

Waldemar Dziki's

Le jeune magicien

abnormality, and what comprises 'genius.' If Pierrot is different, is he abnormal, and should he be ostracized and made fun of? Terrible things happen to him because he is different. Yet in the end he becomes enviable. At the request of the Chief of Police and the national armed forces (there is an un-Canadian kind of nationalism in this film), Pierrot saves the day and becomes a national hero.

In its depiction of a child's reality, there are several visually distinct and separate realms within the film. Some are reassuring, some are threatening, some are neutral. They consist of the different places that make up a child's world: home, school, video arcade etc. They are sharply distinguished by color, lighting, tone and sense of space.

For example, Pierrot's home is appealingly filled with warm colors and soft lighting. There are open areas that seem to flow together into one unified space. It has an aura of trust and safety, potentially a powerful subliminal message to a child about the nature of home and family.

In contrast, the psychiatric hospital where Pierrot is taken for testing is filled with dark shadows and locked doors. It is a world completely under the control of adults, impenetrable except to the initiated. The visual tone of the hospital sequences is dark; they reflect a greenish color, and the doctors/scientists are photographed in half shadow.

There are a good number of visual gags that make children squeal and giggle and adults chuckle. These are generally handled well - they are photographed and edited to create excitement and are thereby entertaining. The chase scene where Pierrot ends up being pursued by all sorts of characters is probably the central example of the

film's kind of silly fun. There are points however, when action and audience involvement seriously lag.

The sub-plot, which provides Pierrot's salvation by turning him into a hero, involves the military and their experimentation with, and transportation of, a volatile and dangerous material - Substance M. We are introduced to this plot line through an obviously loud radio report heard over the banter and tomfoolery during dinner. It is followed by the intercutting of scenes with helicopters and men in military uniforms. I expect these were intended to add an element of danger and tension, but they are basically ineffective. At the turning point of the plot there is an unbearable, overly long sequence that provides far too much dialogue for any audience, let alone a youthful one. The film stops dead, and has trouble picking up its pace and involving us again.

I'm not sure why the motivation for Pierrot's change of status had to be political and military, or why it had to be on such an enormous scale (a national crisis) but it is inappropriate and heavyhanded in context of the other elements of the film.

The story ends in a concert hall, with Alexandre, Pierrot's newfound friend, proving the benefits of harnessing genius through concentration and practice. Alexandre is a musician, an orphan (a disturbingly, or perhaps tellingly prevalent theme in these films) who achieves glory when the previously doubting adults realize he is a musical genius.

In many ways, *Le Jeune magicien* is typical of children's entertainment and representative of the *Tales for All* series. It's difficult to say how children will respond to it; as an adult there were some elements I could appreciate and some that greatly disturbed me. The lat-

ter make me hesitate to recommend the film to friends who have children.

Jamie Gaetz •

LE JEUNE MAGICIEN p. Rock Demers, Krzysztof Zanussi for Film Tor Unit d./sc. Waldemar Dziki assoc. p. Ann Burke, Jacek Szeligowski, Michal Szczerbic d.o.p. Wit dabal art d. Violette Daneau, Jerzy Sajko, Andrzej Przedworski, Andrzej Halinski m. composed and d. Krzesimir Debski ed. Andre Corriveau sd. concept. Claude Langlois sp.fx. Louis Craig, Marc Molin, Mirowslaw Marchwinski prod. man. Zdzislaw Kuczynski, Grzegorz Cichomski, Marek Trojanowski, Waldemar Krol costumes Magdalena Biedrzycka, Barbara Mielniczek, Izabella Izbinska hair and Make-up Magdalena Lecka, Beata Matuszczak, Iwona Skwarka sd. Zbigniew Prygodcki boom Josef Tomporek add. sd. Michel Charron, Alain clavier, Viateur Paiment 1st a.d. Witold Holtz, Tadeusz Proc, Krzysztof Maj 2nd a.d. Jacek Gornowicz, Anna Maria Witkowska cont. Hanna Chelminska cadreur Dariusz Kuc 1st asst. cam. Zdzislaw Najda 2nd asst. cam. Jan Gorski, Zbigniew Gustowski gaffer Stanislaw Matuszewski key grip Bronislaw Lawniczak tutor and dir. of Cdn. casting Danyele Patenaude asst dec. Wojciech Jaworski, Stanislaw Muras, Urszula Szubert, Magdalena Saloni, Jaroslaw Bogusiak, Marian Koczur dec. Ewa Braun, Michal Sulziewicz, Maria Osiecka-Kuminek, Anna Jekielek prod. asst. Louise Belanger acct. Marie-Claude Hebert prod. asst. (Poland) Grazyna Kozłowska, Teresa Paszkiewicz, Bogumil Olejnik, Magdalena Szwarcbart, Zbigniew Sejbt, Patrick Chassin, Christian Longpre prod. coord (Canada) Josee Maufette exterior props Guy Lalonde, Andre Guimond asst. ed. Wea Jaworska, Christine Deneault sd. edit Claude Langlois, Louise Cote assted by Myriam Poirier sd. shoot Michel Charron sp.sd.fx. Alain Clavier sdx Viateur Paiment assisted by Jerome Decarie, Diane Douville rec. by Jocelyn Caron mix Michel Descombes asst. by Andre Gagnon m. consult Anna Izykowska-Mironowicz m. Krzesimir Debski m. mix rafal Paczkowski lyric adaptation Howard Forman int. by Betty Eljarat m. publishing Les Editions La Fete Inc. consult. mus. publ. Michel Zgarka stills Krzysztof Wellman pub. Kevin Tierney, David Novek Associates Les Productions La Fiete, Telefilm Canada, CFCF TV Inc and la Société Radio-Canada participated financially on the Canadian end Zespoły Filmowe and Film Polski participated in the Polish financing l.p. Rusty Jedwab, Natasza Maraszek, Edward Garson, Tomasz Klimasiewicz, Daria Trafankowska, Mariusz Benoit, Wladyslaw Kowalski, Jan Machulski, Maciej Szary, Maria Robaszekiewicz, Danuta Kowalska, Grazyna Szapolowska, Andrzej Szczepkowski, Andrzej Szczepkowski, Andrzej Blumenfeld, Wojciech Mann, Jan Hencz, Piotr Krukowski, Ewa Biala, Maria Wawrzak, Monika Wawrzak, Monika Maraszek colour 35mm running time.

Le *Jeune magicien* is the fourth film in Rock Demers' projected series of 12, *Tales for All*. It seems to have much in common with the preceding three (*The Dog Who Stopped the War*, *The Peanut Butter Solution*, and *Bach and Broccoli*) in its careful delineation of the child's world as separated from the adult world.

This film creates a reality that is made up of certain joys and anguishes, places, events, and people, and is based as much in dream and fantasy as in real life. Watching the film, we enter the world of a child, where a few adults seem to revolve just around the periphery. These adults hold the power, they can say yes or no, and make things happen. A child's dreams and fantasies are often about having a special power, a magic that transcends the adults' power.

The child's world, portrayed on film in this way, becomes credible. Children are being assured, through self-reflection, that they can have as much power and control as adults; they can realize their dreams and anything is possible. For good measure, there are a few lessons and morals thrown in, however subliminally.

Le Jeune magicien opens with a hockey game in a fairly large enclosed arena. Pierrot, 12 years old, is on the bench, dressed and ready to play, but he is never called into the game. He is immediately identified as the sort of kid who is always left on the bench. He's an outsider whose dreams and fantasies only become focused when he is discovered by the magician at a performance he attends with his family. Pierrot takes part in a trick that has the magician levitate a young girl and then make her disappear. He is hooked. He reads everything he can about magic, trying some tricks out himself. Almost accidentally, he finds he has the power to move objects too. But he has no control over this power, so of course, he gets into all sorts of trouble. In the first scenes then, we have a typical powerless, imaginative 12-year-old who discovers an ability that will give him power, even over the adult world.

On one level, *Le Jeune magicien* is a kind of moral tale, as most children's stories tend to be. Pierrot is different. He is ultimately branded abnormal, and therefore undesirable. Normal activities are barred to him. He is refused entry to a party where his classmates and friends are dancing and having fun. The parents, the adults also do not want him around. It is only Marguerite, Pierrot's sweetheart, who respects his talent and believes he is a 'genius.'

There is a strong subliminal message here about the nature of normality and



• Rusty Jedwab's magic keeps Daria Trafankowska begging for more