

TOLEDO GETS ITS CLOSE-UP

The city has a starring role in new indie film screening this week

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John Klein likes to describe his feature film, *Glass City*, as a love letter to Toledo.

Tender touches are all over the two-hour drama, from the city's downtown skyline glittering in the afternoon sun to the endearing nooks and crannies of the Collingwood Arts Center in the Old West End.

"The title almost came before anything else. It needed to be shot here. We love the city," said Mr. Klein, 23, a Perrysburg native who is the movie's producer and cinematographer.

The independent movie, filmed in Toledo over 13 days last summer and directed by St. Francis de Sales High School graduate Cole Simon, will have two public screenings this month before it is submitted to film festivals.



John Klein, left, 'Glass City' producer, and Cole Simon, director, at the Collingwood Arts Center. (THE BLADE/LORI KING)

Glass City will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at the Collingwood Arts Center and 8:30 p.m. April 26 at the Maumee Indoor Theater. Each viewing will be followed by question and answer sessions with Mr. Klein and Mr. Simon, who wrote the screenplay together.

Locals will find plenty that is familiar in the film about a 30-year-old laundromat worker whose stagnant life is reinvigorated when his sister urges him to join an amateur theater company for its summer production of *Death of a Salesman*.

Set in Toledo, there are scenes featuring International Park, the Monroe Street Diner, and the Anthony Wayne Bridge, a portion of which was closed for six hours one night for filming, according to Mr. Klein. Even a green T-shirt for City Councilman Joe McNamara makes an appearance.

MULTIMEDIA

[See the 'Glass City' trailer](#)

Glass City is a character-driven story, and Toledo becomes just one more character whose virtues and blemishes are displayed for all to see. One actor remarks how gorgeous the city is, while another comments, "Toledo is stagnant. There's no goal, no purpose, no reason for it to better itself, and no one who could stand up to do it. ..."

"The city and the main character in the film in a way kind of parallel each other," said Mr. Klein, who now lives in Chicago. "The city is a character, but it's a very subtle character in the movie."

Making the movie - which was filmed on a micro-budget of about \$40,000 - a commercial success won't be easy.

"Most of the films that play in most festivals only play in festivals and never really find a life commercially," said Jonathan Wolf, executive vice president of the Independent Film & Television Alliance, the trade group for independent motion picture distributors.

The filmmakers have no delusions. They'd love to get a distribution deal and make some money. But no matter what happens, Mr. Klein said, they've created a professional calling card and they've worked with some other talented young people.

Mr. Simon, 22, now of Columbus, has met others who have shied away from the industry for fear of not putting

food on the table. He hopes there's a lesson for them here.

"I'm eating just fine," he said. "It's never stupid to have a dream and to go after it. ... There are a million reasons not to do something, but the really important thing is when you know that reason to do something."

Public screenings of "Glass City" will take place at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in the Collingwood Arts Center, 2413 Collingwood Blvd., and at 8:30 p.m. April 26 in the Maumee Indoor Theater, 601 Conant St., Maumee. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students, seniors, and children under 12. Information: www.glasscityfilm.com.

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