

Chicago Tribune

Siskel's Flicks Picks

By Gene Siskel | 14th May 1993



'Map of the Human Heart' Warm, fuzzy and shocking

Our flick of the week is "Map of the Human Heart", an early candidate for best film of the year honors, a most ambitious love story with surprises at every turn. This is the movie I've been telling people to look out for ever since I saw it a month ago.

And I'll try not to diminish its surprise elements, which consist not of "The Crying Game" shocks but of a life unfolding with all of the spontaneity of life itself.

"Map of the Human Heart" begins in the Canadian Arctic in the 1930's when a British mapmaker (Patrick Bergin) rescues a part-Eskimo boy who suddenly takes ill. Removing a child from his roots changes his life profoundly, although he never forgets his ancestors. Taken to a Montreal clinic, the boy will meet a young girl, a different kind of "half- breed" and the remainder of the film follows their separate paths. The special nature of "Map of the Human Heart," aside from the exquisite, painstaking filmmaking of director Vincent Ward, is that there is no way for you to predict where this story will go. For example, how do you think the fire-bombing of Dresden during World War II fits in?

As the young lead characters grow up, they are played by Jason Scott Lee (also starring in "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" and Anne Parillaud (La Femme Nikita), and here are two performers who declare themselves as actors for the '90's. The camera loves them both as they manage to walk through their roles with the same kind of wonder as we have watching them.

To put it simply, "Map of the Human Heart" will remind you of the magical quality of life and love.

"Map of the Human Heart" is playing at the Broadway, Esquire and Outlying theatres. Rated R.