

MICA

Original version: Arabic-French/ Subtitles: French



Director: *Ismaël Ferroukhi*

Release date (France): *December 22, 2021*

Genre: *Drama, sport*

Countries of origin: *Morocco, France*

Length: *104 minutes*

CLASSIFICATION VIEWS

It is aimed at all audiences including children from 8 years of age and up.

The message is optimistic and universal: You must believe in your dreams, and tennis (and sports in general) can help change your destiny.

<https://moroccomail.fr/2021/11/18/mica-le-nouveau-film-dismael-ferroukhi/>

Recommendation : 14 years

SYNOPSIS

Mica, 10, lives with his mother and sick father in a slum in the suburbs of Meknes, which is destined for destruction. A friend of his parents', a handyman in a tennis club in Casablanca, takes him as his apprentice. Mica finds himself propelled into a world of hardship and social inequity. Mr. Slimani, a rich and cultured man and owner of the club, dreams of making his son Omar a tennis champion. To this end, he hires Sophia, a former French champion, as a private trainer. But Omar has very little talent and no passion for the sport. On the other hand, Sophia will eventually notice Mica and take him under her wing....

FILM REVIEWS

Indeed he [Ismaël Ferroukhi] gives us a nice little film in the style of a coming-of-age story in a sport milieu, peppered with observations on society.

En effet, il nous offre ici un joli petit film en forme de récit d'apprentissage situé dans un contexte sportif et mâtiné d'un zeste de constat social.

<https://www.senscritique.com/film/Mica/critique/233255696>

A moving film, subtly touching upon everyone's place in the world with the possibility of changing one's destiny

Un film touchant, qui évoque avec subtilité la place au monde de chacun et la possibilité de changer son destin.

<https://www.leblogducinema.com/critique/critique-film/mica-le-tennis-comme-ascenseur-social-critique-3762103/>

But the main issue of this humanistic film is not so much the sport as such, but the journey that the title character will take to lead him to it. The director draws a portrait of this impoverished youth without a future whose destiny seems to be drawn in advance. Without falling into the trap of miserabilism, he offers a tale of learning the hard way (humiliations, bullying, corporal punishment) that little Mica (Zakaria Inane, a young non-professional who makes his brilliant film debut) is confronted with. He will then be helped by the tennis club handy man/janitor (Azelarab Kaghat) and then by an ex-

champion (Sabrina Ouazani, excellent) who will take him under her wing and show him the basics of the game.

Mais le principal enjeu de ce film emplí d'humaniste n'est pas tant le sport en tant que tel, mais le parcours que fera le personnage-titre afin d'y parvenir. Le réalisateur dresse un portrait de cette jeunesse appauvrie et sans avenir dont le destin semble dessiner d'avance. Sans tomber dans le piège du misérabilisme, il propose un récit d'apprentissage à la dure (humiliations, brimades, punition corporelle) auquel est confronté le petit Mica (Zakaria Inane, un jeune non professionnel qui fait ses débuts bouleversants au cinéma). Il sera ensuite aidé par le gardien du club de tennis (Azelarab Kaghat) puis par une ex-championne (Sabrina Ouazani, excellente) qui va le prendre sous son aile et lui montrer les bases du jeu.

<http://www.cinefilic.com/2020/11/cinermania-2020-mica.html>

DETAILS

LANGUAGE

The film is in Arabic and French with French subtitles.

Very few crude insults like "son of a bitch", "dirty bastard" appear in the subtitles.

Sophie, the former junior tennis champion, makes an affectionate remark towards Mica by saying "p'tit con" (*little jerk*), which here is far from being an insult.

The mother of Omar, the tennis club owner's son, calls Mica a "savage".

Money remains a turning point in the film. It is an element that often comes back in the form of sums to be paid (money to be given to the smugglers), in the form of a word (money demanded with aggression by a gang of street children), in the form of a valuable object (Sophie's luxury watch) or the envelope of the hard-earned salary to be sent to the family

The vocabulary of tennis is developed: *l'appui, le revers, le lancement de balles, le service, avantage à, etc.*

The social inequality between Mica and the club children is expressed with a vocabulary used to talk to a dog.

When Omar and his gang ask Mica to fetch their balls, they say:

Go get it. Go on, run. To the doghouse. Go away!

They bark as they order Mica around.

One of the children addresses vulgarly to Mica: Have you finished cleaning the toilets ?
[*les chiottes*]

VIOLENCE

Mica's journey to maturity is fraught with both physical and psychological trials.

Physical violence - non-graphic

- At the market: territoriality

A gang of children led by a strong teenager chases Mica from the market where he sells his plastic bags: jostling, kicking and aggressive language.

Mica is lying on the ground as he is kicked: the camera does not linger on the scene and there is no visible trace of impact. Mica indicates by a grimace that he aches.

- At the tennis club

The children of the club are harsh. They shoot Mica with the tennis balls for fun. Mica in return throws a tennis ball that hits the face of a child of the club. In all cases, the violence is NON-GRAPHIC: there is no trace of impact from the ball.

During a tennis match, Mica attacks the son of the club owner: we see his arms flailing, but here again the violence is NON-GRAPHIC. It is only by the remark of the mother of Omar, that we learn that Mica would have broken his nose.

The adults do not forgive Mica for his violent reactions.

When the club janitor learns that Mica has thrown a tennis ball at one of the members, he hits him with a belt, but the scene takes place outside the visual field of the screen. Mica is heard pleading with Hajj Kaddour not to punish him.

When Mica attacks Omar just before the tennis tournament, he is forbidden to play.

- In the port of Casablanca

A gang of street children attack Mica to steal his belongings and money. He tries to save his bag, but the children snatch it from his hands, take away his jacket and kick him while insulting him. The scene takes place at night, which obscures physical details.

The smuggler, to whom Mica says he has changed his mind, grabs Mica by the collar and chases him with the intention of punishing him.

Psychological impact

The children in the club treat Mica like a dog (see language section), which leads to his anger and vindictive reactions.

They are ruthless in their harassment of the club guard. Mica is the sad witness of the scene.

Although there is no psychological violence as such, the film focuses on the contrast between Mica's poverty and the privileges of other children. Mica watches from afar as Omar, the club owner's son, has a dreamy birthday party. He watches a car drive by with a baby and his brother (maybe Mica's age) comfortably seated in the back seat while he struggles to sell boxes of Kleenex...

NUDITY

Non-sexual nudity with no close-ups in 2 scenes

- When Mica goes into the sea, his underwear slips and shows his behind.
- As men and Mica are washing in a hammam, they are seen without a shirt on.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

None

L'IMPACT PSYCHOLOGIQUE/LES MESSAGES

The film, brimming with humanity, was shot in Casablanca. "Touched by the violence of social inequalities in the country, I was interested in the fate of these young people who sink into despair and despair and whose only dream is to flee to Europe," said Ismael Ferroukhi in a statement.

<https://laprod.ma/2020/09/16/femmes-du-maroc-mica-film-marocain-de-ismael-ferroukhi-et-produit-par-lamia-chraibi-seducit-a-ang>

Younger viewers may be taken aback by the adversity in a poor child 's life in the tough world of streets and child labour in Morocco.

The director shows how Mica survives humiliations, bullying, theft, and how he confronts the haughty and cruel children of the upper class.

The film is full of humanism and hope.

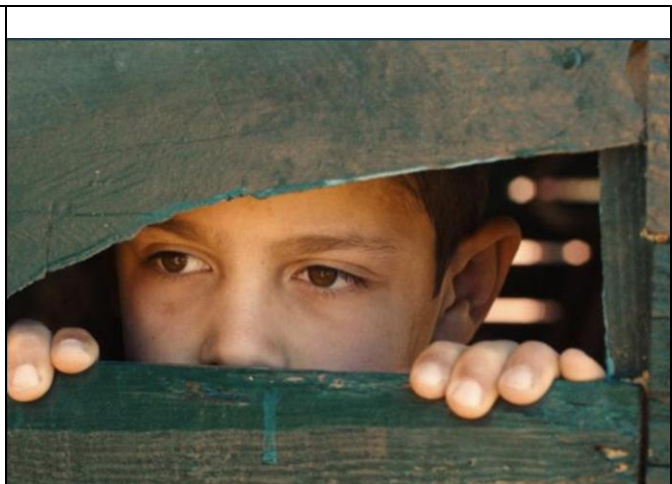
The janitor of the club helps Mica overcome some of his hardships: he allows him to take tennis lessons, he washes him when Mica returns in despair, he takes him to the seaside and shares a hearty meal with him.

Sophia, the former junior tennis champion, also helps Mica find his way: she cultivates and develops his talent, she buys him sports clothes and she helps Mica in his choice not to become a migrant.

FILM PHOTOS



Mica



Mica looks at the children playing tennis from the storage room where he lives



Mica loves birds, symbols of freedom



Hajj Kaddour, the tennis janitor /handy man with Mica



Sophia, the former junior tennis champion, with Mica. She takes him under her wing
Mica was stripped of all his things and money in Casablanca harbour



Mica is stripped of his things and money at the Casablanca harbour



Mica roams in Casablanca



Kaddour takes Mica to the hammam