

## Mark Whelan's Movie Picks

*Yi Yi* (2000) Director: Edward Yang. 173m Rated: N/A



An everyday Taipei family assumes powerful personal discovery in *Yi Yi*, the late Edward Yang's magnum opus and final film.

A judiciously discreet and crestfallen businessman (Nien-Jen Wu) appears to be getting nowhere fast: his ne'er-do-well brother (played with gusto by Chen Xisheng) continually troubles him for money while his spiritually deprived wife (Elaine Jin) struggles to regain some facet of meaning to her wearisome existence.

Wu's concerns intensify when an old flame (a ravishing Ke Suyun) unexpectedly reemerges after a thirty-year absence, obliging him to reassess and contest his life thus far. Even more turmoil flourishes as his teenage daughter stumbles into womanhood tending to his delicate mother as she lay comatose.

His only consolation stems from an unusual association with his youngest son (an unforgettably infectious Jonathan Chang--who peculiarly photographs the backs of peoples' heads) to which he appreciates his youthful obliviousness and purity.

Teeming with acerbic observations, *Yi Yi* is an intelligent and perceptive reflection on daily living. Director and screenwriter Yang manages to weave a deceptively unassuming tapestry without succumbing to conventions or manipulation.

There are no false proceedings that develop throughout *Yi Yi's* three-hour duration as each frame is sheathed in truth and a tender token of the pricelessness our outwardly monotonous lives enclose.

--Mark Whelan, May 13, 2015

