

Movie Review

'Midnight Express' drives hard, fast

By Paula Reid

"Midnight Express" is not a nice movie. It is not a movie anyone would wish to see twice. It is a brutal, harrowing melange of sadism, corruption, dishonor and hopelessness, a mixture made all the more disturbing by being based on truth.

The story concerns the fate of American and European youths imprisoned in Turkish jails on drug charges, and centers around the things experienced by Billy Hayes during the five years he spent in Istanbul's Sagmalcilar Prison for attempting to smuggle some hashish back to the United States in 1970.

After his arrest Hayes was sentenced to four and a half years; when only 53 days remained on his first sentence, he was taken back to court and re-sentenced to another 30 years, a common occurrence under Turkey's quaint judicial system.

Prior to the imposition of the second sentence, Hayes had been waiting, with reasonable patience, to be freed, as he had been advised to do so. When faced

with the prospect of another 30 years in Sagmalcilar, he determined to catch the "midnight express" — to escape by any means he could find.

The film, even in the most brutal sequences, has a curiously arty look to it, rather like Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" had. The exterior shots of the domes of Istanbul, the coffeehouses and bazaars glow with the golden aureole one expects of the mysterious East. The nimbus persists even inside the prison, as does the use of slow-motion. Tastes in such matters differ widely; to many it can only seem like a slightly elevated Peckinpah treatment, with blood spraying in delicately dreamy arcs. In any event, the necessity, if not the effectiveness, of the rather voluptuous cinematography cannot always be clearly demonstrated.

The performances are generally quite good, though Brad Davis, who plays Billy Hayes, is old enough now to quit pretending to be James Dean. John Hurt, as Max, the British fixer, looks wonderfully wan

and delicate throughout the film, an appearance most deceiving, since he survived over seven years in Sagmalcilar. Unfortunately, when the real Max (a brilliant Dutchman) was finally gotten out after Hayes escaped, he had fixed once too often, and now sits vegetating in Amsterdam, mindless.

One of the most striking sequences in the entire film comes just prior to Hayes' escape. After killing a guard in the main prison, he is thrown into the prison asylum. He remains there for a considerable time, drugged into a lethargic mindlessness by the guards who move among the wards distributing downers from large plastic bags. Every day the inmates who can move about "walk the wheel," i.e., shuffle ceaselessly about an enormous stone pillar, shattered zombies in a modern Malebolge.

A visit from his girlfriend, bringing

money from home, jolts Hayes into reality again. That day he returns to the wheel, as is his custom, and begins to walk again. But this time he walks against the feeble current of his fellows, going counter to the Turkish proscription against walking to the left. The strength gained from walking against the wheel, back into self-will, makes it possible for Hayes to escape.

Whether or not one agrees with the morality implied in the movie, it cannot be denied that there are over 2500 Americans, mostly students, entombed in overseas prisons like Sagmalcilar, or worse. Whatever the movie's faults, if it can change the barbarous methods of torture and confinement used by the Turkish government and governments elsewhere, it will have accomplished things not possible to more entertaining or less flawed films.



Photo by Tom Roepke

Appearing in "The Imaginary Invalid" are (l-r): Bill Payne, Amy Stoch, Sue Brasee and Mark Stevens. It will be performed Nov. 2-4, at 8:15 each evening. Tickets are \$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for students.

Oakar to speak on 'Politics and the Woman'

The next guest of the Wednesday morning convocation series will be Rep. Mary Rose Oakar, D-Ohio, who will speak on "Politics and the Woman."

Rep. Oakar, who serves the Greater Cleveland area in Congress, has been active in both government and community service in and around the Cleveland area. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English from Ursuline College in 1962 and her master's in fine arts from John Carroll University in 1966. She has also studied drama in London and at Colum-

bia University.

Besides various committee appointments, Rep. Oakar was recently appointed by the Speaker of the House to be a member of the National Commission on Unemployment Compensation. She also serves as the co-chairperson of the Northeast Ohio congressional delegation.

The program will begin at 10 a.m. in the Patterson Student Center and is free to the public.

Main St., Ashland

Ashland's Bear's Jewelers
 Quality Jewellery Store

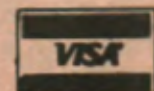
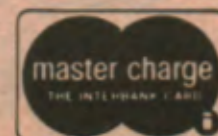


FINE DINING
AND
COCKTAILS

Students receive 10% discount
on dinner even if Dad buys


2061 CLAREMONT AVE.
PHONE: 419-289-1188

You are
welcome
to use:



UP TO
\$100
 PER MONTH FOR PLASMA DONATIONS
\$200
 FOR SPECIAL ANTIBODIES

Bonus for first time donors with this ad.

 plasma alliance

Open Mon.-Sat. 7:30 AM & 4 evenings M T W & Th till 9:00 PM
 372 E. Exchange St., Akron OH. Phone 376-6873 for appt.