



YOU, THE LIVING (DU LEVANDE)

Autumn
Season
2008

Starring: Jessica Lundberg, Elisabet Helander, Björn Englund, Leif Larsson, Ollie Olson

Written by: Roy Andersson

Directed by: Roy Andersson

Language: Swedish, with English subtitles

Running Time: 94 minutes



Beginning with a dream of bombs falling from the sky, ending with a blank vision of the apocalypse, and filling the space between with a litany of human disconnection, misery, frustration and despair, *You, The Living* would be an almost unbearably bleak mosaic of our living deaths, were it not for Andersson's profound appreciation of Chaplin's observation that comedy is tragedy seen in long-shot. Each scene is lit softly without any shadows, composed with the intensity and banal beauty of a portrait, and shot wide by DP Gustav Danielsson's unforgiving camera (which hardly ever moves). The resulting effect serves to amplify the trivial (yet profound) absurdity of all these situations. We might wish that these lost souls could see themselves as we see them, but then, by recognising a part of ourselves in them, we too become part of the film's comic fabric. Our own quotidian tragedies, Andersson suggests, might be equally funny when viewed by someone else.



If the largely non-professional performances in *You, The Living* convey a sense of everyday naturalism, then this is repeatedly unbalanced by a series of alienation effects. Characters talk directly to camera, and even occasionally express themselves in song. White make-up lends everyone the otherworldly pallor of the undead. Elaborate dream sequences are presented with the same flat visual tone as scenes of 'reality' so as to be

stylistically indistinguishable from them - and the film's final, ethereal image recalls the opening scene in such a way as to leave it unclear where exactly dreams end and life begins. For, according to Andersson's deadpan philosophy, we the living sleepwalk through our existence like zombies, commuting amid a vale of mist before eventually reaching the oblivion of Lethe. You call that living?

Film 4 Website



The Director – Roy Andersson

“He's like a cold soup mix of Buster Keaton, David Lynch, Jerry Lewis and Terry Gilliam”

Roy Andersson (born March 31, 1943) is a Swedish film director, best known for his films *A Swedish Love Story* and *Songs from the Second Floor*. More than any other, *Songs from the Second Floor* succeeded in cementing his personal style - a style characterized by long takes, absurdist comedy, stiff caricaturing of Swedish culture, Felliniesque grotesques, sight gags, and heavy anti-capitalist themes. He has spent much of his professional life working on advertisement spots, directing over 300 commercials and 2 short films, but only directing 3 major, feature-length films in as many decades.

In March 1996, Andersson began filming *Songs from the Second Floor*, a film that was to be completed four years later in May of 2000. After its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival the film also became an international critical success. It won the Special Jury Prize in Cannes 2000 and five Guldbagge awards in Sweden for best film, direction, cinematography, screenplay and sound. The film was made up of forty-six long tableaux shots, marrying tough, bleak social criticism with his characteristic absurdist dead-pan and surrealism.