

HOUSE OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTIES

A Film by
Vadim Glowna

99 Minutes, Color, 2007, 35mm



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THE HOUSE OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTIES

SYNOPSIS

A wealthy businessman in his late 60s, Edmond (Vadim Glowna), is haunted by the death, many years before, of his wife and daughter in a car accident. On the advice of an old friend, Kogi, he visits a mysterious 'house' for older men. In this establishment it is possible to spend an entire night in bed with beautiful, sleeping girls. The girls have consented to be drugged and won't awaken, and the men will feel a certain comfort from their warm embrace and perhaps a feeling of a temporary escape from age.

Madame (Angela Winkler), the 'managing director' of the establishment, is almost motherly, yet very tight lipped, in her interactions with Edmond, but also in how she speaks of the young ladies in her charge.

More and more Edmond surrenders to the unconscious seduction, youth and unpredictable sensuality of the drugged young women. As he drifts in and out of associations and memories of his past, bizarre hallucinations drive Edmond to seek escape in the arms of a young girl.

By accident, Edmond observes Madame as she supervises the removal of what appears to be a corpse packed in a bag, thrown into a car and secretly taken away.

Nevertheless Edmond returns again to the 'House of the Sleeping Beauties,' pondering his morality, his desires, and the purpose of his life. As he does so, he begins to lose his tenuous grasp on reality.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

What is this film about?

It is about transition, remembrance, mourning, guilt, loneliness, sex and death, eroticism and dying. These are the main threads of this film.

'Being an old man always means being the neighbor of death.'

When I read Kawabata's book for the first time I thought: What a beautifully strange and melancholic story!

Research showed that such an establishment actually existed in Berlin in the 1920's and 30's; surely there were also some in Prague, Paris or Vienna too. I was then convinced that this novel tells a story that could not only have happened in Japan, but could be told in Europe as well.

I only inherited the sleeping girls, Madame and Eguchi (whom I call Edmond) from Kawabata's plot. Then I continued the story far beyond the novel, added a couple of characters and expanded the 'thriller element' that mysteriously accompanies the entire novel. The memories don't belong to Eguchi anymore, but to Edmond, whom I gave an equivalent European memory, based on my own experiences.

The closeness of erotic adventure and the yearning for death, the painful memories of Edmond's dead wife and daughter, the warmth of the young sleeping women, the strangeness of Madame and the organization of the 'Redeemer Sect' behind her, add up to an insomnia that makes Edmond a stroller, a wanderer through the night. Edmond, pushed by his feelings of guilt, his craving for an embrace and tenderness at the end of his life, has just one thing left - he will die of a broken heart, but redeemed.

CAST

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Edmond | Vadim Glowna |
| Madame | Angela Winkler |
| Kogi | Maximilian Schell |
| Mister Gold | Birol Ünel |
| Secretary | Mona Glass |
| Maid | Marina Weiss |
| Balladeer | Benjamin Cabuk |
| Preacher | Peter Lupp |
| Sleeping Beauty | Jacqueline Le Saunier |
| Sleeping Beauty | Maria Burghard |
| Sleeping Beauty | Babet Mader |
| Sleeping Beauty | Linda Elsner |
| Sleeping Beauty | Sarah Swenshon |
| Sleeping Beauty | Isabelle Wackers |

CREW

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|-------------------------|--|
| Written and Directed by | Vadim Glowna |
| Produced by | Vadim Glowna Raymond Tarabay |
| Co-Produced by | Peter Weber Michael Frenschkowski Marco Hertel Bernd Schaarmann |
| Director of Photography | Ciro Cappellari |
| Production Design by | Peter Weber |
| Costume Design by | Lucie Bates |
| Make-Up Artist | Jekatarina Oertel |
| Sound Design by | Thomas Knop |
| Edited by | Charlie Lézin |
| Original Music by | Nikolaus Glowna Siggi Mueller |

VADIM GLOWNA

Vadim Glowna was born 1941 and grew up in Hamburg. The versatile actor, director and author attended Hamburg Stage school. 1961 Gustaf Gründgens took him directly to Hamburger Schauspielhaus where Glowna's career began. Vadim Glowna became one of Germany's most popular TV and film actors. He also had many international appearances in films such as Sam Peckinpah's epic 'Steiner - Cross of Iron' and Claude Chabrol's 'Quiet Days in Clichy' among many others.

In 2000 he was awarded Best Actor of the year by German Film Critics for his appearance in Oskar Roehler's award-winning film 'No Place to Go'.

Vadim Glowna is also a very successful director, having directing more than 30 TV films as well as 8 feature films. 1981 he won several awards for his film 'Desperado City', among others: The 'Caméra d'Or' at the International Film festival in Cannes. Two of his other directed films 'Nothing left to lose' (1983) and 'Raising to the Bait' (1992) where in the competition at the International Berlin Filmfestival and both got Honorable Mentions. 1989 Vadim Glowna was member of the jury at the Berlin Filmfestival.

MAXIMILLIAN SCHELL

Maximilian Schell is one of the most well-known and one of the most successful German speaking actors and directors worldwide.

In 1961 he tackled the difficult role of the defense attorney in the sprawling war-crimes epic 'Judgment at Nuremberg' for which he won an 'Oscar' as Best Actor.

Maximilian Schell was six times nominated for an Academy Award, as well as winning the 'Golden Globe' twice. In Sam Peckinpah's 'Steiner - Cross of Iron' (1976) he met Vadim Glowna, where they became friends.

ANGELA WINKLER

Angela Winkler is a legend in German theatre. She has appeared in over 100 different plays and worked with the best directors in Europe. Many of her 22 film appearances been international successes, like 'The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum' (Schlöndorf/Trotta), where Winkler was awarded with the German Filmprize, and 'The Tin Drum' which won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film as well the 'Palme d'Or' at Cannes in 1980. 1984 she played the leading part together with Vadim Glowna in 'Edith's Diary'.

BIROL ÜNEL

Biröl Ünel is currently the shooting star of the German film scene. After the huge success of 'Head-On' (won 'Golden Bear' at the Berlin Filmfestival as well as the European Film Award, sold to more than 30 territories worldwide and earned over 10 million Euros at the box office), he played the principal role in Tony Gatlif's new film 'Transylvania', and will be starring Vadim Glowna's next film 'Heroes'. In 2004 Biröl won the German Filmprize and was nominated as Best Actor for the European Film Award.

YASUNARI KAWABATA

Yasunari Kawabata was the first Japanese novelist to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (1968). Many of Kawabata's books explore the melancholy place of sex in culture and people's lives. His works combined old Japan's beauty with modernist trends, realism with surrealist visions. Over the course of his life, Kawabata wrote more than a hundred 'palm-of-the-hand' stories - as the author called them.