

B A D T I M I N G (1980)

Cast: Art Garfunkel (Dr. Alex Linden); Theresa Russell (Milena Flaherty);
Harvey Keitel (Inspector Fredrich Netusil); Denholm Elliott
(Milena's Husband)

Director: Nicholas Roeg

Dr. Alex Lindens, an American research psychoanalyst working in Vienna has a passionate love affair with Milena Flaherty, the wayward wife of a middle-aged Czech army officer. As the affair develops he pretends to cool observation, but becomes increasingly jealous as she asserts her independence with deliberately erratic behaviour. Finally she attempts suicide after telephoning him to declare her intentions. After examining the scene of Milena's attempted suicide and the discrepancies in Alex's statement to the police, Inspector Netusil suspects Alex has ravished the girl whilst she lay unconscious.

Such a description conveys little of the films flavour, because more than any of Roeg's earlier films "Bad Timing" is a dazzling mosaic that moves back and forth in time, producing an astonishing range of effects and associations.

Alex's skills are also employed by American military intelligence to assess communist weak spots, one of which is Milena's husband. Alex however is also being spied upon by Inspector Netusil, so the film is also about surveillance, voyeurism and suspicion (and their corrosive effect) at different levels. Can we be sure that Alex did ravish Milena or is it Inspector Netusil's personal fantasy?

Nicholas Roeg is arguably the best British director since Hitchcock. He entered films as a clapper boy in 1950, and by 1959 had worked his way up to cinematographer. In 1962 he worked as second unit cameraman on "Lawrence of Arabia" and then worked as director of photography on such films as Roger Cormans "Masque of the Red Death", Francois Truffant's "Fahrenheit 451" and John Schlesinger's "Far From The Madding Crowd". His first film as director (a collaborative effort with Donald Commell in 1970) was "Performance" shown last season. Since then he has only made four films - "Walkabout" 1971; "Don't Look Now" 1973; "The Man Who Fell To Earth" 1976 and "Bad Timing" 1980, each one made in his own imaginative and stylistically striking way.

The technical brilliance of "Bad Timing" is indisputable and if you love or hate the film you will not forget it. A word of warning - Simon and Garfunkel records will never be the same again!

Stephen Lock

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'Bad Timing'

Directed by Nicholas Roeg

For everyone who has seen *Don't Look Now* (even the expurgated version the BBC showed recently on TV) will find that Nicholas Roeg has in his new film *Bad Timing* continued to pursue his themes of the male/female relationships; the use of time in flashback sequences, allied

to a precise editing technique all contained within the framework of a thriller. *Bad Timing* goes further than *Don't Look Now*—it's going to be called indulgent, difficult and weird. It certainly demands attention and will certainly divide people.

Art Garfunkel is an American who is living in Vienna and is picked up by Theresa Russell at a party—the film consists of his recollections of their subsequent stormy relationship during a night when she is taken to hospital suffering from an overdose of sleeping pills. The case is investigated by a

policeman, Harvey Keitel, who wants to know why she took the pills, and particularly why there was an apparent long delay before Garfunkel phoned for the ambulance. Time, memory and relationships all play their part in the fascinating jigsaw puzzle that is unfolded before us.



Nicholas Roeg (centre) on set for a scene in an Austrian cafe from *Bad Timing*.



Eleven o'clock, but all is not well with Art Garfunkel as he contemplates his relationship with Theresa Russell.



Up in Vienna; Theresa Russell attracts the attention of Art Garfunkel at a party.