

# The Never ending Story

Movie review

by TERRY DUPUIS  
German director Wolfgang Petersen gained international acclaim several years ago with a startlingly realistic film called *Das Boot*. In English this would translate as *The Boat*. It told the story of common sailors aboard a submarine during the Second World War, from the German point of view. The movie was

intense and succeeded in producing a feeling of claustrophobia within the theatre audience.

Audiences and critics were wondering what Petersen would follow up his prize-winning

movie with. Their question was answered when the German film maker's next movie was released. In subject matter it was as far

away from the realism of his first film as it could possibly be. But unfortunately, it was just as far removed in quality and impact as well.

*The Neverending Story* is Wolfgang Petersen's attempt to make the ultimate screen fantasy adventure. One need only compare it to such classics as *The Wizard of Oz* and *The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T.*, or more recently, to *Star Wars* or *E.T.* to see how short of his goal the film maker has fallen.

This is not to say that *The Neverending Story* is a shoddy production. It isn't. In terms of budget, some \$27 million dollars were lavished on it. And the special effects and numerous creatures in the story were created by some of

the best craftsmen in the business. And there are several well-done sequences. But *The Neverending Story* fails to engage or entertain the audience for long. Worst of all, for a fantasy movie, it fails completely to enchant or to evoke in us any childlike sense of wonder.

Instead there are many moments in *The Neverending Story* which come across as being just childish, rather than childlike. There is a difference. At the same time, the movie tries too often to be profound, and it comes across as being pretentious. The fantasy land which Petersen evokes in the movie has a Swamp of Sadness, a Sea of Possibilities, and a destructive something called *The Nothing*

which is out to take our dreams away from us.

The story is seen from the point of view of a 10-year-old boy. One day he wanders into an old book store, where the strange proprietor shows him a book called *The Neverending Story*. The boy takes the book away with him, and finds himself transported into a magical wonderland called *Fantasia*. But the results fall far short of Walt Disney's classic cartoon *Fantasia*.

Barret Oliver plays the 10-year-old boy, and his father is played by Gerald McRaney. McRaney is best known to audiences as the more uncouth half of the "Simon and Simon" detective team from television. Apart from these two players, most of the performers looked like their voices were dubbed.

A sense of wonder and a vivid imagination are all right, but it seems to me that Petersen and his special effects and makeup people got a little carried away. Some of the creatures and people who inhabit the land of *Fantasia* are downright repulsive looking. At first the movie seemed to be something of a novelty, but after about a quarter of an hour I grew tired of this en-

dless procession of grotesqueries.

As far as I'm concerned the 1939 *Wizard of Oz* still remains the model and the yardstick

for all children's movie fantasies. It has more thrills and charm in any one of its scenes than the entire *Neverending Story*.

## Society needs help

by EVELYN WALKER  
Throughout the year and in particular September, Arthritis Society volunteers make Midland a better place to live. Without these people, there would be no Arthritis Society.

In many cities across the country people don't

care about their neighbours or how they live.

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### Meets Pontiff

### Local firm to rescue

"The media tent looks nice but where are the plugs?" a host broadcaster (CBC-TV) technician wondered aloud late Thursday afternoon.

Sure enough, a check of the 160-foot by 80-foot blue and white colour tent revealed there were plenty of lights but no additional plugs for broadcasters and those from the media wishing to set up couplers to report on Pope John Paul's pending visit.

That's where the folks at Walker's Electric stepped in.

In less than 24 hours, Walker's had set up the necessary electrical work to make the tent fully operational.

The story was much the same for Emery Bros. Electric of Penetanguishene which did much of the wiring

Joan and Donald Roszmann of Penetanguishene met the Pope in The Martyrs' Shrine Church Sept. 15.

Their daughters Kimberley Ann (left) and Saundra Lynn sang in the choir. Bonnie is Roszmann's seeing-eye dog.

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7:15 *Romancing The Stone* Also *REVENGE OF THE NERDS*

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**ROXY 2** Starts Friday 7 and 9

*The Philadelphia Experiment* SWEARING

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### THE WILD LIFE

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