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- Marian Nichols, Moraga

See it Before the Hollywood Remake

"Starbuck" arrives in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Patrick Huard



Photos provided

Already an international blockbuster and a future Hollywood remake, the crowd pleaser of a movie "Starbuck" comes to Orinda from Quebec for one week starting May 3. The Canadian flavor is something you won't want to miss in this efficient comedy about what it means to be a father.

The story begins when David Wozniak, played by Patrick Huard, discovers that he has fathered hundreds of children, now in their early 20s – the result of the multiple sperm donations he made in his youth. Wozniak is 42, going on 19, when he hears the news: more than 100 of his 'children' are suing to have his identity revealed. An irresponsible and immature though likeable individual, he learns at the same time that his girlfriend is pregnant. His journey through the exploration of these different "fatherhoods" ultimately makes a man of him.

Scenarists Martin Petit and Ken Scott, who also directed the movie, used the North American legal void regarding the anonymity of sperm donors to talk about what it means to be a father, to be part of a family, and to dis-

cuss the place of men in this new paradigm procreation techniques have created. But this is not an intellectual movie; it is full of fun scenes, mostly carried through by Huard whose charming clumsiness and desire to do the right thing land him in very difficult situations.

Wozniak is known to the fertility clinic and to his children as Starbuck, named after the legendary Canadian bull Hanoverhill Starbuck that had an almost perfect genetic code and revolutionized artificial insemination. As of today, the bull is the best sire ever recorded by the Artificial Insemination Center of Quebec. But are you a father because someone carries some of your genetic material? The movie tends to say yes.

The hero is surrounded by fathers: his own dad, now a widower; his brothers; and his best friend, who has four kids and no wife. At times Petit and Scott push fatherhood a little too much, which creates some oddities in the scenario. Wozniak's children refer to their 'adopted families' when they talk about those who raised them, but when there is sperm donation it is likely that the biologi-

cal mother is raising the child. But where are the mothers in the movie? Starbuck appears to be an omnipotent being, the sole creator of hundreds of kids, a feat that borders on machismo.

Some of the children Wozniak meets seem to be caricatures of themselves, with somewhat miraculous outcomes following their brief encounters: the wannabe actor gets the role of his life; the drug addict straightens up without medical help; the struggling street singer finds an audience.

"Starbuck" is still a fun, feel-good movie, even if it may have sacrificed some plausibility for a good ending. In the U.S. the movie rights have been purchased by Steven Spielberg and a remake is on its way under the direction of Scott. It is rumored that Vince Vaughn might be cast as Starbuck with the action taking place in New York City – much different from the original locale, the Montreal neighborhood called Mile-End, a multicultural area with specific style, colors and buildings that add to the good vibe of "Starbuck."

For more information, visit internationalshowcase.org.

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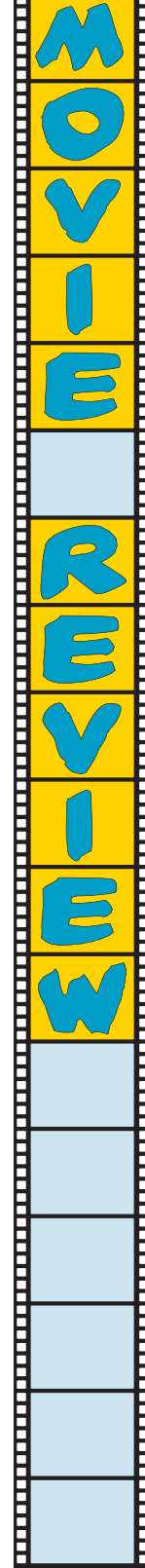
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Classic Film Festival Weekend

By Derek Zemrak



Mickey Rooney



Boris Karloff



Abbott and Costello

The stars will be shining brightly on the weekend of May 10-12 in Lamorinda at the first semiannual Classic Film Festival and Hall of Fame ceremony. Described below are a few of the events occurring that weekend.

Do you remember going to the movies to see a double feature? Well take yourself back in time at 1 p.m. May 11 at the Orinda Theatre to watch the "Boris Karloff Double Feature" – two movies for the price of one! First on the bill is "The Raven" followed by "Frankenstein," which is hailed as one of the best horror films ever made. An added bonus for this event will be Sarah Karloff in person for a Q & A. She will also present never-before-seen footage of her father, Boris Karloff. I recommend taking along the grandkids to share in this experience.

What would a classic film festival weekend be without screen legend Mickey Rooney? Mickey is coming! He will be at the Orinda Theatre at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 11 for a special screening of "National Velvet." Mr. Rooney will be doing a Q & A prior to the movie. "National Velvet" was the film that made Elizabeth Taylor a movie star at the age of 12. This promises to be a special Hollywood night in Lamorinda!

Is comedy your thing? The Classic Film Festival has you covered with "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein" showing at noon May 12 at the Rheem Theatre. The screening includes special guest Chris Costello, daughter of legendary funny man Lou Costello. Ms. Costello will be doing a Q & A about growing up Costello style.



Cloris Leachman Photos provided

After that event, the queen of comedy, Oscar winner, Golden Globe winner, eight-time Emmy Award winner and 2003 California Independent Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, Ms. Cloris Leachman will make an appearance at the Rheem Theatre at 3 p.m. May 12 for a special screening of Mel Brooks' classic comedy "Young Frankenstein." The Q & A will be hosted by the Bay Area's Favorite Film Critic, KRON 4 movie reviewer, Jan Wahl. Any event with Ms. Leachman will be an afternoon to remember with a whole lot of laughs.

All proceeds from the Classic Film Festival and Hall of Fame induction weekend go to benefit the digital conversion fund for the Rheem Theatre. The latest information about the Classic Film Festival and Hall of Fame weekend can be seen at www.lamorindatheatres.com.

Derek Zemrak is a Film Critic, Film Producer and Founder of the California Independent Film Festival. You can follow Derek on Twitter @zemrak for the latest Hollywood news. Derek is the host of Real to Reel on TRadioV.com live at 6 p.m. every Tuesday.

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