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Cinema Theatre Ontario, SP 105

PLATFORM

(ZHANTAI)

Director: Jia Zhangke

Hong Kong/China/Japan/France 2000 154 minutes

Cast: Wang Hongwei, Zhao Tao

"Might be the greatest film to come out of Mainland China" (Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Chicago Reader*). At once epic and intimate, PLATFORM captures the convulsive social, economic, and political changes in Communist China in the crucial period between 1979 and 1989 by focusing intently on the (mis)fortunes of a group of young performers in a provincial theatre troupe. The transformation of the country, from "pure" communism to the most acquisitive and corrupt kind of capitalism, is subtly reflected in the lives of the five musicians, as they are buffeted by forces they are hardly aware of, and their values and hinterland dreams begin to change or fade. The style of their music changes, too, from rousing Mao propaganda songs to glitzy Cantopop-style spectacle. PLATFORM is a work of recollection, beautifully detailed in setting and atmosphere – the landscape of the Yellow River and nearby Mongolian territory is evoked in all its dusty severity – and masterfully shot with a visual precision that reminds one of the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien or Tsai Ming-liang. Maintaining a reticent distance from the characters and often using long takes, Jia's camera manages to be reserved and observant, which only amplifies the ache of longing and homesickness that suffuses the film. The soundtrack is equally "designed," with extraordinary use of ambient and offscreen sound. Enthralling in its formal authority and emotional power, PLATFORM is one of the most significant works of recent international cinema. "One of the ten best films of 2001 . . . A great film" (J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*).

Sunday, March 27 1:00 p.m.