

Review: Game-playing and shared psychosis infect singular feminine horror of 'Braid'

By Katie Walsh



Sarah Hay, left, and Imogen Waterhouse in the movie "Braid." (Blue Fox Entertainment)

What if our games of childhood make-believe never, ever ended? Writer/director Mitzi Peirone poses the question in her feature directorial debut, the creepy, candy-colored psychological horror "Braid." As the daffy Daphne, Madeline Brewer, anchors this hallucinatory thriller.

Sarah Hay and Imogen Waterhouse co-star opposite Brewer as Tilda and Petula. These two bad girls escape a drug raid and skip town with a plan to score cash from their old pal Daphne, who lives alone in an old, sprawling mansion. But in order to gain entry, they have to play a treacherous game of make-believe.

The twisty script and outré cinematic style will keep you on your toes as the trio ramble around this ramshackle house, their game escalating in violence and bloodshed. Cinematographer Todd Banhazl brings a woozy, unmoored camera style, with wide-angle lenses adding to the oddball surreality. Banhazl and Peirone play with bold color choices — bright pinks and purples to suggest an altered state of mind, while a noirish black-and-white indicates characters approaching the truth.

Peirone's first feature is marked by a daring style and a willingness to dive deeply into the darker psychology of female friendship. A uniquely feminine horror film, "Braid" is a bold debut worth watching.

Rated: R, for disturbing/violent content, language, some sexuality and drug use.

Running time: 1 hour, 22 minutes