

Great Directors: Kubrick

Eyes Wide Shut 1999 (R)

Friday, December 5 - Wednesday, December 10, 2008



Film Information

Directed by
Stanley Kubrick

Language
English

Running Time
159 minutes

Film Notes

In his introduction to the biography *Kubrick: The Definitive Edition*, Martin Scorsese wrote of his great admiration for the legendary filmmaker, and about the curious critical response that his films tended to inspire. Others have talked about this phenomenon, too, if it can be called that, and it goes something like this: With each film, Kubrick would bring something new and revolutionary to cinema, and so with the next project, critics would instinctively expect more of the same. Their immediate reaction was often one of confusion, if not outright disapproval (consider the seismic shifts between 2001 and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, and then from A CLOCKWORK ORANGE to BARRY LYNDON) though as time passed admiration and even awe for his most recent film would grow. Then the next one would surface and do something altogether different, and the process would begin all over again.

“When EYES WIDE SHUT came out a few months after Stanley Kubrick’s death in 1999, it was severely misunderstood, which came as no surprise,” Scorsese wrote. “If you go back and look at the contemporary reactions to any Kubrick picture (except the earliest ones), you’ll see that all his films were initially misunderstood. Then, after five or ten years came the

realization that 2001 or BARRY LYNDON or THE SHINING was like nothing else before or since.”

EYES WIDE SHUT most definitely falls in that category. It provokes a response from the viewer that the viewer may not feel entirely comfortable about, as Kubrick’s films often did. And it does so in panoramic fashion—not just through the performances or the cinematography or the pacing, but the sound. Kubrick used music in varying ways and to strong effect throughout his career, but it’s difficult to think of any sound more immediately and singlehandedly chilling than the dissonant piano tones in EYES WIDE SHUT, taken from the second movement of György Ligeti’s piano cycle “Musica ricercata.”

—Casey



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“You will kindly remove your mask.”

More Information

Screenplay by
Stanley Kubrick
Frederic Raphael

Based on the novella
Traumnovelle (Dream Story) by
Arthur Schnitzler

Featuring
Tom Cruise
Nicole Kidman
Madison Eginton
Sydney Pollack
Jackie Sawiris
Todd Field
Rade Serbedzija
Leelee Sobieski
Alan Cumming

Cinematography by
Larry Smith

Original Music by
Jocelyn Pook

Film Editing by
Nigel Galt

Country of Origin
UK

“The first reviews of 2001 were insulting, let alone bad. An important Los Angeles critic faulted PATHS OF GLORY because the actors didn’t speak with French accents. When DR. STRANGELOVE came out, a New York paper ran a review under the head ‘Moscow Could Not Buy More Harm to America.’ Something like that. But critical opinion on my films has always been salvaged by what I would call subsequent critical opinion. Which is why I think audiences are more reliable than critics, at least initially. Audiences tend not to bring all that critical baggage with them to each film... And I really think that a few critics come to my films expecting to see the last film. They’re waiting to see something that never happens. I imagine it must be something like standing in the batter’s box waiting for a fast ball, and the pitcher throws a change-up. The batter swings and misses. He thinks...‘he threw me the wrong pitch.’ I think this accounts for some of the initial hostility.”

—Stanley Kubrick

Also Recommended

- Lolita 1962 (Dir. Stanley Kubrick)
- Belle du jour 1967 (Dir. Luis Buñuel)
- The Conversation 1974 (Dir. Francis Ford Coppola)
- The Shining 1980 (Dir. Stanley Kubrick)
- Blue Velvet 1986 (Dir. David Lynch)