

Document Citation

Title Rave reviews from coast to coast for Torment

Author(s)

Source Oxford Films

Date

Type exhibitor manual

Language English

Pagination

No. of Pages 1

Subjects

Film Subjects Hets (Torment), Sjöberg, Alf, 1944

'Torment' Proves Unusual and Masterful Swedish Film at Clay Theater

Adult Theme Well Handled

Strong Performances By Grand Prix Cast

By Emilia Hodel

A somber, adult and masterful film opened this week at the Clay Theater in the Swedish "Torment." Winner of the Grand Prix du Cinema of the 1946 Cannes International Film Festival, we can only imagine no other picture even had a chance after judges had viewed this sensitively photographed and delicately told story of sadism and adolescent despair.

Even in the credit sequence to open the picture, the mood is set by the imaginative study of the two children involved in the terror of this masterpiece.

SCHOOL THEME

To Americans the school setting will seem very strange, since our system of education is far freer and children are much more cherished. But any European who has attended "high school" there can relate many instances of injustice, brutality and viciousness, just as we see pictured in "Torment."

This Swedish picture is strictly adult fare, since it deals with sadism, a prostitute, and the first love experiences of a youth. FLAWLESS

There is no flaw as far as I was able to determine. Young Alf Kjellin and Mai Zetterling and Schoolmaster Stig Jarrel are perfect. Settings are sympathetic to the theme without being obtrusive. And the direction by Alf Sjoberg is dignified and compelling.

Although the dialog is in Swedish, the story seems to transcend language and become a universal story. English subtitles are excellently translated.

Film goers will be interested to know that both young stars have been brought to Hollywood on contracts and that the producers of the prize-winning picture also produced the early Greta Garbo films and "Intermezzo."

"NEWORK'S DIM."

Swedish Film Is a Haunting Work of Art

PM Reviews

TORMENT, an Oxford Film at the Avenue Playhouse, starring Alf they are victimized by their own by Alf Sjoberg.

Torment, the new Swedish film at the Avenue Playhouse, is a work of art, but more than that, it is a lad is instantly recognizable as deep and haunting experience that true and real, because it reflects' achieves a positive good. Whoever universal experience. It is experisees it cannot fail to feel renewed ence recalled with tenderness and awareness of the problems of the young, and by that reawakened understanding, at least resolve to

Torment reminds us of something we have all known once and may have now forgotten: of how hard and how terribly lonely, it is to be young. It shows us how we some- upon the people who combined to times array ourselves against the make the film. young as if the young were our enemy and we theirs, as, if we must do battle with them on equal footing instead of embracing them and the production, the writing, the cutcome to terms with and find their contributes its share to the impact place in the arbitrary, adult-ruled of the whole. Seeing it, one can

rigidity of the school system, by stirring. Youth, the spiritual needs the sick sadism of his Latin teach- of youth to which all youth, rich er, by the demands of his parents, and poor, is heir, has never been

Kjellin, Mai Zetterling, Stig Jarrel, problems-loyalty of his contemwith Olof Winnerstrand, Stig Olin, poraries. We see him stumble and Jan Molander, Gosta Cederlund. blunder into his first love affair-a Script by Ingmar Bergman, directed pitiful and shabby experience in itself-see him give it beauty and dignity because his heart is pure.

Everything that happens to this be more helpful to those so desperately in need of help in their inner hattle to grow up.

tion. Torment is a film as bountiful in compassion as it is with the ability to express that compassion. It has undertaken a noble theme.

In every department it is beau-

environment inexorably awaiting only marvel at the great taste that pervades it everywhere, that makes even the smallest bit of it a signifi-Torment reminds us of our for- cant contribution to the large efgetfulness by the simple means of fect. Though it pulsates with tragshowing us a lad at school, in a edy and drama, no phase of it is school fraught with echoes of our held a moment too long, no part of by the only intermittent-because better served. -CECELIA AGER

-SAN CISCO BULLETIN'

Torment'Held Stuming Film

NOT FROM England, France or Italy, but from Sweden—and why not?—comes one of the year's most stunning foreign films. Under the title of "Torment," it opened yesterday at the Clay Theater.

bine for an emotional storm that

perils his sanity on discovery that

his companion's betrayer is his

hands and his direction of sus-

picion toward the boy is a climax

of chilling impact, relieved by a

friendly headmaster's token of

sympathy and a note of hopeful-

ness for the tortured student's

ner of a David O. Selznick con-

tract through his masterly per-

formance. And Mai Zetterling has

been enrolled by England's J.

Arthur Rank for her portrayal of

the girl, in her first real love af-

fair with the student and in ter-

ror of another visit by her tor-

ing portrait of the bestial and

neurotic professor, himself tor-

tured at the end. Other school

characters are wonderfully

"Torment" indeed is a picture

Stig Jarrel submits a frighten-

turing traducer.

for adults only.

played.

Alf Kjellin in this role is win-

Her death at the teacher's

own enemy in the school.

Involving a student and professor in a Stockholm boys' school with a neighborhood girl, the drama is projected with the utmost in realism and a daring never ventured in Hollywood's screen products.

Its frankness has to do with uation finals and his passionate exposing the effects of iron rule affair with a cigar salesgirl comin a type of European school, the downfall of a degenerate instructor, the experience of a tormented boy and the tragedy of the girl in both their lives. But it is also a story of humanness and compassion as it touches adolescent lives and adult decadence.

Rule of Fear

There is grimness in the camera's first sweeping invasion of the school when a terrorized young pupil, late for the prayer period, is pursued by a catlike disciplinarian. With this minor incident the prevailing tyranny of the institution's principal heads is vividly established.

Then the fear and hatred of student for teacher is seen growing, to be epitomized in the persons of one Caligula and the boy, Jan-Erik, upon whom his sadistic urges are chiefly vented.

Torment Grows The youth's failure in his grad-NEW RKER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

Prizewinner from Sweden



HE problems of adolescence, so often used as an excuse for quick and shoddy levity in the movies, provide the sturdy fibre of "Torment," a Swedish film, which won the

Grand Prix du Cinéma at the Cannes International Film Festival last year. The picture concentrates on three characters—a boy equally confused by Latin and love, a girl who has explored the possibilities of sex with precocious haste, and a high-school teacher afflicted with a mental tic that provokes him into hating everyone. Beginning with a grimly realistic portrayal of the teacher's vicious tyranny in his classroom, "Torment" goes into the development of the immature but nevertheless serious love affair between the boy and girl. Gradually, the film reveals that the girl lives in terror of a man who has debauched her. He is, of course, the high-school teacher, probably as fully realized a psychotic as the screen has offered since the Germans -conceivably out of deference to the Führer—ceased their investigations along that line some years ago. The teacher, played by an actor named Stig Jarrel, is neat, prim, gelid, and terrifying, and just as convincing during weeping spells of self-pity as he is during bouts of thin-lipped cruelty. His treatment of the boy who is at once his rival and his pupil is as subtle a demonstration of sadism as the Marquis himself ever dreamed up, and his relationship with the girl of the piece is made more graphic by understatement than it could be by any clinical detail. Throughout its course, "Torment" refrains from any pious judgments. It is tolerant and understanding both of its insecure adolescents and of its brainsick pedagogue. The photography is a miracle of clarity and the scenes are uniformly authentic. Cast as the boy and girl, a couple of youngsters named Alf Kjellin and Mai Zetterling do almost as well as Mr. Jarrel, and that's saying good deal.

own school - day experiences. We it is emphasized out of proportion watch as his idealism and inno- to its basic theme. It is as estheticence is battered by the righteous cally rewarding as it is spiritually

PROPER OFFICE

By DOROTHY MASTERS * * *

A triumph in sadism, "Torment" will make the hackles rise, the stomach turn flipflops and the mind recoil in reluctant subservi once. The sinister magnetism of Avenue's Swedish drama is a new high in cinematic coercion. Never before has it been achieved with such great artistry or such prolonged intensity.

The film is a matter of portraiture rather than story. Its pring director Alf Sjoberg, who held the espais are a perverted professor, megaphone on "Himlaspelet," and a sensitive lad who is one of his who deserves much of the credit

performance as the psychopathic instructor, alternating the pitiable aspects with the horrible manirelationship between him and the girl is not so vividly limned as that between him and his student, the menace is skillfully conjured and maintained.

Alf Kiellin. recently signed by David Selznick, gives another impressive portrayal as the badgered puvil who gets caught up in a Haison that transcends its sordid background for moments of rare.

Mai Zetterling. whose excellent performance in the film led to a contract with H. Arthur Rank, appears as the hapless youngster who is the professor's principal victim. This. too, is a curious re-

Pusing this wealth of talent is favorite targets, and a terrovized for an artistic masterpiece. The girl who gravitates between the film is presented with English

Vivid Drama Probing Study of Tragedy at Laurel By W. E. OLIVER

'Torment' Is

The European film industry presents one of its most daring probes into human relations in "Torment," master. a Swedish production of exceptional artistry in production and acting, Laurel Theater.

-LOS MGELES HERALD

The story bites deeply. It tells of a neurotic Latin teacher in a to escape from his psychological school for youth, who visits the pangs of his twisted emotions on his students with cruelty that only a master in torture could devise. The personal element of the story comes from the conflict between this sadist and a youth unlucky enough to befriend and fall in love with a girl who, by an unholy at-

The title comes from the plight self.

tachment, only implied in the picture, is victim of the brutal school 3-WAY PLIGHT

torture, and the youth, whose idealistic infatuation is complicated by the crisis in his life caused when the girl is found murdered. Sets, photography (some of the best), music, story telling and act-

ing all bring this strong and simple tragedy to a stark culmination. With true insight into the method of Greek tragedy, the makers of this film bring a lift at its finale that sends the spectator away with some inspiration to neutralize the somber obsession of the story it-

which last night opened at the of all three of these characters, the There are several fine performmaster with his hopeless neuroti- ances in the picture.

-SANCISCO FRANCISCO

'Torment' Is Rated A Major Work of Art

By JOHN HOBART

Swedish movies are a rarity in this town. Except for unpretentious little farces that are occasionally put on view (and which, I am told, are not representative of the Swedish film industry's output), we have had-up to now-no way of knowing what that country's movie-makers are capable of.

Well, we have now. "Torment," which replaced "Children of Paradise" on the Clay Theater's screen yesterday, proves that the Swedish studios can make!

not only good pictures but wonderful ones. This is the film that won the grand prize at last year's International Film Festival at Cannes. It is in every respect a major work of art-acted, directed and photographed with the most perceptive sensitivity.

SARANCISMAINE

Artistry Distinguishes Torment'

By HORTENSE MORTON.

it is obvious why it was award his evil imprint on the girl's life. ed the Grand Prize at the Cannes Stig Jarrell, for our money, is International Film Festival last the finest actor in the film. As year over the strongest cinema the evil school master, with a competition in Europe.

the most pretentious dramaticasily forgotten. cally speaking to emanate from Miss Zetterling enlists sympathe Scandinavian studios, is at thy as the alcoholic strumpet. the Clay.

life" film. We're thinking now in cast by the pedagogue. terms of intelligent adults. Defi- There are many interesting nitely adults. And definitely in scenes showing Swedish school ically analytical-its earthy ele. strand, as headmaster, and Gosta ments ARE presented with naive Cederlund, an elderly professor. honesty, also with artistry.

David O. Selznick, and Miss Zet. let up on his dinning that the terling is enlisted in the ranks boy is certain to fail in his studof J. Arthur Rank.

husky Nordic type. As an actor time arrives. Faced with this psyof demanding roles, he should chological inquisition and lack of be a fine addition to American sympathy at home, the boy falls "films. His is a realistic perform: in with a little trollop, and negance as the young student, emo- lects his books. He is unaware

AFTER SEEING "Torment"—that the professor has also left complex personality exposed long The Swedish production, by far ago by Freud, his portrayal isn't

pathetic in her eagerness to re-Contrary to innuendo, 'Tor tain some semblance of decency ment" is not a cheap "facts of and renounce the vicious spell

telligent. While it never gets clin. routine and here Olaf Winner. help dispell the unfavorable im-Alf Kjellin and Mai Zetter pact of Jarrell's characterization. ling, young boy and girl, around tionally hexed by a putty-face whom much of the story revolves, Latin professor of sadistic bent, have been snatched by foreign who cunningly and constantly studios for their work in this. applies the power of suggestion. Kjellin is now under contract to Never once does the instructor

ies. This sinister goading reaches Kjellin is a handsome youth, a a crescendo as final examination

HOLLY WOOD NEWS"

'Tornent' a Penetrating Psychological Study

By ANN HELMING So-called "psychological" flims have been making their way on and off the screen with monotonous regularity for the past few years. Enthusiastically and often inaccurately, screen writers have delved into the field of psychiatry so frequently that almost any movie-goer can now toss off terms like paranoia and schizophrenia without batting an eyelash. Rarely, however, has any film cently done; taken together, they

accomplished the penetrating psy-serve as admirable dramatic foils the Grand Prize in the Interna- are remarkably well-acted. of emotional conflict.

The central figures are a sadistic arresting screen personality. Latin teacher in a Stockholm boys' Mai, Zetterling, who plays the school, a sensitive adolescent boy girl, is also very capable in a dewho is his pupil, and a young manding role. However, it is woman with whom both men be- Stig Jarrel, as the depraved procome involved. The girl's relation- fessor, who dominates the entire ship with the teacher is one of story with his compelling and reterror because of abnormal cruel- pellent portrayal. Alternately ties he inflicts upon her. Her re- suave and hysterical, he makes the lationship with the boy is an most of every scene in which he idyllic one, overshadowed by fear appears.

reveal.

chological study of a human being for one another. The girls' charwhich is found in "Torment." This acter is less finely drawn but Swedish film, which last year won nevertheless interesting. All three tional Film Festival at Cannes, is The boy, Jan-Erik, is brought to adult and intelligent in its ap-life by the performance of Alf proach. Without a psychiatrist in Kellin. The handsome young the offing to parade technical Swedish star, who is already on

terms, it tells the story of three, his way to this country to make a individuals caught in strange web film, has a sensitive, almost spiritual quality which makes him an

of the tormento ais afraid to Olof Winnerstrand, Olav Riego,

Stig Olin, and Marta Arbin are The character delineations of outstanding in the supporting cast. both boy and teacher are magnifi-

OXFORD FILMS 1819 B'way N.Y.C.

WARNING: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)