

"THE TIN DRUM" (DIE BLECHTROMMEL)

1979. United Artists. Colour.

Director: Volker Schlöndorff. From the book by Gunter Grass

Starring: Mario Adorf, Angela Winkler & David Bennent.

A young boy, in Nazi Germany, decides that he does not want to grow any more..that he wants to remain at three for the rest of his life. Having decided this, he infact does not grow physically but does mature mentally. The film follows the exploits of the young lad, Oskar (David Bennent), along with the traumatic events of his family.

The Tin Drum is actually an object of childhood, a toy, which Oskar clings desparately to throughout his life. This drum symbolised his intent to stop growing, his resistance of reaching manhood and his disassociation with adults. It is a wonderful thought that if, when we reached our favourite age, we could suddenly stop growing up. I am sure many of us would avoid the peaks of old age! But this film is far from indulgent fantasy on the part of the Director....there is more to it than that: Schlöndorff is trying to make us feel the boys resentment to adults, to make us picture how disgusting his parents and elders appear to him. He does not wish to grow up like that, so he prevents it. In doing so, through, does Oskar find happiness, is he fulfilled? Is this the right thing to do? When you see the film tonight you can answer these questions yourself and decide if it would be worth stopping natural development to retain happiness and prevent possible doom. Also, over its duration try to think: do you feel sorry for Oskar, remembering that it was his decision to stop growing but not his to be born into the world. If you consider this you may find, like me, that you enjoy the film but your emotions are not moved in sympathy towards the main character.

Whatever, Tin Drum is a vastly entertaining slice of German cinema, although the initial originality of the theme seems to wain slightly towards the end, with some rather silly dwarf-domestic scenes which do nothing to enhance the overall excellance of the picture. For some, there will be moments of this film that make them feel sick...for others there will be shock at the way Schlöndorff has handled Oskars sexual activities....but for most it will be an interesting, unorthodox and slightly ironic look at Nazi Germany. Make the most of it, enjoy the film!.

IAN BRESMAN

DONT FORGET: Come along to our next presentation and split your sides at some vintage comedy: The Marx Brothers in "A Night At The Opera", 8.00pm on Thursday 14th October.