

Kadisbellan

("Condom Catapult"; aka: "The Slingshot")

Sweden : 1993 : dir. Ake Sandgren :

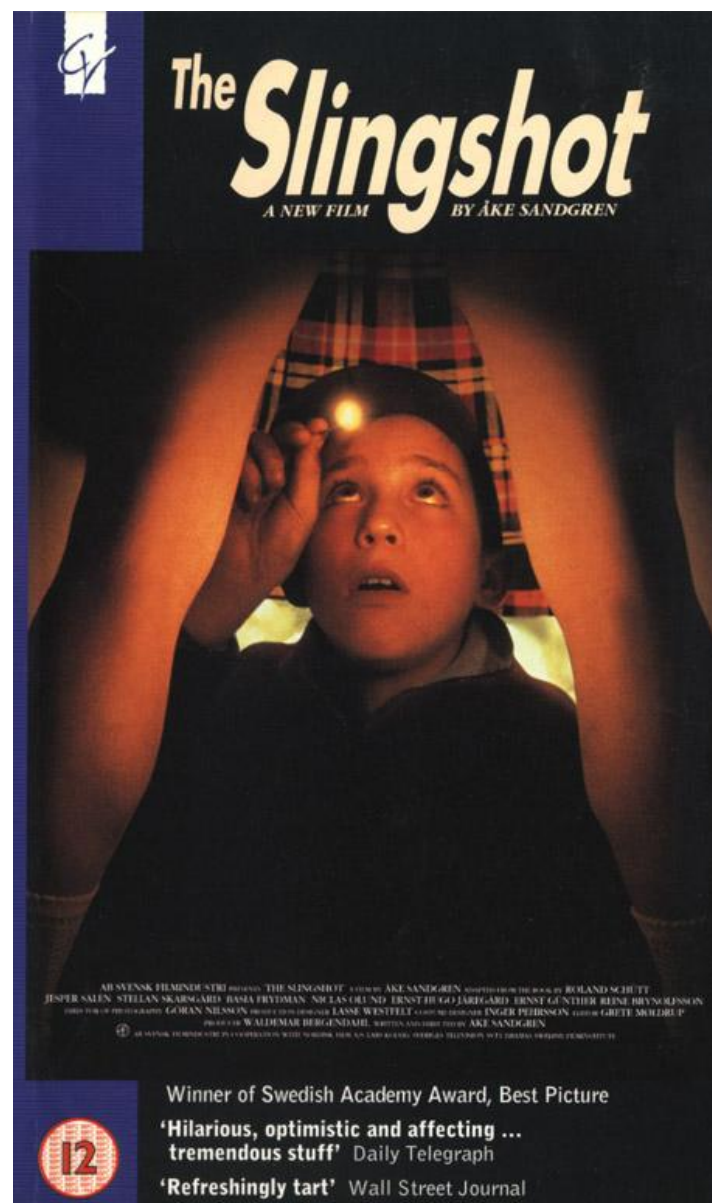
: 102 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Jesper Salén](#)

Stellan Skarsgård; Basia Frydman; Niklas Olund; Ernst-Hugo Järegård

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 € M ♂	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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*For once, girls are **not** the primary focus of a young boy's life in this story, but the video packaging above does all it can to generate that impression anyway. What else **is there** to childhood but sex?*



After various other schemes – underwater socks, “balloons with knobs” for the neighbourhood children, boy inventor Roland finally hits pay dirt by converting his mother’s mysterious new rubber devices into state-of-the-art catapults for the scalawag-about-town. They sell like hot cakes.

Leonard Maltin’s Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

“Odd childhood remembrance, from 78-year old Roland Schutt’s autobiographical novel, about a 10-year old outcast in 1920s Sweden: Mom’s a Russian Jew, Dad’s a Socialist, and young Roland (Salén) fashions slingshots from the condoms sold by mother on the black market. Perhaps tries to pack too much material into one film, but this was a great success in Sweden. **1/2 ”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "Video Movie Guide 1993"]

Sunday Times review:

“A 12-year old boy (Jesper Salén) has a hard time in the ultra-reactionary Stockholm of the 1920s. His sciatica-ridden father (Stellan Skarsgard) is an unemployed left-wing activist, and his mother (Basia Frydman) is a Russian Jew who peddles illegal condoms; so at school he suffers prejudice on a double count from his sadistic teacher. His elder

brother, an aspiring but indifferent boxer, uses him as a punchbag, and the neighbourhood youths engage his manual skills to repaint and mend bicycles without telling him they are stolen, leading to trouble with the law. After what he has been used to, the reform school seems like heaven.

This bleak tale, written and directed by Ake Sandgren, is based on the early life of Roland Schutt, an inventor who wrote his memoirs when he was nearly 80. By no means is it unrelieved gloom, and humorous moments occasionally surface. The slingshot of the title is a catapult, mass-produced by the lad from bent wire and his mother’s prophylactics, which becomes essential equipment for the schoolboys until authority gets wind of it. ”

Daily Mirror review:

“Jesper Salén as a 12-year old boy facing trials and tribulations in 20’s Stockholm. A kind of **"MY LIFE AS A DOG"**’s-body, lacking the charm and insight of Lasse Halstrom’s growing pains drama. ** ”

Not how the title was subtly altered for the English-speaking world (and whose bright little idea was that?) "Condom Slingshot" (or "Johnny Catapult" for that matter) not only is a more direct translation, conveying both the humour and controversy of Roland’s key invention, it also, incidentally, dispenses with sex as the cornerstone of adolescent self-discovery, and

reminds us that there was a time – within living memory – when boys at 13 had a different scale of priorities. But we know why the title was changed to the more anodyne "**THE SLINGSHOT**", don't we?

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