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**"Kauwboy" (Little Bird) at the Orinda Theatre**By *Sophie Braccini*

"Kauwboy" Image provided

responsible for another being.

In an interview for Onlinefilm.org, Koole said that the story of "Kauwboy" was closely tied to his own. "When I was 12, a Jackdaw landed on my bedroom's windowsill ... little by little, we became friends. It came back every day and was becoming bolder, coming into my bedroom and perching on my shoulder," he remembered. He also said that it took him a long time to find the right child to play Jojo. "We saw at least 300 boys before meeting with Rick Lens," he said. "We looked in the streets, in musicals, in bird refuges, and called casting agents." Koole said that the first time he saw Lens he intuitively knew it would be a perfect cast. The young actor is indeed remarkable.

"Kauwboy" is a delightful and poetic family movie for viewers of all ages: children will appreciate the respect given to their peers without too much corniness or simplification; adults will feel their hearts open and be reminded of the pains and the joys of childhood.

The movie will be presented at the Orinda Theatre for one week, beginning Sept. 13. For more information, visit [www.lamorindatheatres.com](http://www.lamorindatheatres.com).

In the film "Kauwboy," 10-year-old Jojo is often left to his own devices. His mother is no more than a smiling image on the wall and a distant voice on the phone; his father is locked up, a bit too rough, and out of his depth.

Jojo finds secret comfort in taking care of a baby Jackdaw that has fallen from its nest. The bird is more touching than pretty: it is sparsely feathered, a little thing chirping and frail that Jojo immediately takes charge of. Yet, in spite of its weakness, the tiny Jackdaw gives Jojo the necessary strength to confront reality.

Jojo is endearing; he is a dreamer hoping for a better life. Netherlands director Boudewijn Koole found in Rick Lens an excellent child actor to portray the abandoned boy full of hopes and desires, trying to escape his difficult present. He is a boy in need of being loved and the spectator wants to protect and take care of him.

Koole has a way of depicting the magic that can come from some children and their imaginations. There is something of Peter Pan in Jojo; his whimsical side that tends to ignore reality is engaging. He tries to live by creating his own world, to grow without the support of his mother's love. Beyond his 10 years of age, he possesses a great strength.

The director tactfully shows the oblique way children can 'make do' with their distress, showing the pain but also the liveliness of the child and his resilience. The topic could have been approached with a gooey Disney-like sentimentality, but in "Kauwboy" the bird is not a magical friend fallen from the sky with human-like feelings, but, more modestly, the precious conduit that will permit fragile Jojo to grow.

Jojo's gradual discovery and understanding of the bird is his gate to adulthood. He learns what it is to be

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