



The Main Feature

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Jojo Rabbit

New Zealand, Czech Republic, US 2019
108 mins. Certificate 12A

Director	Taika Waititi
Screenplay	Taika Waititi, based on the book <i>Caging Skies</i> by Christine Leunens
Cinematography	Mihai Malaimare Jr
Cast	
JoJo Betzler	Roman Griffin Davis
Rosie Betzler	Scarlett Johansson
Yorki	Archie Yates
Adolf	Taika Waititi
Elsa Korr	Thomasin McKenzie
Captain Klenzendorf	Sam Rockwell
Fraülein Rahm	Rebel Wilson
Finkel	Alfie Allen
Deertz	Stephen Merchant



It's 1944 and war rages across Europe. Johannes "JoJo" Betzler is madly patriotic and desperately wants to make friends and contribute to his country's war effort. He attends a Hitler Youth camp, where the boys are promised a fun weekend of "war games, ambush technique and blowing stuff up" – who could resist?

Unfortunately, JoJo's time at camp is a series of disasters (no spoilers here) and his career ambition to join Hitler's personal bodyguard looks unlikely to come to fruition, despite his idol (played by the frantic Taika Waititi) being his constant companion and adviser. JoJo has absorbed the Nazi hatred of the Jews, despite never knowingly having met any, and his discussion of their traits with his best – indeed, only – friend Yorki shows us how easily young children can be filled with nonsense.

Yorki, at camp: "How would you know if you saw one? They could look just like us." When he discovers his mother is hiding a young Jewish girl in their attic, JoJo's view of the world and his own mother both take a huge knock. However, he decides that this is an opportunity to write a book on the Jews which will be useful propaganda for the Nazis, thus proving his usefulness and devotion.

Fraülein Rahm, at camp: "Kids, it's time to burn some books!"

The infamous burning of books outside Humboldt University on 10 May 1933 was one of the defining events of the rise of the Nazis.



In the middle of this square on 10 May 1933 National Socialist students burned the works of hundreds of freelance writers, publicists, philosophers and scientists.

A few yards away is another plaque bearing a quote from the great German poet Heinrich Heine, long dead but prescient: "That was only a foretaste. When one burns books, in the end one will also burn people."

JoJo's collection of drawings and comments, fed by Elsa's tall tales, becomes more ludicrous as time progresses. We can see just how crazy it is by the delight of the Gestapo officer Deertz ("I wish more of our young boys had your blind fanaticism.") when he reads it.

On the other hand, Elsa can see that JoJo is more torn that he would admit to: "You're not a Nazi, JoJo. You're a ten-year old kid who likes dressing up in a funny uniform and wants to be part of a club."



And that is the crux of the matter. In the same way that *Jaws* is not a film about a shark, this is not a film about Nazi Germany, as it appears at first glance. It is a film about belonging, about prejudice, a film that shows the adult world through a child's eyes, thereby bringing it squarely into the same category as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Go-Between*.

On a side note, having spent many years concentrating on the East/West post war years (*Deutschland 83*) or the present day (*Falke*), the German film and tv industry has recently started to turn its attention to the late Weimar Republic period (e.g., with *Babylon Berlin*). However, co-writer and co-director Achim von Borries has said "We always said it was over in 1933. If there is a final season, it would be the first months after the so-called seizure of power before the Reichstag fire. The National Socialists had turned the country upside down so fundamentally that the Babylonian in Berlin was over. After that we don't want to go on."

Gill McGlashan



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Peter Bradshaw of the Guardian remembers Peter Bogdanovich, who died in January aged 82

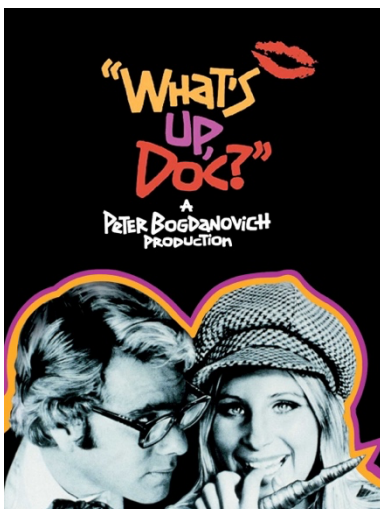
Peter Bogdanovich was the blazing night-sky comet of the New Hollywood generation whose trajectory got knocked off course a little, by personal tragedy and the contingencies of show business, but kept hurtling onwards with brilliant work and passionate cinephilia to the very end. His first four hits, *Targets* (1968), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *What's Up Doc?* (1972) and *Paper Moon* (1973) were somehow both thrillingly and authentically modern and yet also instantly belonged to the classic pantheon. With the touch of restless young genius, he seemed to reinvent pulp crime, the western, the road movie and the screwball comedy – in short order.



The Last Picture Show is a glorious and authentic American film, set in a windblown Texan town where the town's dying movie theatre (even in 1971, there was agonising about the death of movie theatres, when terrestrial television and televised sports were the supposed culprits) is showing Howard Hawks's *Red River* as its final film. A young kid has an affair with a melancholy older woman – magnificently played by Cloris Leachman. Cybill Shepherd (with whom Bogdanovich was to fall in love) is unforgettably stylish. There is much small-

town gossip and sexual tension, culminating in a quite extraordinary nude swimming scene, staggering for its calm candour, beyond eroticism, and quite unequalled by anything before or since.

In *Paper Moon* (another piece of Americana in black-and-white) Bogdanovich gave us one of the greatest odd couples in history and the most poignant adult-child turn since Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan. Ryan O'Neal and his real-life daughter Tatum O'Neal are the daddy-daughter grifter team drifting across the Depression-era midwest tricking people out of their money with cons long and short and revealing only their own self-deception and hollowed-out lives. Bogdanovich elicited an eerily good performance from Tatum in particular.



Bogdanovich gave his love of comedy free play in *What's Up Doc?* with Ryan O'Neal and Barbra Streisand, those quintessential 70s movie stars, and showed that he could construct and control the energies of comedy (as difficult as anything he had done up until then, but less likely to be critically approved, although this film did very well.)

The low point of Bogdanovich's life came with the murder of the actor Dorothy Stratten, who was starring in his film *They All Laughed* (1981) with whom Bogdanovich was in a relationship, by the man to whom she was married, but separated. Bogdanovich all but ruined himself financially finishing the film which was not surprisingly tainted in the public mind by its grim history, and Bogdanovich found himself criticised for being a part of the misogynist macho culture of movie-making of which Stratten was the victim, a sentiment not entirely mollified by the fact that

Bogdanovich married Stratten's sister Louise who became his producing partner.

Bogdanovich found his comeback – though perhaps nothing like the streak of pure inspiration with which he began his career – in 1985, with the bold and heartfelt emotional drama, pointedly entitled *Mask*, which gave Cher a chance to prove that she was an excellent actor. It was based on the true story of a boy with a challenging craniofacial disorder. Cher played his mother, toughly confronting

those who can't appreciate her son's inner intelligence and humanity and Eric Stoltz played the boy himself in makeup (in 2022, there would be much more of a debate about appropriate casting).

Though plagued with financial worries for a very great deal of the 80s and 90s, Bogdanovich kept teaching and writing and working, making an amiable stab in his mid-70s at farce with his *She's Funny that Way*. But his late masterpiece was *The Great Buster: A Celebration* in 2018, his inspired tribute to Keaton and *The Other Side of The Wind*, which almost deserves now to be considered a co-creation with Welles's spirit.

Bogdanovich was a native cinema genius, who in his heyday made great films as easily as breathing.

Taken from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jan/06/peter-bogdanovich-a-loving-cineaste-and-fearless-genius-of-cinema>

Comments and reactions to: **Breakfast at Tiffany's**

No of reaction slips received = 25

Average score = 7.20

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	1	~	~	~	2	3	6	8	5	~

Mesmeric, delightful quality film

Except for the cat, a useless film in every way

Class film

A fairy tale for adults

I'd miss seeing this classic before now. Film was enchanting, as was Audrey Hepburn's performance.

Creepy and uncomfortable at times. Great clothes and décor. Cat deserves an Oscar

Very different from what I remember – except Mickey Rooney, unfortunately

Amazing music. For once, a happy ending

Light-hearted nonsense – a pleasure to watch

Deeper and darker than I remembered. Audrey Hepburn will go far, I predict. Cats Lives Matter

Good but obvious ending to film

Knew of it, never seen it, much better than I thought

Position	Film	Average score
1	Breakfast at Tiffany's	7.20
2	Nomadland	7.13
3	Parasite	7.07
4	The Farewell	6.85
5	The Personal History of David Copperfield	6.67
6	Permission	6.60
7	Pain and Glory	6.59
8	The Crimson Pirate	6.42
9	Baby Driver	6.19
10	Bait	5.35

Forthcoming attraction: 10 March 2022 – **Limbo**



Limbo is about refugees and asylum seekers in Britain, and it's a bracingly internationalist and non-parochial piece of work: film-making with a bold view on the world but also as gentle and intimate as a much-loved sitcom. This is superlative film-making from Ben Sharrock. The Guardian