

## South African family *A World Apart*

*A World Apart* ★★★ 1/2  
Princess Theatre  
December 2-8

review by Brad Howard

*A World Apart* is an extremely emotional film. Winner of the Special Grand

### Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

The ESO has several concerts and events scheduled over the next few weeks. Tonight, Thursday, December 1, the Lighter Classics series continues with a varied program of works by Rossini, Sammartini, Vivaldi, Grieg, Smetana and Offenbach. Featured soloist will be Dutch recorder player Michala Petri.

This Saturday, December 3, the ESO presents their Saturdays For Kids concert at 2 pm at the Jubilee Auditorium, featuring children's entertainer Charlotte Diamond.

The ESO will be performing Handel's "Messiah" next Friday and Saturday, December 9 and 10, featuring guest conductor Jon Washburn and the Richard Eaton Singers. The Edmonton Food Bank will be taking donations at the concert.

On December 15, 16 and 17, the ESO presents "An Old Fashioned Christmas", featuring guest conductor David Hoyt, National Ballet dancers Cynthia Macedo and Andrew Needhammer, as well as various local radio and television personalities.

The ESO will also be performing in several malls around town over the next few weeks.

Prize of the Jury, at the 41st Cannes Film Festival, it stars Barbara Hershey, Jodhi May and Linda Mvusi, all of whom shared the best actress award at Cannes as well.

Loosely based on the true story of journalist Ruth First and her family, *A World Apart* chronicles the struggles of Diane Roth (Barbara Hershey) to expose the injustices of apartheid and the emotional trials her struggles place on her family. However, her wonderfully average daughter Molly's (Jodhi May) battle with ostracism from friends and community and with trying to understand her mother's motivations and the family situation, is the central topic of the story. It studies the effect on family, and specifically children, when people battle authority for a belief.

Due to his political opinions and actions, Molly's father must flee the country in the

### Roth is arrested under the infamous South African 90-day Detention Act...

opening scene of the film and Molly's mother must continue to report injustices on her own. In the process she almost totally ignores Molly because of her priorities.

Roth is arrested under the infamous South African 90-day Detention Act, under which anyone can be imprisoned for 90 days without being charged. She must battle with herself to maintain her own ideals and political decisions while faced with permanent incarceration and possible



Barbara Hershey, left, and Jodhi May in *A World Apart*: anti-apartheid activists in South Africa don't get much sympathy from the authorities.

death. She is released after 118 days (having been arrested again just minutes after her first 90 day incarceration ended) under house arrest only after attempting suicide.

While her mother is incarcerated, Molly struggles to understand her mother's motivations with the help of their caring housekeeper (Linda Mvusi) who exposes her to the living conditions of blacks in South Africa. Molly must also fight her loneliness as friends and community fling accusations and communist labels at her.

The acting is flawless, and combined with the skillfully directed scene transitions, one's suspension of disbelief never falters. The settings, vehicles and accompanying styles all support the 1963 era when anti-apartheid movement was really just starting. There are faults to be found in the vagueness of much of the film. We

wonder exactly what Diane Roth was involved in, and what the main reasons for her detention were.

We get the feeling that the writer Sean Solvo, the daughter of Ruth First, was attempting to express a depth of her family situation in a way that is not completely understood by the audience. Some of Molly's actions are not well enough explained; thus we are left guessing. The character of Molly also flaws the film, because she is much too willing to listen and follow direction without question for most thirteen year olds.

Despite this, though, it is through Molly that the film successfully evokes our compassion and understanding for her and her situation. It makes us feel aware of the suffering which is often necessary in the pursuit of holding one's beliefs and attempting to effect change in the world.

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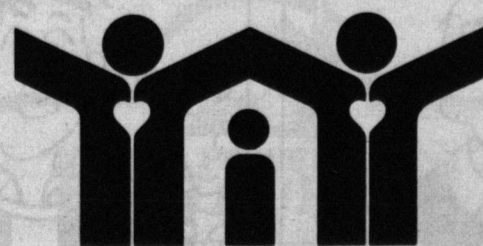
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