Fernando Arrabal's Odyssey of the Pacific

Over a year later than its originally anticipated release date, Fernando Arrabal's Odyssey of the Pacific has chugged into Canadian theatres, and the suspicion is that this anarchistic clunker will be ordered out fast.

It concerns the daydream fantasies of three children who plot to escape the unimaginative confines of their bourgeois life, on board a rusted steam locomotive. Unfortunately, the film is deplorably scripted, poorly acted and technically flawed. Its principal problem lies in the leaden inauthenticity of its language — not surprising considering the international melange which contributed to this English-language film.

Spanish-born Arrabal does not speak English himself, yet he bravely (or foolishly) made the film in English. The internationally renowned playwright/director co-scripted the film with Quebec writer Roger Lemelin of Les Plouffe fame, and his words were conveyed into English by an on-location translator. Another factor compounding this linguistic contrivance was that the actors were predominantly French-speaking, were directed in French, yet delivered their lines, for the most part, in English. That is, when they weren't being dubbed! One is tempted to ask: why was this film even made in English?

Surely it would have rung truer in another language. What remains is the overall feeling of the film, and ironically the fantastical side of the film does seem genuinely linked to a child's imagination: the one side of the film does seem genuinely linked to a child's imagination: the one

HEART OF GOLD


Alessa-ballad (Mickey Rooney), who plays as a child, is the story of young Cambodian refugee boy named Hoang. His parents, married to each other, were forced to sell their daughter and son to the Khmer Rouge. Through a series of mishaps, the children are separated from each other.

Hoang is taken to work on a sugar plantation, while his sister finds herself in a refugee camp. Despite the odds against them, the siblings remain connected through their dreams. The film explores themes of survival, family and the power of the human spirit.

Andrew Dowler

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