

Show Me Love Turns 15 This Year!



Lukas Moodysson shares 15 things you might not know about Sweden's best youth film.

On October 23, 1998 the premiere was held for the teen drama that was to shake up the rigid Swedish film industry. Never before has a lesbian story attracted so many to the theatres and equally rare is it that it so honestly and accurately depicted teens - and Moodysson and his Agnes and Elin paved the way for many exciting debutants since.

Guldbagges rained down on the film's young director/screenwriter and the stars, Alexandra Dahlström and Rebecka Liljeberg. Ahead of this week's classic review I revisited **Show Me Love** and discovered that yes, it is just as good today.

But the film's commentary track is also a little gold mine if you want to immerse yourself in one of the biggest Swedish films ever. So on the occasion of the 15th anniversary, here are 15 things you might not know about **Show Me Love**, from director Lukas Moodysson himself.



1. Another Opening Scene

The film begins with Agnes' wish list on her computer, "3. that elin will fall in love with me."

It was actually supposed to come much later in the film, says Moodysson. But when editing, he concluded that right there was a good start. From the beginning, the following scene was supposed to open the film, Elin's O'Boy attack on her sister.

- It was pretty fun to film since we had to cut all the time. Erica (Carlson) had to go and wash her hair every time just to get O'Boy all over it again.

2. Mathias Rust's Stage Fright

The scene where Johan (Mathias Rust) is waiting for Elin outside her home and pretending to fix his moped was the actor's first scene ever. It made Lukas a little nervous:

- I know he was talented, but I think he was even more nervous. But I'm so glad it worked out when I began to understand that it would work with all the inexperienced actors.

3. Recorded at Retirement Home

For the scene where Elin and her sister are styling in front of the elevator mirror, you had a look at one of Trollhättan's retirement homes.

- There were not many elevators that shut themselves like that in

Trollhättan. So we filmed in a retirement home. That scene was completely different to how it looked in the script; it was tricky to cut with the door closed all the time. So it's really sliced up. Much of the movie comes of course when you cut it, says Moodysson and celebrated **Show Me Love**'s editor Michal Leszcylowski.

4. It Began with the Sisters

One of the first scenes that was written for the movie is one with Elin and Jessica, when Elin wants to do drugs and tries to swallow down assorted pills with coke. Moodysson says that it started out as a completely different screenplay about two sisters.

- It was about two sisters who lived next door to a serial killer who dismembered people. One night they locked themselves out and have to knock on his door. Then a lot of gory stuff, knives and murder and stuff happens. Then there was just this scene, and it started my interest in this world. They talked about what they wanted to do, about drugs and love and Italians.

5. Stealth Advertising

The ICA bags that Elin's mother has at the elevator are no coincidence. Lukas Moodysson says that an ICA store in Trollhättan helped a lot during the recording:

- This is the only stealth advertising we have in the movie.



6. The In & Out List is the Real Thing

The scene where Elin is browsing a VeckoRevyn magazine and discovers that raves are "out" was included in the script, but was later deleted. The director thought that he would never find the right one of those In & Out lists to use in the film. But by accident...

- Suddenly when we were on set, it happened that a VeckoRevyn was there, with an In & Out list where raves were "out" together with pasta and the Spice Girls. Then we just had to bring it back. There are quite a few things that were changed during the shooting that were written about.

7. A Mistake

There were many movie posters and pictures of idols adorning the teenage girls' walls. But there was a poster the director regretted afterwards.

- **Romeo & Juliet** - the poster in Agnes' room was a mistake. I got the feeling that it was a good movie, but then a lot of good people said that it was bad. Then maybe people thought that they (Agnes & Elin) are like Romeo and Juliet, but that was not intended at all.

8. They Hated the Spice Girls

In Elin's room they had several of the young actors' friends in the film go and hang up posters on the wall of stuff they liked.

- There is partly a Spice Girls poster, but it's not because they like the Spice Girls, but because they hate them. So they wrote a lot of crap on them with lipstick on the poster.

9. The Best Bits Came Spontaneously

Some of Lukas Moodysson's favourite moments in the film are the spontaneous things that the actors just do. Natural interactions that emerged such as between the sisters Elin and Jessica or between friends Johan and Marcus.

- There are things that cannot be directed, he says.

10. The Production Designer Tested the Suicide Scene

In one scene a sad Agnes tries to cut her wrists with a razor.

- One of the set designers tested this in real life, she cut her

wrists with a razor blade like that. I thought it would have little effect, but she said it was bleeding a lot. Not that she was dying, but it was bleeding a lot more than you'd think. Rebecka does not do it for real, of course. Those are tricks that were filmed.



11. The Music Was Too Expensive

While both Moodysson and most of the audience are happy with the music selection in *Show Me Love*, it was supposed to sound a little different. The director hoped to have Morrissey on the soundtrack. Also the kissing scene in the car where Foreigner's *I Wanna Know What Love Is* is playing, was a successful substitute.

- We had heard Bonnie Tyler's *Total Eclipse of the Heart* on the car radio and thought it would fit perfectly. But they wanted around 400,000 for the rights, which were far too expensive, says the director.

12. Åmål Hated Us

The sign that says "Welcome to Åmål" was specially made for the film. Moodysson would have liked to borrow a real sign from Åmål, but...

- We got it absolutely that the community hated us. They don't anymore, but they didn't know what it would be about. They only knew that the movie was called *Fucking Åmål*. Of course it was

stupid of us not to tell them what we did, for it's certainly not meant to be malicious.

13. Bingo Lotto Does Not Hit Home Abroad

- When the scene comes on, the audience abroad does not know that it is an actor, and that it's a parody. They do not believe that that kind of show can be for real, that that is the way Locket is. Also in Denmark, someone commented that Locket was a good actor. Also, the A-drain plate and K-drain is another typical Swedish thing lost in translation when the movie is shown abroad. As "love" does not even begin with the letter K in English, notes Moodysson.

14. Johan and Jessica Get Together

When Elin and Agnes go home to fuck (or drink O'Boy), the camera has just left Johan (Mathias Rust) and Jessica (Erica Carlson) in the schoolyard. The director thinks that the two will also become a couple:

- There was a scripted version where they were kissing at the end. You want it to work out that they get together. Since I'm romantically inclined, I believe and hope that it will be so. They get together, he says.

15. Hard to Watch The Movie

- I've only seen the movie 3-4 times. I think it's a little hard to watch it because it always gets to me that I think it's super bad. That it's just some sort of mass psychosis that makes people think that it's good, says the director.

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