

**MOVIE REVIEW**

# “Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters”

By Derek Zemrak



Dionysus (Stanley Tucci) takes Percy (Logan Lerman) under his wing. Photo Murray Close TM and © 2013 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Not for sale or duplication.

Logan Lerman (“The Perks of Being a Wallflower”) reprises his role as Percy Jackson, the modern day son of the ancient Greek god, Poseidon, in the sequel to the 2010 film “Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief.” In this installment Percy and his friends embark on a journey to hunt for the Golden Fleece at the Sea of Monsters in order to save the dying tree that protects their habitat.

All the main characters return in “Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters” including Annabeth, played by Alexandra Daddario, Grover portrayed by Brandon T. Jackson and Clarisse, the daughter of Ares, played by the talented young actress Leven Rambin (“Hunger Games”). Added cast members in the film are Tyson (Douglas Smith), Percy’s Cyclops half brother. Also the very talented veteran actor Stanley Tucci co-stars in the role of Dionysus, the god of wine. Tucci is a joy to watch as he brings the young actors to new levels.

“Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters” is a fast-paced pre-teen/teen Greek methodical action adventure joy ride that is rated PG. Director Thor Freudenthal (“Hotel of Dogs,” “Diary of a Wimpy Kid”) keeps the pacing and tone aimed at the younger target audience. Before I realized it, the movie ended. It did not seem like it had a total running time of 106 minutes.

**A Hollywood side note:** If you are looking for an interesting inside Hollywood novel I recommend “The Ear of the Heart: An Actress’ Journey from Hollywood to Holy Vows.” I had the honor of

interviewing Mother Dolores Hart, the nun who gave Elvis his first onscreen kiss in the movie “Loving You” in 1957. Hart was on top of Hollywood starring in 10 films and co-starring not only with Elvis twice (“Loving You,” “King Creole”) but also with Anthony Quinn (“Wild Is the Wind”), Montgomery Clift (“Lonely Hearts”) and George Hamilton (“Where the Boys Are”), just to name a few. In 1959, she received a Tony Award nomination for Best Featured Actress for her role in the play “The Pleasure of His Company” opposite George Peppard. Hart gave up her career in 1963 at the age of 24 to become a Roman Catholic nun when she entered the Benedictine Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Conn.



Derek Zemrak and Mother Dolores Hart Photo provided

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 can be heard every Friday on KAHN 950AM on the Poppoff Show.

# 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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