

P'Tang Yang Kipperbang

(US = "Kipperbang")

UK TV : 1982 : dir. Michael Apted : Channel 4 / Goldcrest / Enigma : 90 min
 prod: David Puttnam & Chris Griffin : scr: Jack Rosenthal : dir.ph.: Tony Pierce-Roberts
John Albasiny; Abigail Cruttenden; Mark Brelsford (Brailsford); Chris Karallis; Maurice Dee
 Frances Ruffelle; Nicola Prince; Alison Steadman; Robert Urquhart; Garry Cooper;
 Richenda Carey

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John Albasiny as Jack Rosenthal's lovelorn 1948 schoolboy – uncannily foreshadowing Fred Savage's 1960s lovelorn schoolboy in *"The Wonder Years"*
 Source: indeterminate website

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
 2001 review:

"Annoyingly lightweight comedy detailing the romantic fantasies and predicaments of young teens and their elders – particularly, their English teacher – in 1948 Britain. Originally made for British television, released here theatrically in 1984. *½ "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"1948. A 14-year old boy, Alan, is secretly in love with Ann, a girl in his class. He doesn't dare speak to her, however, until he lands a part in the school play. In a certain scene he has to kiss Ann. Light and inconsequential [? = *"onbenullige"*] but sympathetic and subtle romantic comedy about teen love. Produced by David Puttnam. ** "

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"The first *"Film On Four"* and also the first *"First Love"* - umbrellas under umbrellas! - on Channel 4's opening night. Cricket-mad schoolboy hankers ineffectually after pretty classmate. "Funny and sweet and made inspired use of an imagined John Arlott cricket commentary" I reported, "but did schoolchildren say 'dishiest' already in 1948? Even more, did they say 'Sod off'? Bet they didn't." Writer: Jack Rosenthal."

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"The title refers to some secret schoolboy slang – school in the '50s, that is, in a leafy London suburb. The young hero (John Albasiny) is a grave-faced boy with a crush on the girl (Abigail Cruttenden) acting with him in the school play. Rehearsing it is Miss Land (Alison Steadman), who is having an affair with the groundsman (Garry Cooper). In sum, no masterpiece, but like most of the pieces written by Jack Rosenthal, modest and truthful. ** "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"An understated glimpse at the rites of adolescence circa 1948. The problems of our awkward hero pining for the school dreamgirl are paralleled with his English teacher facing a scandalous pregnancy. ** "

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"This touching, gently comic account of a schoolboy's obsession with a girl in his class, skilfully drawn by Jack Rosenthal, centres on Alan, perfectly played by John Albasiny, whose secret torment is as pure as the idyllic post-war setting. Young Alan's seething mass of schoolboy desire is, in fact, as chaste as the private life of his teacher (Alison Steadman) is unchaste.

The suspense involved in Alan's attempts to get his girl is beautifully drawn out. So serious a quest does this become that it even overrides his passion for cricket. He relives John Arlott's commentaries word for word, amusingly applying the action to his imaginary struggle to win not the Ashes but his beloved Ann. As the elusive heroine, Abigail Cruttenden, in the role of the prettiest girl in the class, expresses all the boredom and smugness that third form girls tend to adopt in such circumstances.

As Alan's cohorts, Mark Brelsford and Chris Caballis commendably display the more unsavoury nature of rampant schoolboys (short of hair but long on curiosity), leaving their more sensitive friend to suffer alone those first steps along the rocky road from word games to women. *** "

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"This is another World War II coming-of-age saga, in the same category as **"HOPE AND GLORY"**, **"EMPIRE OF THE SUN"** and **"AU REVOIR LES ENFANTS"**. Charming and wistful at times, it doesn't quite reach the heights attained by the other three films. ** "

The Virgin Film Guide review:

"This often enchanting and nostalgic look at adolescent life in 1948 England centres on Alan (Albasiny), a largely ignored schoolboy nicknamed "Quack Quack" because of his surname (Duckworth). When Alan decides to get his first kiss, he sets his sights on Ann (Cruttenden), an attractive schoolmate who doesn't even notice him. His big chance comes when he is chosen for the romantic lead in a school play. Luckily for him, Ann is his co-star. Intercut with the scenes of the adolescents are the lives of their teachers, and the result, warmly helmed by director Apted, is a pleasantly rounded little film. Although some portions of **"KIPPERBANG"** fall flat, much of the picture accurately captures the awkwardness of growing up. ***½ "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide" or "Variety Movie Guide 1993"]

Radio Times review:

"Teenage love in the late-Forties London suburbs is the subject of this lightweight blend of nostalgia and romantic comedy. Schoolboy John Albasiny has a crush on Abigail Cruttenden; some secret schoolboy slang explains the title; and John Arlott's distinctive cricket commentating voice is used to good effect to frame Albasiny's daydreams. ** "

"Comedy written by Jack Rosenthal, set during a post-war British summer. Shy schoolboy Alan Duckworth harbours a desire to kiss fellow pupil Ann, but his awkwardness does not endear him to the girls in his class."

“Sweet tale of young love at school, showing in the **"Look Who's Talking"** season, enlivened no end by Alison Steadman as a

teacher rehearsing the school play while her mind is elsewhere, fantasising about grounds-





*Ah but what schooldays
comedy would be
complete without the
Trial by Rod – here
disarmed of any severe
undertones by the use
of a cricket commentary
as the headmaster hits
a hearty six to the
appreciative seat of
Alan's gym shorts.
Well played that man!*

*Source: The Movie &
TV Spanking Page*



man Garry Cooper. This gently funny, wistful little film is securely based on a solid script by reliable Jack Rosenthal. John Albasiny scores, too, as the 40s London schoolboy with a passion for the coolly untouchable Abigail Cruttenden, most recently seen in the BBC drama **"LOVE ON A BRANCH LINE"**. *** "

What's On TV note:

"Comedy-drama about the growing pains of a teenage boy in 1948. Shown as part of the **"Look Who's Talking"** season."

Sunday Times note:

"Jack Rosenthal's wonderful comedy was first shown on Channel 4's second night, in 1982. It is set in a co-ed school in 1948 where, for 14-year old Alan Duckworth (John Albasiny), life is a metaphor for cricket. He yearns to kiss classmate Ann (Abigail Cruttenden) and his chance looms in the school play. This is his First Test - and Duckworth is an inauspicious name. John Arlott commentates; Alison Steadman is an A-plus teacher."

"Charming childhood comedy directed by Michael Apted."

The title is onomatopoeiac for the fireworks attendant on that all-important first kiss. Jack Rosenthal was the talented pen behind **"BAR MITZVAH BOY"** and **"THE EVACUEES"**, both of equal interest to the archive. Both too are comedy-dramas, the latter based on Rosenthal's boyhood experiences as a WW2 evacuee living with a seaside landlady. Director Michael Apted made the ground-breaking documentaries **"7 Up"**, **"14 Up"**, **"21 Up"** and **"28 Up"**, but has done no work of interest here since he went into mainstream moviemaking.

It's too long since I saw **"P'TANG.."** to review it personally, but I share Maltin's general impression of it – irritatingly lightweight and inconsequential. It is also, however self-effacingly, another of those schoolyard hymns to heterosexual inevitability. Adults are suspicious of adolescence, annoyed by its self-preoccupation and lack of respect, but one way to bridge that gap, and it is still being used with tiresome frequency, is to portray kids of that age simply as proto-married couples and parents – gauche, insecure and frantic to pair off, not *sexually* but socially. Re-interpreting puberty in this way (which in truth is far more about sex and self-image than any quest for partnership) gratifies conventional adult outlooks by making it a frantic yearning to achieve what that adult has already accomplished. As such, these school romances paint a very selective and self-serving view of the turmoil and confusion that is puberty. No amount of gentle comedy can disguise that.

Nothing else is known of Albasiny, Cruttenden or the other juveniles in the cast.

See subject index under **BOY-MEETS-GIRL**, **CHILD PERFORMERS**, **COMEDY**, **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**, **SCHOOL** and **SPORT**.