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California Indie Fest-a Feast

By Andrea A. Firth



Opening night movie Monsiuer Lazhar Photo provided

burlesque comic, twin's triumphing over a genetic disease, a ninety year-old triathlete and her octogenarian high jumping pal, an all-women's tribe in Kenya, California's single-speed cyclists, and the tragic tale of young woman's battle with an eating disorder.

A little more local is the documentary film entitled Century of Light. Filmmaker Chris Leps tells the story of the longest burning light bulb. Housed in a fire station in Livermore the bulb has been lit (with a few minor interruptions) since it was first installed in 1901, that's 111 years and counting. "Things were built to last back then," says Leps who wrote, produced, and directed the 42-minute film. A stuntman by day and filmmaker whenever he can make it happen, Leps explores the innovation, technology and local people behind this remarkable bulb.

Bite-Sized Portions-CAIFF's Shorts

Done well it does not take long to tell a good story. The short film selections in the 14th annual California Film Festival are between four and thirty minutes long, with most about a ten-minute watch. The quick pics are animated, funny and dramatic, with subject matter that ranges from the excitement of spring to loss and renewal and what can happen when you borrow a cup of sugar (see the short called Sugar to find out).

The Festival often showcases up-and-coming filmmakers. The short selection Bandito was written, directed and filmed by San Jose-based film student Ryan Wood who is currently studying at the Art Institute of California in Sunnyvale. Like any good western, the short has hairy-faced bad guys, a gravelly-voiced sheriff, a beautiful cowgirl, and of course, a gun fight. Produced on a shoestring budget, Wood's cinematography is remarkable and covers a lot of land in Hollister where the seven-minute movie was shot. Light on dialogue and heavy on mood and scene, it's a surprising tale. Don't miss it.

The opening weekend of the Festival (February 10th and 11th) is the time to eat, drink, and play at the Rheem in Moraga. The Festival kicks off with a reception on Friday night starting at 5:30 p.m. with host Dianne Dwyer, the weekend anchor of NBC Bay Area news. The Saturday night social starts around 10:30 p.m. after the screening of Rocky and continues til...

For all you need to know about the California Independent Film Festival, including the full schedule and ticket information, go online to caiff.org.

The upcoming California Independent Film Festival will give filmgoers a smorgasbord of movie options (a veritable feast) including foreign language films, features, documentaries, and shorts, along with a chance to eat, drink, and party. The festival will be screening movies at both the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga and the Orinda Theatre from February 10th through the 16th. Here's a taste of what attendees can see.

And the winner is...

Monsiuer Lazhar, an Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Language Film, will open the Festival on Friday, February 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Rheem Theatre. The sensitive and humorous Canadian film tells the story of an Algerian immigrant who is hired to replace a well-liked teacher who died tragically. While the students in the Montreal middle school heal under the new teacher's tutelage, he deals with the pain of his former life.

Keeping it Real-CAIFF's Documentaries

Screening throughout the six-day festival, the seven documentary films tackle a range of subjects, both weighty and lighter fare, and tell the stories of the last living

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