



UNB FILM SOCIETY PRESENTS:

The Engima of Kaspar Hauser

EVERY MAN HIMSELF AND GOD AGAINST ALL

Like all of Werner Herzog's films, Kaspar Hauser seems to be dominated by some vast, deeply menacing abstraction. Herzog insists, however, that his films are not about ideas. "You must understand that I am not a philosopher. I am not an intellectual" he said in an interview with David Overbey; "I make films to rid myself of them, like ridding myself of a nightmare." Anyone who has seen his early films--Even Dwarfs Started Small and Aguirre, Wrath of God leap to mind--cannot help but acknowledge the justice of the comparison. His work has the obsessive insistence and the fragile clarity of a fever dream. It is an effect Herzog goes to some trouble to create: before

each day's shooting, he made a practice of hypnotizing the entire cast of Heart of Glass (1977). His films deliberately and dangerously exploit the innate qualities of genuine outsiders. In casting the role of Kaspar, Herzog chose a young man ("Bruno S.") who had been diagnosed as schizophrenic, and whose youth--thirteen years spent in various State institutions--was already the subject of Lutz Eisholz's Bruno der Schwarze. Bruno S. is joined by two unusual characters from earlier Herzog films: Helmut Doring, the "Little King" of Even Dwarfs, and Hombrecito, the Indian flautist from Aguirre.

Even without such a cast, the story of Kaspar Hauser would

be extraordinary. In 1828, Kaspar appeared in a small town in Germany, literally out of the ground. He had no knowledge of language, logic, religion, or human philosophy, for he had been tied in a sitting position in a cellar since birth. He possessed only his name and a bland platitude which he was incapable of interpreting: "I would like to be the kind of horseman my father was." And so Kaspar, the sole man in human history who was born as an adult, entered society lacking the experience and knowledge which very child takes for granted. Given this material, a less individual director might well have made easy farce or indulged in trite social criticism; fortunately, Herzog struggles for something more challenging. Eschewing obvious manipulation in favor of a more neutral style, he portrays the townspeople as various and human: they are not uniformly horrible, any more than Kaspar is consistently saintly. Brigitte Mira, for example, turns in a warm and natural performance as Frau Kathe, and Kaspar's mentor, Daumer, is well-meaning, if limited; the priests and professors, on the other hand, are depicted less sympathetically. Throughout the film the tension between innocence and experience is developed with subtlety, as well as with a certain degree of ambiguity. This is especially evident in the (seemingly) inevitable resolution of Kaspar's "education," the meaning of which is neither neat nor immediately obvious.



YOUR COLLEGE RADIO PLAYLIST

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TW	LW	WO	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	7	3	Kate Bush	Sensual World	Capitol/EMI
2	5	3	Jesus and Mary Chain	Automatic	Wea
3	1	5	Cowboy Junkies	Blue Moon Revisted	Cooking
4	6	3	Sugarcubes	Here Today,	
				Tomorrow Next Week	Wea/Electra
5	3	4	Bauhaus	Swing the Heartache	Beggars'
6	9	5	Bob Dylan	Oh Mercy	Columbia
7	2	7	Jane Siberry	Bound By the Beauty	Duke Street
8	15	3	Sonic Youth	Daydream Nation	Blast First
9	14	3	Various Artists	The New Beat r/Evolution	Network
10	8	8	Ziggy Marley	One Bright Day	Virgin
11	18	3	Hectors' Body	Space	Independent
12	12	6	Front Line Assembly	No Limit 12"	Wax Trax
13	4	8	Bel Canto	Dreaming Girl E.P.	Network
14	10	7	Red Flag	Naive Art	Enigma
15	21	5	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Mothers' Mill	Capitol/EMI
16	13	9	Doughboys	Home Again ...	Restless
17	22	2	Phibes	Here Comes Your Man E.P.	4AD
18	--	1	The Druids	Be Careful,	Independent
19	11	9	Chris and Cosy	Trust	Network
20	--	1	Chalk Circle	As the Crow Flies	Duke Street
21	26	2	Gordop Quinton	Sea Kings	Woodnight
22	--	1	Jazz Butcher	Big Planet, Scarey Planet	Mercury
23	16	7	Various Artists	Electronic Body Music	Antler
24	19	11	54-40	Fight for Love	Reprise
25	--	1	Cluck DVA	The Act	Wax Trax
26	30	6	Various Artists	En Garde	En Guard
27	24	7	In Sotto Voce	Tracks	Antler
28	23	8	Stompin' Tom Connors	Fiddle & Song	Capitol
29	17	10	Martin L. Gore	Counterfeit E.P.	Mute
30	20	11	Various Artists	It Came From Canada #5	Dg

* Canadian Content
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