

## **Light into the realm of shadows**

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(Film thermometer: 20 points out of 30)

“24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE” wants to take the S&M and swingers scene out of the dirty corner

“Shame is only fear of yourself”, says the dominatrix Maria (Mira Gittner) to the young Eve, who goes on a sexual trip of salvation, into the depth of the S&M scene and swingers clubs. But with his stories about these well frequented taboo places, “24/7 The Passion of Life” liberates the milieu from dirt, mess and the prejudice of dark violence. The film rather tries to abolish the border between bourgeoisie and so-called perversion: both are only two sides of the same coin – and the sexually excessive one is perhaps the less neurotic, healthier one.

“Passion of Life” from Roland Reber is a fictional movie. But it was shot at original sites, partly with members of the scene.

But with its strong stylization, the film is far away from being a documentary.

Accompanied by music from Mozart’s Requiem and catholic church songs, as well as pietà and religious associations, there are poetic, mysterious pictures that are solemn. Also bizarre scenes, fit in there, like the ones of a theology student who can only reconcile with God and his own sexual urges through a blasphemous Christ-Crucifixion Performance. Besides these highly esthetical stylized scenes, the background story is set sharply realistic: Eve, heiress of a Hotel, in her father-daughter conflict, the shock when her visits to the scene get known, and the swingers club, with its petty bourgeois dreadfulness, the rustic interior, country music and the moustache-thanks-dear types. The film has weaknesses here, because dialogues and performance often appear artificial and clumsy. Also the liberal educational message is pronounced pithily: the dominatrix – in the film also sociology student – speaks exaggerated phrases ex cathedra.

But after all “24/7 The Passion of Life” has a great amount of sincerity. And never mind if one shares the philosophy of liberation: it is an exceptional film, and an independent film interesting in its aesthetic and contents. And perhaps in each Dr. Jekyll of us, there is a hidden sexual Mr. Hyde.

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