

CINEMA

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MOVIES
THIS
WEEK

All the Right Moves: Cinema World (342-6536).

Big Chill: A group of old college friends meet for one friend's funeral and spend the weekend together. National (344-3431).

Blood Wedding: Carlos Saura's passionate, explosive ballet translation of Garcia Lorca's famous play. Showing with *La Truite*, Dec. 8-14. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Blue Thunder: Showing with *Risky Business*. Oakway Cinema (342-5351).

Christine: Suspense thriller about a '57 Plymouth possessed by the devil. West 11th (342-4142).

Christmas Story: A comedy satire of the all-American Christmas in Gary, Indiana. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Deal of the Century: A Chevy Chase comedy about dealing arms. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Eddie and the Cruisers: A tale about a rock & roll star who disappears in a car accident. Showing with *War Games*. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Educating Rita: Stars Michael Caine and debuts Julie Walters as a working class woman who's also a part-time student at the university. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Fanny and Alexander: Ingmar Bergman's most recent and perhaps last film is about a large Swedish theatrical family around the turn of the century, and the series of events which change their lives. Bijou (686-2458).

For Your Eyes Only: James Bond. Showing with *From Russia With Love*. Mayflower (345-1022).

From Russia With Love: A James Bond favorite. Showing with *For Your Eyes Only*. Mayflower (345-1022).

Koyaanisqatsi: A Hopi word meaning "life out of balance," this film with no characters or dialogue shows us, through image and sound, what America was and what it has become. Late show. Bijou (686-2458).

Mr. Mom: Dad stays home to raise 3 kids while Mom pursues her career. Cinema World (342-6536).

Never Cry Wolf: Based on Farley Mowat's book about a man who lives with and studies the wolves. Cinema World (342-6536).

Never Say Never Again: Sean Connery returns to the James Bond role. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Return of the Jedi: The third Star Wars adventure. West 11th (342-4142).

Risky Business: Dream and fantasy mix with reality in this tender and humorous film about a teenage boy going through sexual initiation, who meets a big city prostitute through the prank of a friend. Showing with *Blue Thunder*. Oakway Cinema (342-5351).

Rocky Horror Picture Show: Classic kink. Bijou Late Nite (686-2458).

Scarface: Al Pacino stars in this film about cocaine deals and the underworld. West 11th (342-4142).

Sudden Impact: Clint Eastwood is Dirty Harry. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Superman III: Showing with *Twilight Zone*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Terms of Endearment: Shirley MacLaine, Debra Winger, and Jack Nicholson star in this sensitive comedy centering around the relationship of a mother and daughter. From a Larry McMurtry novel. McDonald (344-4343).

La Truite (The Trout): From French director Joseph Losey, this social comedy is about a trout breeder's daughter, played by Isabelle Huppert, who enters the world of wealth and big business. Co-feature is *Blood Wedding*. Dec. 8-14. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Twilight Zone: The Movie: Showing with *Superman III*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

War Games: Computer games turn serious when a boy and his computer accidentally begin playing global thermonuclear war. With *Eddie and the Cruisers*. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Yentel: Produced, directed by, and starring Barbra Streisand, this film is about a young Jewish girl who disguises herself as a boy in order to get an education. Cinema World (342-6536).

Fanny
and
Alexander

Directed by Ingmar Bergman. 1983.

Fanny and Alexander has been described as "Ingmar Bergman's last and most ambitious film." While it remains to be seen whether the Swedish director will produce any more films, it can be asserted that *Fanny and Alexander*, running well over three hours in length, is indeed ambitious.

The film is set in an unidentified Swedish town in the first decade of the twentieth century and the story begins on Christmas Eve with the performance of a traditional Christmas play by members of the Ekdahl family.

When the Christmas play ends, the theater company members listen to their manager, Oscar Ekdahl, deliver his annual speech. At one point he says that he loves "this little world inside the thick walls of the playhouse." He explains that sometimes this little world "succeeds for a moment in reflecting the big world, so that we understand it better." And he speculates that perhaps their little theatre gives "the people who come here the chance of forgetting for a while ... the harsh world outside."

In his attempt to describe his feelings, Oscar Ekdahl may well be echoing the sentiments of Ingmar Bergman himself concerning the purpose of the fifty-odd feature films Bergman has directed over the last four decades.

Oscar is but one of several characters in *Fanny and Alexander* who reflects on his life and tries to articulate the meaning of human existence. His mother Helena, who is the widowed head of the large Ekdahl family, is weighed down with sadness as she oversees the elaborate preparations for the Christmas Eve dinner. After the lavish dinner has been consumed, the festivities are finished, and the various family members have departed



Emilie Ekdahl (played by Ewa Froling) and Alma Ekdahl (Mona Malm) at a family Christmas celebration in Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*, now showing at the Bijou.

or retired to bed, Helena sits with her old friend Isak Jacobi (long a source of comfort to her) and says that "the happy splendid life is over, and the horrible dirty life is engulfing us. That's the way of it."

The twilight reflections of Oscar and Helena are appropriate comments for this last film of Bergman's but they are counterbalanced by the points of view of other characters in the film. Fanny and Alexander are eight and ten years old respectively, and much of the film's point of view is through their eyes. For them, the Christmas Eve festivities are filled with excitement, merriment, and even a sense of mystery. The large Ekdahl family, encompassing various uncles and aunts, cousins and numerous servants, as well as the thirty-odd members of the theater troupe, comprise an entire world for Fanny and Alexander. It is, by turns, a world of established family traditions, intimations of adult pleasures, suggestions of family secrets, and eventually, knowledge of

death, and glimpses of the spirit world.

As in other Bergman films, there are seemingly inexplicable events in *Fanny and Alexander*. Isak Jacobi, the long time family friend (and former lover of Helena) is a Jewish antique dealer, banker, and part-time illusionist who plays a central role in aiding the Ekdahl family when Emilie (the mother of Fanny and Alexander) requires help in disengaging herself from her marriage to a puritanical bishop after Oscar's death. Isak performs what can only be interpreted as magical feats in rescuing Fanny and Alexander from their virtual imprisonment at the bishop's house.

Fanny and Alexander contains all the familiar themes that Ingmar Bergman has presented in his films throughout his career: the tyranny of religion, the mysteries of death, and the illusions and the comedy of the human condition.

And underlying the story is the fundamentally cinematic reality of the film which completely holds the viewer for more than three hours. Bergman has said that "the great gift of cinema photography is the human face" and *Fanny and Alexander* clearly manifests his remark. Sven Nykvist, Bergman's long-time associate, is once again the cinematographer, and his collaboration with Bergman make *Fanny and Alexander* a stunning visual experience.

Events come full circle in this "last and most ambitious film" and Bergman leaves us on a note of affirmation. This includes Helena reading lines from Strindberg's *Dream Play* which serves as a final commentary for *Fanny and Alexander*:

"Anything can happen, anything is possible and likely. Time and space do not exist. On a flimsy ground of reality, imagination spins out and weaves new patterns. . . ."

—Tim Volem

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