



Review: *My Life As a Dog* Success rests on 10-year-old star

by Ross West

At Friday night's opening of *My Life as a Dog* the audience laughed through much of the film. At other times the theater's air grew still and heavy with the humidity of tears. The humorous, the touching and the tragic smoothly and elegantly braid together throughout *My Life as a Dog*, this year's most warmhearted film.

Much of the film's success rests on its star, a small, boundlessly energetic boy named Ingemar. Ingemar is like a Swedish version of what Dennis the Menace could have been had his writers ever seen fit to venture beyond silliness and into the frightening and funny world of the real. Although Ingemar is a child, his concerns are in no way puerile.

Away from his ailing mother to give her a rest, Ingemar stays with his Aunt Ulla and Uncle Gunnar in a Fifties-vintage rural Swedish town. The town is full of odd-balls (e.g. The Man Who's Always Fix-

ing His Roof) but director/co-writer Lasse Hallstrom's story doesn't caricature; it lovingly draws the townspeople in a way that captures their quirks while insisting on their dignity.

These people are quaint and charming to the point where David Byrne might want to cartoon them into a sequel of *True Stories*. The closer comparison, however, is with *Local Hero*, another film where numerous eccentric supporting roles get a generous and sympathetic treatment.

The most striking thing about *My Life as a Dog* is the way Ingemar does his growing up. He faces conflicts that wouldn't seem out of place in a Bergman film or a Faulkner novel, yet the story is buoyant and bobbing rather than heavy. This film gets by without benefit of a "bad guy" ominously lurking at every corner threatening to fill the story with more conflict. In *My Life as a Dog* life itself is tough enough. To overcome life's

obstacles sadness, reflection, and the kindhearted gesture of friend or relative somehow seem to be enough. There's not a mean-spirited character to be found here.

The decision to cast Anton Glanzelius as Ingemar deserves and has received praise; the boy was awarded the Swedish equivalent to an Academy Award for Best Actor. He doesn't look perfect—as do so many Hollywood kid actors—but instead has an ordinary appearance. This everyday look and the graceful, unstudied moves that go with it combine marvelously. Without being put off by the Central Casting look, the audience is able to believe almost immediately in the character. And once that happens. . .

My Life as a Dog makes for a very happy evening, like resting in a warm chalet in warm sox, coals glowing in the hearth while outside the snow piles high.

now showing

NEW TO TOWN

International Film Festival

All Festival showings are at Cinema 7 (687-0733), and a double feature with the other film listed for that date.

August 28-31:

• **The Puppetoon Movie:** Explores the fantasy world of puppeteer/actor George Pal, creator of Gumby and the Pillsbury doughboy. Out of circulation for 40 years.

• **Recent Czech Animation:** Recommended for ages 14 and up. Three tales told with puppet animation: *The Pied Piper*, *Ballad of the Greenwood*, and *The Extinct of World Gloves*.

September 1-3:

• **No Regrets for Our Youth:** *Village Voice* calls it Akira Kurosawa's "first major personal film." Set in modern times, a woman balances love, family and politics.

• **Cactus:** Paul Cox (*Man of Flowers*), called Australia's "most off-beat" and "most innovative" director, made this drama starring Isabelle Huppert (*The Bedroom Window*).

September 4-7:

• **Straight to Hell:** Alex Cox (*Repo Man*, *Sid and Nancy*) praises and pans "spaghetti westerns," those B cowboy movies so beloved by Italian cineastes. E.g., see next entry.

• **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly:** By Sergio Leone, considered THE spaghetti western director. This one's the crowning glory of those 1960s *Fistful of Dollars*, etc. movies, made with Clint Eastwood.

September 8-10:

• **The Orchestra Conductor:** From Poland, directed by Andrzej Wajda, comes this study of art and politics, with a "magnificent performance" by Sir John Gielgud.

• **My Friend Ivan Lapshin:** Glasnost is back in the USA, too. This 1982 Russian film was just released last year, a portrait of life under Stalin.

September 11-14:

• **Andy Warhol:** Made in 1973 and re-released in synchrony with the pop artist's recent death, it captures on celluloid Warhol's films, fellow luminaries, and the artist himself.

• **A Zed and Two Noughts:** A cinematic stimulation of the intellect, with reportedly stomach-turning shots.

September 15-17: "A Tribute to Welles, Godard"

• **Une Femme Est une Femme (A Woman is a Woman):** Shown in its original 1962 widescreen version, this is monumental French director Jean-Luc Godard's only musical. With Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Belmondo.

• **Othello:** Very rare print. Orson Welles' 1952 version of the age-old story of a man obsessed with jealousy.

Starting Friday, August 28:

The Big Easy: By-the-ways U.A. Ellen Barkin (*Buckaroo Bonzai*) meets laid-back cop Dennis Quaid (*Innerspace*) on a murder case in New Orleans. L.A. Weekly pick of the week. Cinema World (342-6536).

The Fourth Protocol: Spy Michael Caine vs. a Russian agent who seeks superior nuclear power. Suspense, based on a Frederick Forsyth novel. Cinema World (342-6536).

Hamburger Hill: Another movie view of the Vietnam War, about a 10-day battle. Action-drama by John Irvin. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

House II: The Second Story: Sequel to last year's horror-comedy about an artist who inherits a very weird house. Springfield Quad (726-9073) and Movieland (342-4142).

Personal Services: Python Terry Jones recreates the story of British popular heroine Cynthia Payne, busted by Bobbies for madaming a brothel in London suburbs. Bijou (686-2458).

CONTINUING/RETURNING

La Bamba: Lou Diamond Phillips and Esai Morales star in this re-creation of the life of Richie Valens, a late-'50s rock star who died in a plane crash at the peak of his career. Los Lobos provides many of the musical numbers. Double feature with *Innerspace* at Cinema World (342-6536).

Blind Date: Bruce Willis (TV's *Moonlighting*) spends a bizarre evening with Kim Basinger, in a slapstick comedy by Blake Edwards. Late-night feature at the Bijou (686-2458).

Born in East L.A.: Cheech Marin is back, without his partner. This time he's both director and star, in a comedy with Jan Michael Vincent. National (344-3431).

Can't Buy Me Love: High school nerd Patrick Dempsey tries to use his money to attract cheerleader Amanda Peterson. Teen comedy. Movieland (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Dirty Dancing: Being compared to *Saturday Night Fever* and *Flashdance*, this musical/romance takes place in 1963 in upstate New York. Jewish American Princess Jennifer Grey plays a young woman who falls for older man Patrick Swayze. Movieland (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Full Metal Jacket: The long-awaited Stanley (2001) Kubrick film, it never lets up revealing the mindlessness and brutality of war, climaxing at the 1968 Tet Offensive of the Vietnam War. Double feature with *Roxanne* at the McDonald (344-4343).

Innerspace: In this science fiction comedy about a secret government project, Dennis Quaid plays a macho brute reduced to miniature, then injected into grocery clerk Martin Short. Double feature with *La Bamba* at Cinema World (342-6536).

The Living Daylights: Two firsts are in this new James Bond flick: Timothy Dalton now plays Agent 007, and he is involved with a new intrigue—monogamy. Fantasy/adventure. Movieland (342-4142).

Maid to Order: Ally Sheedy goes from riches to rags. Co-stars Beverly D'Angelo, Michael Ontkean and Valerie Perrine. Comedy. Movieland (342-4142).

Masters of the Universe: Dolph Lundgren and Frank Langella face combat in this live-action sci-fi adaptation of the toys/cartoon series. Movieland (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

My Life as a Dog: A nostalgic look at pre-adolescence, the film depicts a year in a boy's life, during which he learns his mother is dying. By the Swedish director Lasse Hallstrom. Bijou (686-2458).

Nadine: Takes place in Texas in the '50s. Jeff Bridges and Kim Basinger play a couple at odds, trying to avoid a murder rap. Comedy-thriller. Double feature with *Spaceballs* at Springfield Fine Arts (747-2201).

No Way Out: Navy lieutenant Kevin Costner goes from shipboard duty to involvement with the CIA. With Gene Hackman, and some steamy scenes. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

RoboCop: Sci-fi thriller about a cyborg employed to clean up on Detroit lowlife. With Peter Weller, it's graphically violent, satirizes TV newscasts, and is more than comix brought to life. Movieland (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Roxanne: Steve Martin, with the longest nose since Pinocchio, and Daryl Hannah star in a modern-day comedy based on the story of Cyrano de Bergerac. Double feature with *Full Metal Jacket* at the McDonald (344-4343).

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: Heigh-ho! This re-release of the 1937 technicolor Disney classic is at Movieland (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Spaceballs: Mel Brooks spoofs Star Wars. Brooks plays the U.S. president, and Daphne Zuniga "Her Spoiled Highness." Double feature with *Nadine* at Springfield Fine Arts (747-2201).

Stakeout: Emilio Estevez and Richard Dreyfuss are two undercover detectives. Comedy-adventure. Cinema World (342-6536).

Superman IV: The Quest for Peace: Christopher Reeve again plays the Man of Steel, up against Nuclear Man. Gene Hackman plays a villain, with Margot Kidder as Lois Lane, and Mariel Hemingway. Movieland (342-4142).

Who's That Girl: Madonna plays a parolee seeking the man who actually committed the crime for which she did four years. Griffin Dunne is her attorney. Movieland (342-4142).

Thursday, August 27 is the last showing for: *La Vie Est a Nous* and *Camina Camina* at Cinema 7. Prick Up Your Ears at the Bijou. Late-night feature *Lethal Weapon* at the Bijou. The Lost Boys, Care Bears and *Nadine* at Cinema World. *Monster Squad* at Movieland. *Monster Squad* and *North Shore* double feature at Springfield Quad. Back to the Beach at Valley River Twin. Heartbreak Ridge and *Witches of Eastwick* double feature at Springfield Fine Arts.

[This Now Showing covers films/movies from August 27-Sept. 2, and the International Film Festival. The film booking business being what it is, at this printing theater managers have little information about showings from Sept. 3-16. Call numbers listed during those dates. RUMORS: Coming before Sept. 17 are *Undercover* and *Russkies*.]

PRINCE PÜCKLER'S
ICE CREAM & FROZEN YOGURT

END OF SUMMER SPECIAL
through September 21

Sundaes \$1.25

- Euphoria Ultra-Chocolate sundaes
- Frozen Yogurt Sundaes
- Hot Fudge • Butterscotch
- Marshmallow • Strawberry

Downtown, 861 Willamette. Mon-Thur 7:30 am-9 pm, Fri 7:30 am-10 pm, Sat 10 am-9 pm, Sun 12-6 pm
Campus, 13th & Hilyard. Mon-Fri 11-midnight, Sat-Sun 12-midnight
19th & Agate. Mon-Fri 11:30 am-11 pm, Sat-Sun 12-11 pm

BIJOU LATE NITE
STARTS FRIDAY, AUGUST 28
Despite warning, BRUCE WILLIS lets KIM BASINGER - the title's date and at first glance the woman of his dreams - have a sip of champagne. Like splitting an atom, it's a tiny action that breeds catastrophe. Directed by BLAKE EDWARDS, it also stars JOHN LARROQUETTE.

Blind Date
Fri-Sat 11:30
Sun-Thur 11:00
Adm \$2.50

COMING SOON TO LATE NIGHT!
PLATOON
AND
RAISING ARIZONA

CALL 686-2458 FOR MORE INFO

STARTS FRIDAY AUGUST 28 IN OUR NEW AUDITORIUM
Fri-Sat 7:35 & 9:45 / Sun-Thur 7:15 & 9:30
Sunday Bargain Matinee 4:15 \$3

"Julie Walters seems to energize the whole film - to give it a rare kind of screwball fizziness." *Pauline Kael, The New Yorker*
"Julie Walters ('Educating Rita') is a kick as she undergoes a transformation from harried waitress with a contempt for 'tarts' to a brothel owner who's always ready to serve a bit of breakfast or tea to her steady clients." *Judy Stone, S.F. Examiner*

PERSONAL SERVICES
Stud. w/f.D. \$3.50 / Miser Mon. \$3 / Free Popcorn Tues. 492 E. 13th

MY LIFE AS A DOG
"DELICATE, WAGGISH FUN."
-David Edelstein, Village Voice
"Somehow, director Lasse Hallstrom has caught all the perils and delights of treading that knife edge between pain and delight that is childhood blending to adolescence. A sterling film..." *Shelia Benson, L.A. Times*

Fri-Sat 7:15 & 9:25
Sun-Thur 6:40 & 8:50
Sun. Barg. Mat. 4 pm \$3

"IT SHOULDN'T BE MISSED."
-Christine Arnold
Mammi Herald

686-2458 Coming soon: 84 CHARING CROSS ROAD, JEAN DE FLORETTE

Cinema 7 presents **INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** Atrium Bldg. 687-0733

THE PUPPETOON MOVIE
Premieres August 28-31. Puppetoons—Fri & Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm & 7 pm, Mon 7 pm plus Czech Animation Fri & Sat 9:30 pm, Sun 3:30 & 8:30 pm, Mon 8:30 am.
Recent Czech Animation
The Pied Piper—Ballad of the Greenwood
The Extinct of World Gloves

No Regrets for Our Youth
the only feminist film by AKIRA KUROSAWA

Cactus

Premieres September 1-3. From Japan Kurosawa not only reveals his first major heroine but also represents his finest major personal film. Shows at 7 pm only plus on same program—from Australia Paul Cox's brilliant offbeat love story shows nightly at 9:10 pm only.