



Council Chamber of the Town Hall, 104 Ferguson St, Williamstown, 7.30pm, Wednesday 24th September, 2025.

The Colour of Paradise

Review by MaryAnn Johanson, Fri 24th March 2000, flickfilosopher.com

Think back to the movie that made you fall in love with movies. Do you remembering feeling how it seemed like you had never seen a film before, how what you were seeing onscreen now seemed more real than anything you'd seen before? It's like falling in love with a person — he or she, the object of your affection, suddenly seems more vivid than everyone else. That's how *The Color of Paradise* made me feel... like I was being granted a revelation, shown a secret that few are entrusted with, of hidden perfection.



Mohammad reading in his sister's classroom

Written and directed by Majid Majidi, *The Color of Paradise* is a heartbreakingly beautiful film, a fable of the lucidity of children and the desperation of adults wrapped in an ode to nature and the human connection to the natural world. The story it tells is uncomplicated yet has a mythic grandeur, reminiscent of the age-old fairy tales that still frighten children and unsettle adults to this day.

Eight-year-old Mohammad (Mohsen Ramezani) attends a school for the blind in Tehran, but as summer vacation begins he heads home to the mountains of northern Iran with his father, Hashem (Hossein Mahjoub), a poor coal worker. Their journey, by bus and then by foot and pony, is long, and takes Mohammad from a world of cell phones, cassette players, and every modern convenience to a remote village without electricity or running water. But he is overjoyed to be reunited with his sisters, Hanyeh (Elham Sharim) and Bahareh (Farahnaz Safari), and his grandmother (Salime Feizi), and to be back in the natural environment he is so attuned to.

Mohammad — who so loves reading that he begs to be allowed to attend his sisters' school, which hasn't let out for the summer yet — "reads" everything with his fingers, from the stones in the bottom of a creek to the seeds on a stalk of alfalfa, interpreting the braille-like bumps he feels as numbers and letters for the sheer joy of it. As he listens to woodpeckers and helps gather wildflowers from the fields and eggs from the henhouse, Majidi draws us into Mohammad's experience of a world he cannot see with some of the least showy camerawork you're ever likely to see. It seems like a paradox that such a visual medium as film could help us perceive as a blind child does, yet there's such a quiet, meditative quality to shots like the single long take of Mo-



hammad's hands caressing egg after egg as his sister passes them to him that you begin to touch rather than see the world.

It's at the very beginning of the film, though, that Majidi astounds with filmmaking so simple and elegant that it's almost audacious. While Mohammad, the last child remaining at his school, waits outside for his father, he rescues a baby bird that has fallen from its nest, finding it by touch and

sound amongst fallen leaves and climbing the nearest tree — with the baby in his shirt pocket — to return the hatchling home. It's difficult for me to articulate why this is so extraordinary, except to say that it feels so primal and pure that it strikes you in the gut, and that feeling never lets up from then on.

It's not just visually that *The Color of Paradise* is primal. A horrible, Brothers Grimm sense of dread hangs over all that happens here — Hashem, Mohammad's father, is so disheartened by caring for his handicapped child that he is constantly looking for ways to unburden himself of the boy. When the school in Tehran won't agree to keep Mohammad over the summer, Hashem tries to apprentice the child to a blind carpenter far from their home village. A widower, Hashem is courting a woman in the village, and he fears Mohammad will hurt his standing with his future in-laws. Will Hashem, in true fairy tale fashion, simply abandon his child in the woods? How could he possibly harm this beautiful little boy? The Brothers Grimm would appreciate how it all ends.

With its gorgeous imagery and haunting tale, *The Color of Paradise* is a film I won't soon forget. This is unself-conscious, unpretentious filmmaking that's like nothing I've ever seen before.

Supper Roster

MONTH	MEMBER(S)	MONTH	MEMBER(S)
June 25 <i>The Terminal</i>	Jayne & Mary (Thank you)	July 30 <i>I'm Your Man</i>	Annie & Therese (thank you)
August 27 <i>Red, White & Brass</i>	Jake & Ollie (Thank you)	September 24 <i>The Colour of Paradise</i>	Vicki & Peter
October 29 <i>On A Clear Day</i>	Doug Bews	November 26 <i>The Long, Long Trailer</i>	Dee Falloon

Starbox Results

	5	4	3	2	1	Average
Red, White & Brass	16	7	4	0	0	4.4

To watch a trailer (& read more) head to the 2024 program on our website

[https://: www.williamstown-film-society.org](https://www.williamstown-film-society.org)