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Ai Dente Italian Comedy Soon to Orinda

By Sophie Braccini

Domenico Proietti presents



mineVaganti Il nuovo film di Ferzan Özpetek
L'unica cosa più complicata dell'amore è la famiglia

Loose Cannons (*Mine Vaganti*) will be shown at the Orinda Theatre from August 19 to the 22 and on August 25. This Italian comedy is brought to Orinda by the Lamorinda Film & Entertainment Foundation (LFEF). Once a month, for about a week, LFEF screens a foreign feature film that has never been released commercially in the Bay Area, is not currently available through any other medium, and has been recognized in international film festivals. The August movie is a perfect pick for a light summer evening.

Tommaso (Riccardo Scamarcio) is the youngest son of an Italian family that owns a pasta factory in the Puglia region (the heel of Italy's boot). He's made up his mind to tell his family he is gay, at the family dinner. As he's about to make his big announcement, his older brother steals his thunder and comes out himself, resulting in his exclusion from the family clan and causing his macho father to have a heart attack.

Since this is a comedy, the heart attack is not too serious, but worrisome enough that poor Tommaso does not dare to deliver the 'coup-de-grace.' He decides to delay his own moment of truth and tries to get interested in the farfalle and tortellini produced in the family business. Until his Roman friends, including his lover, show up.

This movie is Ferzan Ozpetek's first attempt at directing a comedy. The Italian director, with Turkish origins, was better known for melodramas, such as the 2003 film *Facing Windows* that won numerous awards and was distributed by Sony Pictures Classics in North America. In *Loose Cannons*, Ozpetek tries hard and stops at nothing to make the viewer smile, and for the most part, it works. Some scenes are very amusing, but the rhythm lags a bit at times. The situation is not that complicated for Tommaso, but Ozpetek manages to render the main character so engaging that one can't help but pity him and fear for him when his friends arrive.

Riccardo Scamarcio, who plays Tommaso, is a sweet version of the languid Latin lovers portrayed in old Italian movies. In this film, he is charming and funny at the same time. The social conformity of the upper middle class country family is depicted with accuracy. The character of the grandmother, lucid and generous, is very touching and believable.

Sometimes a bit overdone and bordering on caricature, the movie is light, unpretentious and funny. This is a perfect fit for a summer evening, with the added charm of a picturesque setting and an excellent sound track. Having to read subtitles can be a bit annoying at times, but it is a worthwhile trade-off for being immersed in the musicality of the Italian language.

You'll leave the Orinda Theatre relaxed and with the feeling that you've had a few hours of vacation in Italy.

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