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MODERN TIMES



TIFF13 Review: *Ida* (2013)

Posted by Brandy Dean | September 11, 2013 | 0 Comment | 1832 views

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Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski returns home to create *Ida*, a puzzling and beautiful drama about a young novitiate nun, raised as an orphan in the convent, on the precipice of taking her vows. When the Mother Superior insists that she first meet her only remaining relative, Ida learns some surprising information about her own past and some dark family secrets dating from the Nazi occupation of Poland.

On the one hand, *Ida* is almost like an art-house parody, exactly what one might expect at a film festival when she goes to see a "black and white Polish movie about a nun." The film makes few concessions to its audience – it's slow as molasses, includes very little dialogue, and draws heavily on the aesthetics of silent cinema. Basically, *Ida* challenges serious cinephiles to an arm wrestling match. It is worth the effort, however.

The chief charm of *Ida* is the stunning visual beauty of the film. Shot in Academy ratio, the basic square of classic cinema, the film is the visual child of Carl Theodor Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, with a healthy dose of *La Nouvelle Vague*. Given the not-so-innovative subject matter – the emotional and psychological trauma of World War II in Europe – Pawlikowski seems to be implying that to truly examine these horrors, we need to step outside of ourselves to an earlier time when storytelling was a more purely visual affair.

All in all, *Ida* is a bold film in that it holds back so much. Obviously Pawlikowski wasn't going for obviousness – else why create such an austere film? But by withholding some of the basic expectations of cinema (historical background, camera movement, expected musical cues), *Ida* runs the risk of alienating its audience. Personally, I thought *Ida's* beauty was inspiring, but enter this film with caution.

Screening Times for *Ida*

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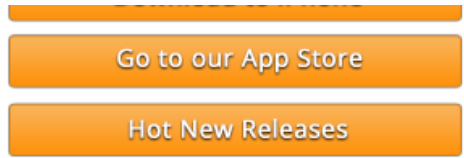
A Gallery of Images from Ida



Watch the Ida Trailer



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About Brandy Dean



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