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## International Film Showcase Double Treat: "The Hunt" and "The Silence"

By Sophie Braccini



"The Hunt" Photo provided

As summer comes to an end, the two cinephile-minds behind the International Film Showcase, Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury, thought Lamorinda's discriminating audience deserved the best in international films, light or dark. This month the showcase will feature the highly charged, emotional film, "The Hunt," by director Thomas Vinterberg, followed by a riveting psychological thriller, "The Silence," by director Baran bo Odar.

In "The Hunt," Lucas (Mads Mikkelsen) works at a preschool in a small town next to a forest where he hunts deer with friends. Among them is Theo, the father of little Klara (Annika Wedderkop) who attends the pre-school where Lucas works. When Klara tells the schoolmaster that Lucas has shown her his "private parts," the legal process is initiated and the rumor of pedophilia spreads, the children taking part. Lucas becomes a pariah.

The first third of the movie is remarkably directed. It establishes the dramatic elements, creating a riveting feeling of ineluctable doom. Mikkelsen (who received a well-deserved Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival for this role) plays a convincing character of impeccable integrity,

while staying passive and showing remarkable strength.

Unfortunately, other characters in the movie lack that same depth. The schoolmaster takes an obviously perturbed child's accusations at face value; and the parents become executioners who will not obey any court order, which can be painful to witness.

The movie, however, touches on the presumption of innocence, while questioning what it means to be male in our changing society. Lucas' career at a preschool, which was once dominated by women, and his love of hunting reflect the contradictions men are faced with.

Another dark film, "The Silence," begins with the murder of an 11-year-old girl by a pedophile. Exactly 23 years later, at the same location, a similar crime is committed. The first crime was never solved and the police are on full alert, the families emotionally devastated. The movie provides a delicate balance between mystery and psychological thriller. The culprits are given no sympathy; the situations and protagonists are analyzed with surgical precision.

This reflection on evil and the death of a child takes the spectator on a trip to Hell, led with remarkable mastery by Swiss director Baran bo Odar. In 2011, the year the film was released in Europe, Variety selected Baran bo Odar as one of the "10 directors to watch" worldwide, an understandable choice after seeing this movie where the placid calm of sunny Finland contrasts with such a chilling and unspeakable crime.

"The Hunt" will open for one week at the Orinda Theatre Aug. 23; "The Silence" opens Aug. 30 and will also play at the Rheem Theatre beginning Sept. 6 for one week. For more information, visit lamorindatheatres.com.



"The Silence" Photo provided

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