



41st SEASON

ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2020/21

Locarno, Cinema Kursaal

18:15

Friday, 13 November 2020

JOJO RABBIT

2019

108 minutes

Directed by **Taika Waititi**

Starring: Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie, Taika Waititi, Rebel Wilson, Sam Rockwell, Scarlett Johansson

In the later stages of World War II, ten-year-old Johannes "Jojo" Betzler joins the *Deutsches Jungvolk* (junior section of the Hitler youth). Jojo is an innocent boy but heavily indoctrinated with the Nazi ideals (manifested in his imaginary friend, Adolf, a supportive and buffoonish version of Adolf Hitler). On the day of his first training camp run by Captain Klenzendorf, he is given the derisive nickname "Jojo Rabbit" by the other children after refusing to kill a rabbit to prove his killer instinct. Pepped up by Adolf, he returns to prove his bravery, stealing a *Stielhandgranate* and throwing it without supervision. The grenade explodes at his feet, leaving him scarred and limping. Jojo's mother Rosie (Scarlett Johansson) coerces Klenzendorf into ensuring that Jojo is included and given responsibilities. Jojo is given small tasks such as spreading propaganda leaflets throughout the town, and collecting scrap for the war effort.

Beneath the fanaticism, Jojo is a frightened boy whose sister has died and whose father has disappeared in battle. But his mother Rosie has a secret: she's a covert anti-fascist who is hiding a Jewish girl, Elsa (*Leave No Trace* star Thomasin McKenzie), in the attic. When Jojo stumbles upon Elsa, he is initially horrified, believing her to be a monster. But gradually the pair strike up a love-hate relationship that infuriates imaginary Adolf and causes Jojo to start to rethink his allegiances.

Critics' comments:

-Jojo Rabbit is a beautiful fairy tale of a story. It's set amid one of the most horrific periods of world history, but the gas chambers and concentration camps are nowhere to be seen.(from The Screen Scene)

- Taika Waititi's film is tender, daring, and sharp -- precisely pitched so that it keeps its path steady and its ambitions in check. (from *Independent UK*)

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