

UNB Film Society presents "Mephisto"

This Friday and Saturday at 7:00 pm the UNB Film Society will be showing Istvan Szabo's *Mephisto* (1981). The earlier starting time is required by the film's unusual length (two and a half hours).

Although Istvan Szabo's *Mephisto* is a controversial film, its superb quality is unquestioned. Given the excellent cast led by Klaus Maria Brandauer, and the sensational script, based on a long suppressed novel by Klaus Mann (Thomas Mann's son), it is not surprising that this Hungarian-German co-production won the 1981 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. However, Szabo's subject is the moral ambiguity of the artist in a period of political crises. Although he opts for the universal impact of allegory by pruning some of the more obvious historical reference points (his officers cry "Heil" but not "Hitler"), it is clear that he is dealing with Germany in the period between wars. Brandauer's character, Hendrik Hofgen, is based on Gustaf Grundgens, a commanding figure in German theatre both before and after the Second World War. Klaus Mann was Grundgens' brother-in-law, and perhaps Grundgens' lover as well, which certainly gave him a unique perspective on this theatrical Titan. In Szabo's treatment, Hofgen/Grundgens emerges as both morally and artistically equivocal, and the many contradictions of his life are profoundly disturbing.

Hofgen (Brandauer) is an ambitious Hamburg actor, at once painfully eager to please and insatiable in his jealous appetite for applause. He seizes every opportunity to perform, whether it is offered by a Socialist theatre collective or by the rising Nazi party.

He woos and wins the daughter (Janda) of an influential intellectual, and abandons her as quickly when her usefulness passes. When he becomes the protege of "the General" (Hoppe), he puts his histrionic talents at the service of his patron's party. Yet he also attempts to use his growing influence to save his leftist friends and his black mistress (Boyd).

Szabo seems to come down rather harshly on the side of personal responsibility, and he appears to regard actors as inherently lacking in moral commitment (a stand which leads one, perhaps, to question his own role in Hungary's film industry). But to see the irredeemably ugly side of the performer's desire for acclaim in an industry which so frequently enjoys flattering (or romantically dissipated) self-portraits, is refreshing. And in spite of Szabo's relatively overt directorial comment (or perhaps because of it), we feel a surprising sympathy for Hofgen, who, for all his Mephistophelean posing, is obviously more Faust than devil.

press release

PLAYLIST For week ending March 16th, 1990

This Wk	Last Wk	Wks. On	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
☆1	11	3	Maestro Fresh Wes	Symphony in Effect	Attic
2	9	3	Devo	Now It can be told...	Enigma
☆3	4	4	Norman Iceburg	Kiss the Beauty	Karlama
4	1	5	They Might Be Giants	Flood	Elektra
5	13	3	Public Enemy	Welcome to TerrorDome	Def Jam
☆6	3	5	Brenda Baker	Brenda Baker	Independent
☆7	2	7	Various Artists	Oh God Mom's on Chnl 10	Og
8	17	2	Peter Murphy	Deep	Beggar's Banquet
☆9	5	7	Deja Voodoo	Live Bkstage Club (helsinki)	Og
☆10	8	8	Town Cryers	Surprise, Surprise	Flat & Black
11	21	2	Renegade Sound Wave	Biting My Nails	Mute
12	7	5	Indigo Girls	Strange Fire	Epic
☆13	6	6	The Vindicators	The Vindicators	Og
☆14	—	1	Cowboy Junkies	The Caution Horses	BMG
15	10	8	Ofra Haza	Desert Wind	Wea
16	14	5	National Peoples Gang	Orange	Dr. Dream
☆17	—	1	Spirit of the West	Save this House	Wea
18	24	2	The Lilac Time	Paradise Circus	Fontana
☆19	—	1	Eva Everything	Piece of Cake	Great Shakes
20	—	1	Pale Saints	Barging Into Presence of God	4AD
21	12	9	Deborah Harry	Def, Dumb and Blonde	Sire
22	—	1	Close Lobsters	Headache Rhetoric	Enigma
23	—	1	A Split Second	Firewalker (12")	Antler
24	—	1	Everything but the Girl	Language of Life	Wea
25	18	4	The Arch	The Messier Album	Antler
26	16	3	All About Eve	Scarlet & other Stories	Phonogram
27	—	1	Tall Tales and True	Shiver	rooArt
28	19	9	The Creatures	Boomerang	Geffen
29	20	10	Tracy Chapman	Crossroads	Elektra
30	15	10	Psychadelic Furs	Books of Days	Columbia/CBS

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Social Club

Concert

APRIL 12th

A BALLROOM EVENT

members and
guests



Kradle