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"EXTRAORDINARY!"
- A.O. SCOT, THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE



EDGE



FROM THE ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR OF
HEAD-ON
FATIH AKIN

OF



HEAVEN





Second film in our German Season

Eden Court Cinema
24th January 2017 at
7.15pm

Review by Ann
Hornaday from the
Washington Post
(2008). Review
sourced by Tony
Janssens (InFifa),
film notes compiled
by Mark MacLennan
(InFiFa).

The Edge of Heaven

2007, Germany, Colour Drama, Running time: 124 mins. Rating:18

Directed by Fatih Akin

Cast: Nurgül Yeşilçay, Baki Davrak, Tuncel Kurtiz, Hanna Schygulla,
Patrycia Ziolkowska, Nursel Köse

There's a shot in Fatih Akin's "The Edge of Heaven" that conveys to viewers in one elegant, quiet gesture that they are in the hands of a great filmmaker. The shot closes the first of the film's three chapters; a car is driving at a diagonal from one side of the screen and the camera cruises with it at an angle, finally meeting up with the vehicle and settling on the man driving it.

That uninterrupted take -- a classic example of bravura filmmaking, with its traveling camera and crucial sense of timing -- shows why Akin is one of the best directors working today. Not only does the shot reflect his technical prowess, but it fluently expresses his unique artistic philosophy, born of his heritage as a German of Turkish descent.

Since making his feature debut in 2000 with the winsome romantic comedy "In July," Akin, 34, has made a specialty of capturing people in motion as they cross literal and metaphorical borders. He gives them their space, observing them from a discreet and oblique distance, but gradually zooms in to create intimate, finely etched portraits of restless and contradictory souls. With his ensuing films, "Head-On" and "Crossing the Bridge," a distinctive Akin style has emerged: unhurried, compassionate and deeply engaged with a fast-changing world.

"The Edge of Heaven" marks the crowning achievement in Akin's still-developing career, and it's an absolute must-see for anyone interested in the cinematic future at its brightest.

Among Akin's talents is a knack for superb casting, and "The Edge of Heaven" is no exception: Audiences will cheer a sometimes serene and sometimes shattering performance from veteran German actress Hanna Schygulla ("The Marriage of Maria Braun"), but they will just as surely be captivated by such unknowns as Nurguel Yesilcay, Baki Davrak, Tuncel Kurtiz, Patrycia Ziolkowska and Nursel Koese.



"The Edge of Heaven" opens in Turkey but quickly moves to Bremen, where the elderly Turkish immigrant Ali (Kurtiz) persuades a prostitute named Yeter (Koese) to live with him, an arrangement looked on with bemused tolerance by Ali's son Nejat (Davrak), a professor of German literature in Hamburg. The first chapter of the movie focuses on this unlikely threesome; the second chapter shifts to a fiery political activist in Istanbul known as Guel (Yesilcay), as well as a college student in Hamburg named Lotte (Ziolkowska) and her mother, Susanne (Schygulla). These vivid, unforgettable characters, brought to life by an ensemble of unusually expressive and attractive actors, quickly embark on a roundelay of contingency and coincidence, as they proceed to navigate boundaries of culture, identity and politics. Together they personify life's inevitable stages: the intemperate passions of youth, the ambivalences of middle age, the reckoning of old age. Regardless of their differences, in many ways they act as mirrors, reflecting a vanished past or a dimly perceived future of one another. When Susanne, while placidly pitting cherries, engages Guel in a debate



About Turkey joining the European Union, she could be arguing with the freethinking girl of her own lost youth.



How those two disparate women, as well as the other characters, come to cross paths will remind some viewers of the 2006 film "Babel." But unlike that overrated film, "The Edge of Heaven" addresses the same themes with unforced ease, from the random acts of violence that set its characters in motion to issues of globalization and cultural misunderstanding.

If "The Edge of Heaven" exemplifies film at its most politically and socially alert, it's the farthest thing from a polemic: While his characters endure the bullying of Muslim fundamentalists in Germany or an arrest by Turkish police for leftist activism, Akin seems to maintain a healthy mistrust of political or religious orthodoxy. He's far more interested in creating an of-the-moment portrait of the two cultures with which he's most at home, fluidly traveling between them as he captures not just their special vernaculars but the new cosmopolitan world of his own footloose generation.

Our next screening... **The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum**

The third and last film in our... **Members' Season**



Eden Court Cinema
Tuesday 7th February 2017 at
7.15pm

When Katharina Blum spends the night with an alleged terrorist, her quiet, ordered life falls into ruins. Suddenly a suspect, Katharina is subject to a vicious smear campaign by the police and a ruthless tabloid journalist, testing the limits of her dignity and her sanity. As relevant today as on the day of its release in 1975.



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www.invernessfilmfans.org