



A Hidden Life (Malick, 2019):USA

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Filmmaker Terrence Malick's obsession with the Book of Job has another reincarnation with his latest film, *A Hidden Life*, from Fox Searchlight Pictures. Exquisitely shot utilizing primarily natural lighting by Cinematographer Jorg Widmer the film is aesthetically pleasing and bursting with spiritual energy. Solid acting performances with a splash of authenticity from a relatively exclusive German-Austrian casting by Anja Dührberg that includes August Diehl in the lead role and Valerie Pachner portraying his loving wife as well as Bruno Ganz, Matthias Schoenaerts and Michael Nyqvist, in supporting roles, contribute immensely to film's thematic intent. *A Hidden Life* is based on the a conscientious objecting, Austrian peasant farmer, Franz Jägerstätter, who refused to take an oath of allegiance to Adolph Hitler and sacrifices everything, including his own life, rather than fight with the Nazis in WWII.

Malick sets his masterpiece in authentic Austrian and German World War II locations including the very family farmhouse of the Jägerstatters which, over the years, has become a sort of pilgrimage site. While the film is set in and around World War II, several themes emerge that are not only relevant today -- they seem to be evoking men and women who have a moral compass and intestinal fortitude to stand up to what is, quite simply, inherently wrong.

A Hidden Life premiered this year at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for the Palm d'Or, the festival's highest award. Terrence Malick, directed and wrote the film, was awarded the François Chalais Prize. The François Chalais Prize is awarded at two main events, the Cannes Film Festival (since 1955) and the Young Reporters Awards (since 1999). The award was created in honor of French journalist and film historian, Francois Chalais. At Cannes, the prize traditionally rewards a film dedicated to the affirmation of life and journalism. It also highlights the very presence of journalists at Cannes.

And, it would be easy to look at today's news and see a young Greta Thunberg and imagine Malick's vision. As evocative as Thunberg's recent performance at the United Nations Climate

Action Summit was, Franz Jagerstatter's stance was deliberately contemplative, sourcing a love and understanding of an earthly wife. Interestingly, several members of the cast and crew drew upon a set of love letters between Jagerstatter and his wife to find the correct impetus in creating characters, designing costumes and the selection of shooting locations. With production design by Sebastian Krawinkel and costuming from Lisy Christl, the work could easily pass for a period piece.



Valerie Pachner and August Diehl in the film *A HIDDEN LIFE*. (Photo courtesy of Fox Searchlight Pi

The film has a run time of two hours and fifty-three minutes and is highly recommended. The scrumptious mise-en-scene never gets old and seems to re-create itself throughout the entire film.

In addition to making its world premiere at Cannes, *A Hidden Life* made its North American premiere at the recent 46th Telluride Film Festival and is slated to screen in the Special Presentations at the 50th Anniversary of the Nashville Film Festival, October 3rd through October 12th, 2019, in Nashville, Tennessee.

According to IMDb.com, expect *A Hidden Life* in theatres on December 13th. Until then, I'll see you at the movies!

Category

1. Telluride
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Author

hollywoodglee