

Chester Film Society presents

Cairo Conspiracy aka The Boy From Heaven

Sweden/France/Finland 2022 | 2hr 1m | Cert 12

Director: Tarik Saleh

Starring: Tawfeek Barhom, Fares Fares, Mohammad Bakri, Makram Houry

Synopsis

The threat of state-sanctioned violence hangs over a male student after he is recruited as an informant in a deadly power struggle between the political and religious establishment in this dark Egyptian conspiracy drama. The film had its world premiere at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, where it received the François Chalais Prize.

Critical acclaim

"It's a movie that is boldly anti-clerical, juxtaposing the spectacle of faith with a hidden reality of corruption and hypocrisy... [the] film's final implication that the secular state is marginally more institutionally corrupt than the religious establishment. It's a bold piece of work." *The Guardian*

"Muscular camerawork illustrates the central location of Al-Azhar with an ominous sense of grandeur. Life is orderly and the surroundings magnificent. From the tower where Cairo spreads out as a thousand twinkling lights, to the courtyard, often photographed from an aerial view where white and red prayer caps form a symmetrical pattern, everything looks too perfect. And, as is often the case in cinema as in life, perfection masks rot." *Indiewire*

"Saleh is careful not to tarnish the faith, suggesting that Islam itself is not to blame for the ways that certain people misinterpret and abuse it. That's a refreshing view, considering how one-dimensionally

the religion is typically treated by Western filmmakers — not that it will protect the movie from controversy. You can't make a film like "Cairo Conspiracy" without upsetting great swaths of people. Heck, if you're based in Egypt, you can't make such a film at all."

Variety

"It's a scenario we've seen in many a movie... but it also benefits from Saleh's skillful direction and the sturdy turns by Barhom and Fares, whose characters are constantly playing a cat-and-mouse game with the mosque and the government as they try to save their skin. When things ultimately resolve themselves, the two institutions remain just as corrupt as they were before, and the movie offers up an unsparing vision of Egyptian authority, whether religious or secular."

Hollywood Reporter

Conclusion

All the familiar tropes of a conspiracy thriller yet presented in an intriguingly unfamiliar cultural context.

Our next film:

Martin Eden

Showing on November 2nd

7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)

At The Garret, Storyhouse

www.chesterfilmsociety.co.uk

Please rate tonight's film using the scale below. We welcome your comments! Detach and hand in as you leave.

| ---- I loathed it ---- | ---- I disliked it ----- | ----- It was OK ----- | ----- I liked it ----- | -----I loved it ----- |

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10