his way into the aristocracy. Is he dark-eyed and aloof from the pain of loss, a social climbing commoner's pangs of guilt, or because he's up to nefarious acts? And what about Alessio (Remo Girone), the possibly duplicitous groundskeeper?

Eric D. Howell's detail-conscious feature directing debut keeps us guessing. Adapted from an acclaimed novel by Italy's Silvio Raffo, it defies attempts to classify it as a love story, aughoust steary or a family story. The film is a mystery pieced together with high style by a skilled illusionist.

As she gradually comes to know the father and son, Verena discovers secrets and traits that becloud her good efforts. Jakob believes that Mama, an opera star, now whispers to him through the manor's massive masonry walls. He is drawn to stand on the precipice of the dangerously tall castle towers. Klaus can be frosty enough to raise goose bumps. Then Verena begins hearing Malvina's voice, as well. And she thinks that the castle's aged servant woman Lilia (Lisa Gastoni) is offering her wise counsel when she tells Verena to slip on items of Malvina's sleek wardrobe and model them for Klaus.

There's a rare, refreshing level of Old World class here, a willingness to tell a story that draws viewers into anxiety while sparing them red fountains of gore. Stephen King long ago replaced Edgar Allan Poe as America's favorite merchant of supernatural chills, yet there's a touch of the old master in Howell's work.

The mood is restrained, with few boo scares, but an unyielding sense of uncertainty. Drawing inspiration from Poe's tales of bodies entombed in brick walls, the macabre romances of Alfred Hitchcock and coldly charismatic magnetism of midlife Marcello Mastroianni, it is ripe with atmosphere and suspense.

Grammy-winning singer/pianist Amy Lee draws the film's final curtain with an operatic ballad that leaves behind the guitar attacks and driving percussion of her multiplatinum goth rock band Evanescence.

Lee's composition, "Speak to Me," reprises the film's themes and sensibilities, covering the end credits with a musical frisson of sweet melancholy. The song creates an impression of lucid consistency that the question-rich story lacks. It's the sort of attention-grabbing work that earns best original song nominations.



MOVIES

### 'Voice From the Stone' called out to Emilia Clarke

The "Game of Thrones" star waited years for the movie to come to fruition.

By Colin Covert Star Tribune MAY 4, 2017 — 2:35PM

11

One reason she has stuck with "Game of Thrones" is that her character keeps morphing. "Every season she's different. I never come back to the same girl. The goalposts are moved every time. I'm very lucky with that. It's evolving and changing and ever richer."

If there's a common theme in her work, she said, it's that "it's hard to tell a story that doesn't involve some kind of romance. It's hard for me to get behind a story that doesn't involve some kind of romance. It's that universal thing that connects us and instantly you're able to relate to. It's what sparks our imagination. And part of what makes us human, too."

She said it was "incredible" to work on the first-time feature by Howell, whose entry to the industry as a stuntman propelled him into filmmaking. His credits include the short films "Ana's Playground," which was shortlisted for an Academy Award nomination, and "Strangers," starring James Denton and Marta Milans.

"He's got a really beautiful eye and his vision for the piece is one other thing that drew me in to be a part of it." He came to the complexity and challenge of "Voice" "with so much energy that it was unreal. He hasn't been worn down. He would do things with changes every day and every moment and to have so much excitement is really effective. So you say, 'Yeah, let's try that, let's do that.'"

Even if that involves shooting in a macabre 1,200-year-old Tuscan castle that almost emerges as a character of its own. Clarke said the experience was "genuinely creepy. Truly frightening. But it's magical. It's beautiful. And it's like I don't have to do any acting, I can just react to this place. What the camera is seeing is so much of the story."

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#### Voice from the Stone Blu-ray Review Can you hear me now?

Reviewed by Jeffrey Kauffman, July 27, 2017

Fans of classic <u>The Twilight Zone</u> episodes may recall the spooky outing from 1961 entitled "Long Distance Call", where a little boy (played by Billy Mumy) kept insisting he was talking to his dear, departed grandmother on a toy telephone. Small children's reactions to deaths of loved ones can be widely variant, and it's perhaps understandable that many children resort to what adults would see as fantasy or at least magical realist tendencies in their attempts to deal with their grief. Voice from the Stone posits another little boy scarred by the death of a loved one, in this case his famous concert pianist mother. Little Jakob Rivi (Edward Dring) has remained totally mute for over seven months since the passing of Malvina Rivi (Caterina Murino), leaving Jakob's father and Malvina's widower Klaus Rivi (Marton Csokas) distraught but also a bit curt with the boy. While it's never detailed exactly how this connection was forged, a live in nurse and therapist named Verena (Emilia Clarke) is called upon to live at the palatial castle in Tuscany which has been the family home of Malvina's brood for untold centuries. At least somewhat similarly to that old Twilight Zone episode, it turns out that Jakob is convinced he can hear his mother's spirit whispering to him through the ancient stone walls of the family fortress, and Verena's task, aside from simply trying to get Jakob to open up and talk about his trauma, is to ground Jakob in something approaching reality, since of course spirits can't talk through the stone walls of a castle. Or — can they? Voice from the Stone is incredibly strong on mood, but perhaps less vigorous in the narrative department. The film will probably be a disappointment to those looking for a traditional fright fest or even a typical ghost story, but it weaves a rather potent and hypnotic spell as it tells the tale of Verena's almost physical assimilation into what she initially thinks is Jakob's delusion. As such, the film may also bring to mind such efforts as The Innocents, with its intentionally ambiguous take on Henry James' Turn of the Screw where the viewer is left to wonder whether that film's

live in female helper is imagining things or if there are indeed spirits wafting through the premises. Voice from the



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#### About

Blu-ray movies Blu-ray studios Stone ultimately forsakes its ambiguity, though, something that may actually undercut its subliminally spooky mood.



Note: A couple of unavoidable plot points are discussed in the following section. Those wanting to avoid potential spoilers are encouraged to skip down to the technical portions of the review, below.

Voice from the Stone is based on a source novel by Italian author Silvio Raffo, and I have to think that some of the narrative issues with the film probably stem from a literary ambience in the novel that can't quite be duplicated in a cinematic context. This includes somewhat inconsistent use of voiceover by Verena, used essentially as bookends. But the film also has a bit of an uneasy ride documenting the transformation in the relationship between Verena and Klaus. which morphs from employee-employer into something decidedly more passionate, and which perhaps illogically reminded me a bit of elements in My Cousin Rachel. Had Malvina's spectral spell on Verena been a bit less ambiguously presented, as it is in the early going, that might have made this particular element more believable, and since the film ultimately eschews any indecision about what's actually going on, the temporary artifice seems all the

Also never really very well detailed and therefore not as meaningful as perhaps intended is a subplot involving an old quarry, the former source of Malvina's family's riches, which is now covered with a manmade lake, courtesy of a dam. The "voices" from these particular stones are never loud enough for the audience to hear, figuratively speaking (no pun intended), and therefore the symbolism here is questionable and perhaps too murky to resonate.

More effective, and perhaps even indicative of some smart misdirection on the part of of scenarist Andrew Shaw and director Eric Dennis Howell, is Verena's relationship with two elderly workers at the castle. This particular aspect reminded me of yet another film, *The Others*, though I'm happy to state that my prediction that this film was following in that film's ghostly footsteps turned out to be unfounded. In fact, there's probably only really one outright allusion to a ghost, and it comes rather late in the film, at which point Verena's subsumption of Malvina's essence is already a

Still, Voice from the Stone has an almost palpable mood, one made visceral through some beautiful Tuscan location photography and a fine if fairly one note performance by Clarke. Little Dring is called upon to do little more than scowl throughout the film, and the final breakthrough at the end has a probably pretty lamentable piece of dialogue, but the boy has a slightly menacing presence that serves the film's unsettling ambience rather well (one of the film's most shocking moments comes when Jakob finishes killing a rabbit that has been shot but which isn't "quite dead yet", in a scene that really has nothing to do with the plot but which provides quite a jolt nonetheless). I wasn't particularly wooed by Csokas, at least in his guise as a romantic interest for Verena, though he does better detailing Klaus' angst and anger over his wife's death and the resultant trauma suffered by Jakob.

My colleague Brian Orndorf wasn't quite as taken by Voice from the Stone as I was, although in his review of the film theatrical exhibition he mentions the inescapable atmosphere of the piece. I'd recommend coming to this film without any preconceptions concerning either mystery or thriller aspects, and in fact trying not to even focus on any ghost story element. The film often plays like a dream, and sumptuous visuals, an inviting score and an interesting central performance by Emilia Clarke all help to establish that dreamlike quality surprisingly well, helping the film to overcome some narrative deficits

Voice from the Stone Blu-ray, Video Quality BBBB



Voice from the Stone is presented on Blu-ray courtesy of Momentum Pictures with an AVC encoded 1080p transfer in 2.39:1. The IMDb lists the Arri Alexa as having digitally captured the imagery, and this is by and large a rather nice





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O Apr 30, 2017

Voice From The Stone is a 2017 drama/thriller about a nurse who comes to the aide of a young boy who falls silent after the sudden death of his mother.

Letting go of someone we love is often that of a personal journey, despite perhaps the helping hands of many who offer their support. With the passing of a parent, particularly the mother, a young child might be more deeply effected, and in film, this provides the basis for a number of possibilities for dealing with grief, including exploring the unknown.

For *Voice From the Stone*, that death leads to a dark mystery, one housed in the creaky old homesteads and foggy landscapes that have become a mainstay in these moody stories, layering a bit of dark antiquity in this slow-burning tale. While it looks remarkably good, layered in appropriate unease, and features some effective performances, it doesn't grip with quite the hold it should and misses opportunities to make the most of its themes.

We meet Verena (**Emilia Clarke**), a governess who has a history of helping children with troubling pasts, called to the home of a boy named Jakob (**Edward Georg Dring**), a nine-year-old child whose mother died seven months earlier and has not spoken a word since. He lives in an old stone manor that seems nearly days ways from being consumed by the very nature that surrounds it, rich with dark atmosphere, tall towers and labyrinthine grounds. His behavior has grown increasingly erratic, capped by his insistence that he can hear his mother's voice in the stone walls of the property.

1



There is denying that this is a pretty beautiful looking movie, that's otherwise well made as well. It's not flawed with its cinematography, costumes, set design and acting. It's still mostly the atmosphere and acting in the movie that makes- and keeps this movie a perfectly fine one to watch.

It's a pretty well cast movie, with some fine actors in it. Emilia Clarke is a great leading lady who manages to carry the movie on her own, for most part. She deserves more leading roles but she also deserves better movies.

### **Fangirl Magazine**

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#### Voice From The Stone - Film Review

Posted on May 14, 2017 by Jessica

Clarke especially has to carry a lot of the film as her character is in nearly every scene. She's quickly becoming one of my favorite actresses.

The look of the film is really the star here. Eric D. Howell hasn't done a feature length film before this but you wouldn't realize it by the way he captures light and shoots this movie. Screenwriter Andrew Shaw is also a first timer when it comes to a feature but he captures an interesting balance here that mixes those classic Gothic stories with a far less constrained, adult tone. It's not without its faults of course. There's one glaringly obvious surprise twist that you see coming very early on as well as some pacing issues. But these don't take away from the overall film.



It keeps you guessing as you wonder if Verena is becoming the victim of a possession or at last losing control of her own constrained, controlled nature. Voice From The Stone leaves you at the end to make your own conclusions as to if there is something supernatural happening or if this is purely a story about moving on after a terrible loss. It could be both at the same time of course... but there's still something a bit sinister that leaves you wondering what is at play within the stone itself.

If you are looking for a surprising mix of Gothic mood and emotional story this film delivers. I'm excited to see more from filmmaker Eric D. Howell in the future.



# Film Review: *Voice from the Stone*, Frequently Frustrating

BY STEVE PROKOPY ON APRIL 28, 2017 · ( LEAVE A COMMENT )

This odd but sometimes captivating bit of Gothic psychological drama with a hint of a ghost story sprinkled in for added flavor is sneaking out into the world this week courtesy of director (and former stunt coordinator) Eric D. Howell (*From Heaven to Hell*). Based on the Italian novel by Silvio Raffo (and adapted by Andrew Shaw), *Voice from the Stone* is the story of Verena (Emilia Clarke, of "Game of Thrones" and *Me Before You*), a young British woman living in Italy, circa the 1950s, where she seems to specialize in being a private nurse for the sick children of rich families. But the curse of her job is that once the child is better, the families dismiss her, wanting no memory of the terrible sickness (be it physical ailment or mental dismay).

Verena is summoned to Tuscany to care for young Jakob (Edward Dring), who hasn't spoken a word since his mother, a famous classical piano player (Caterina Murino) died after a terrible illness. His father, Klaus (Marton Csokas), a sculptor, is also distraught to the point where he doesn't believe he can take care of Jakob by himself. After Verena moves he, she begins to notice that Jakob isn't just silent; he's also behaving strangely, often pushing his ear to the walls of the house, where it seems he can hear his dead mother's voice speaking to him from the stones taken from the nearby family-owned but long closed quarry, one of Jakob's favorite spots.

Without many sane specimens in the house, Verena befriends an elderly woman named Lilia (the great Lisa Gastoni), but even that friendship is wrought with complications. *Voice from the Stone* is dripping with creepy atmosphere and eerie locations that seem custom made for a horror film made 50 years ago. Cinematographer Peter Simonite deserves points for shooting the home, in particular, like it would be the kind of place where a ghost might live in the walls. There's also a family crypt nearby that is downright terrifying.

The problem is that the movie feels like third-rate *Jane Eyre*, as it allows the low rumbles of romance between Verena and Klaus take over the far more interesting story of what is going on with Jakob and whether a dead woman is speaking to him and perhaps others in the house. *Voice from the Stone* is frequently frustrating because it has so much going for it that it doesn't capitalize upon. And while I certainly applaud the idea of these two lonely people finding something comforting in each other, the film's strange and nebulous ending blurs the ultimate meaning of the entire work and even has us questioning the identity of certain characters. It's a close call, and ultimately Clarke's thoughtful performance makes this an easy watch, even if the plot is often tiresome.

 $Unfortunately, the film is not currently opening the atrically in Chicago. With that said, it is available on Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07226NCB7?ref_=imdbref_tt_wbr_aiv&tag=imdbtag_tt_wbr_aiv-20) and other VOD platforms (http://voicefromthestonemovie.com/#DOD) beginning today.$ 

# SPECTRUM CULTURE

#### **Voice From the Stone**

**△ BREW ■ MAY** 2, 2017

Grief is a messy experience, one that reveals itself in behavior that's alternately volatile, depressive, withdrawn or anxious, and the way it reshapes our perception of both the past and

the present is uniquely subjective. It's never as neat or as tidy as anything in Voice from the Stone,

The film, set on a countryside Italian manor in the 1950s, expresses feelings of loss and anguish in picturesque tableaus: foggy forest trails, ancient mausoleums and dark, shadowy corridors are elegantly if painstakingly framed, and there's no confusing the very specific mood conjured up Howell and cinematographer Peter Simonite. If style was all that mattered (and for some people, it is all that matters), then *Voice from the Stone* hits every note perfectly, but as Howell peels back the layers of his story and digs deeper into the

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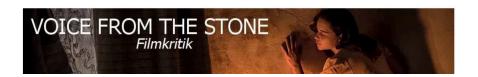
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#### **VOICE FROM THE STONE (2017)**

The wall with soul.



#### **CONCLUSION:**

From an artistic point of view it is a first-class film. The recordings are fantastic, the camera is very good. In terms of content, the film leaves a lot to be desired. The plot is confused and does not follow a true thread. As a viewer, you often feel you have missed an essential piece of information, which is why you can not follow the action correctly. In some places the film also has distinct lengths and could have been kept shorter.

Emilia Clarke plays very convincingly, also the little Jakob and his father are played well. If you like mystical stories, the movie can certainly be enjoyed. From the stool he has torn me, however, definitely not. Pity!

by Franziska Söllner



The story dates back to the 1950s in Tuscany; in the center is the young childminder Verena (Emilia Clarke), who in a imposing, old country house a new workplace with the widowed artist Klaus (Marton Csokas). Since the death of Klaus' wife Malvina (Caterina Murino) the common son Jakob (Edward Dring) is silent. Verena tries to help the boy, but remains unsuccessful. Likewise, Klaus and his servant Alessio (Remo Girone) are extremely repulsive; only in the older Lilia (Lisa Gastoni) Verena finds a confidant. When she realizes how Jakob listens to the stone walls of the property and believes that he can hear his mother,

Howell, in his production, refrains from shaking effects on the soundtrack, as is well known in today's tension cinema. He does not rely on a quick, loud creep, but rather on a creeping, silent discomfort. With his production designer Davide De Stefano and his camera man Peter Simonite, he creates an engaging atmosphere; the film team succeeds in shaping and capturing the walls inside and outside, while at the same time conveying a morbid flair. That **Voice from the Stone is** still more than a beautifully arranged showpiece is due to the drawing of the main character and their interpretation by the British Emilia Clarke ( *Game of Thrones* ).

Already at the beginning shows a scene in which Verena has to say good-bye to a girl who is supervised by her,

how the protagonist can build up to young, fragile people. Verena's empathy is also evident in the passages in which the film deals with the relationship between Verena and Jacob. Clarke plays the role of the passionate carer expressive and fully compelling, making Verena's later drift into (possible) hallucinations and nightmares credible. In particular, the moment Verena is the first to hear the title-giving voice remains in his intensity. While Clarke harmoniously harmonizes with the gifted children's actor Edward Dring, the chemistry between her and Marton Csokas is far less than a householder. The approach between Verena and Klaus is carried out in a sensual way; to the ambivalent romance between a Jane Eyre and a Mr. Rochester, however, this line can not be reached, since Klaus is too pale for this character and the motivations of the characters in these situations remain too much on the level of the assertion to take us as spectators. All in all is **Voice from the Stone**, however, is a superbly illustrated mix of tragedy and mystery, of silent mourning and burgeoning anxiety, in which Clark can impressively demonstrate her talent aside from her well-known series as a dragon queen.

(Andreas Köhnemann)



# FILMSTARTS

In one of the first scenes of the film, Verena arrives in Tuscany - an extremely atmospheric sequence, and also a gibberish spur: the arriving driver takes a bus through a picturesque, increasingly foggy landscape with old villages and dark forests. The last stretch of the way to the old country house walks along a secluded forest path along Verena, while thick fog winds roll over the ground. She passes a head of an ancient statue lying on the ground, apparently broken off, and finally reaches a tall, wroughtiron gate, which opens with a hyperreal creak in front of her and thus opens the view of the fortress-like property. In this way it goes on until Verena has her first conversation with Jacob's father. Director Eric D. Howell through individual refined details (like unusual angles) always original visual accents. To the harmonious optics, a similarly successful sound design, which effectively supports the special importance, the voices and other sounds in this "Gothic From The Stone" appropriately titled Gothic-Mar.

So much so enjoyable. But unfortunately, "Voice From The Stone" hardly meets the initially awakened positive expectations in the further course of the action. For example, the Australian, Marton Csokas (known as Celeborn from Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy), does not succeed in communicating the sadness and despair of Jacob's father. Instead, Csokas irritates with his persistent facial stiffness and the choppy bouncing out of single sentence fragments. At first, Csoka's dramatic impotence is still largely dominated by the much more convincing Emilia Clarke ("Game Of Thrones") Was intercepted in the role of the restrained but surely Verena. But as soon as Verena becomes more and more emotional in the further course of the action, the credibility of this figure also disappears. In addition, the action is only very sluggish. And as soon as the story finally gets into the aisles, it is already out of the joint. There can also kitschigfilm naked scenes with Emilia Clarke and a genre us Schlusstwist does not really bring the matter really up again.

#### **NOW SHOWING**

### VOICE FROM THE STONE

APRIL 29, 2017 | ONE GUYS OPINION

Producer: Dean Zanuck and Stefano Gallini-Durante

Director: Eric D. Howell Writer: Andrew Shaw

Stars: Emilia Clarke, Marton Ssokas, Edward George Dring, Catherine Murino, Remo

Girone and Lisa Gastoni Studio: Momentum Pictures

#### C+

If atmosphere were everything, Eric D. Howell's debut feature "Voice from the Stone" would be an unqualified winner. As adapted by Andrew Shaw from a 1996 novel by Silvio Raffo, the narrative creates a sense of mystery, and the measured approach of Howell and editor Clayton Condit—you might call it appropriately lapidary, given the title—along with the evocative Tuscan setting beautifully captured by cinematographer Peter Simonite, make for a visually arresting experience. The brooding score by Michael Wandmacher adds to the effect. It's a pity, therefore, that the last act brings resolutions that are entirely too pat and simplistic. The result is an old-fashioned Goth-ic mood piece whose craftsmanship holds one's attention, but proves disappointing in the end.

Emilia Clarke stars as Verena, a nurse specializing in helping troubled children. She responds to an advertisement placed by Klaus (Marton Csokas), a gloomy, bad-tempered widower living on a remote, heavily forested estate in North Italy. His nine-year old son Jakob (Edward George Dring) has refused to speak in the more than seven months since the death of his mother Malvina (Caterina Mureno), a celebrated concert pianist, and a succession of nurses has been unable to persuade him to do so. Verena is the latest to try.

Thus the stage is set for a story that calls to mind the work of the Brontes, or "The Turn of the Screw," or "Rebecca," and Howell and Condit emphasize the similarities by virtually mimicking the Hitchcockian style of his film of the latter (along with an occasional

dash of "Vertigo" for good measure). They have a perfect setting for their tale—a looming castle rising from the greenery, half-covered in reddish vines with a family tomb close by, and surrounded by dense forest through which one must walk to reach the lake created by the old guarry that was the basis of Malvina's family fortune, which

stretched back for many generations.

VOICE FROM THE STONE I

9/5/2017



MAIN ACTOR: RUNNING TIME: Emilia Clarke • Marton Csokas
DVD (87 min) • BD (91 min)
Ascot Flite

27.06.2017 by MarS

Mi piace 0

Tweet

If you hear the name of Emilia Clarke, you probably inevitably think of the mother of dragons Daenerys Targaryen from the success story *Game of Thrones*. But the English actress does not rest on her success and is also going to work outside of Westeros. Does she also make a good figure in the mystery thriller *Voice from the Stone*?

Italy, 1950: Nurse Verena specializes in helping traumatized children. Her newest case is little Jakob, who lives with his father, Klaus, in a large country house and has not spoken a word after the death of his mother. At first Verena does not have access to the boy, but she gradually succeeds in establishing a relationship with Jacob. But Klaus, too, feels more and more attracted to the young woman, as he feels reminded by his wife Malvina. Verena finds out that Jacob seems to hear strange voices in the walls of the house, and in time she is captivated. What is the secret of the stone?

The Beginning in the Mystery Thriller Voice from the Stone - Call from the Hereafte (impresses directly by its atmospheric composition and the quiet, oppressive pictures, which were set perfectly by the great camera work. Also the introduction of the characters and the basic treatment create a great atmosphere and together with the coherent soundtrack create an intense feeling with the viewer. Unfortunately, the film does not manage to maintain these positive aspects over the entire duration of the film, because with increasing duration, action becomes more and more bumpy and incoherent, culminating in a confusing, not really round, final third that has the usual twist, but by no means reaches the class of the first half hour. The actors can not be reproached here, because both Emilia Clarke and Marton Csokas and young actor Edward George Dring fit very well in their roles and know to convince. Also the optical presentation together with the successful camera management and great equipment does not make any misstep, but in contrast to the screenplay, the Voice from the Stone - reputation from the beyond ultimately blocked the way to the genre-highlight.