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'Like Father Like Son' – A Philosophical Tale about Fatherhood

By Sophie Braccini



"Like Father Like Son"

Photo provided

The switching of two babies at birth is the root of Hirokazu Kore-eda's movie "Like Father Like Son" ("Soshite chichi ni naru," which literally translated means "becoming father after all"). The Japanese director explores the flaws of contemporary Japanese society and offers a philosophical tale that explores what it means to become a father, while portraying two very different social groups and ways of life in contemporary Japan.

The movie starts in the impeccably structured and controlled world of successful architect Ryoata (played by pop star Masaharu Fukuyama), his wife Midori (Machiko Ono) and their well disciplined 6-year-old son Keita. Their successful and happy life is shattered when the countryside hospital where the young wife delivered her son, calls to tell them their baby was switched at birth. The other family, Yudai (Lily Franky) and Yukari (Yoko Maki) are much less affluent and seem to live in a joyous and

somewhat precarious chaos with Ryusei, Ryoata and Midori's biological son, and two younger siblings.

Had this been an American movie, this discovery of the switch might have instigated violent outbursts and emotional scenes, but Kore-eda is of another school, that of old Yasujiro Ozu. He paints emotions through close-ups, where a single tear forming at the corner of the eye projects more than 20 seconds of sound and fury would, with subtleties similar to those in Masato Harada's movie "Chronicle of My Mother" shown last year as part of the monthly International Film Showcase. Machiko Ono, who plays Midori, the somewhat subdued wife of the successful architect is deftly restrained. Even the two boys, who say very few words, have an almost palpable physical presence that carries a great deal of emotion.

The movie could be perceived as a political tirade. The materialistic world of Ryoata, where broken toys are replaced by new ones and where

a father cannot relate to his son, to the tin shack where Yudai repairs everything and everyone bathes together in one bathtub.

But beyond the social portrayal, Kore-eda's movie is a reflection about how to become a father. In an interview for the French newspaper L'Humanité (the movie won the Jury Prize at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival), Kore-eda confirmed that he made the movie to answer the question, how do we become fathers? "The idea of switching the children is a way to ask the questions of the bloodline and of time," he said. "In one of the scenes, one of the mothers, Saiki Yukari, says: 'For you the bloodline is the most important question because you have not bonded with your child.' What fathers are asking is whether their child is like them."

The one-week showing of "Like Father Like Son" begins May 2 at the Orinda Theatre. For tickets and showtimes, call (925) 254-9060.

Miramonte's Public Speaking Team Remains Triumphant

Submitted by Fatima Hasanain



Miramonte High School Individual Events Speakers

Photo provided

For most people, the term "March Madness" refers to the frenzy of college basketball games that consume people's lives for the entire month. However, for Miramonte High School's public speaking team, the phrase takes on an entirely different meaning. For these students, March is a busy time, with tournaments held every Saturday, some even beginning a day early on Friday. These "March Madness" qualifying tournaments determine which distinguished competitors will proceed to the highest levels of competition: the California High School Speech Association's State Tournament held this April in Modesto, Calif., and the National Forensic League's National Tournament held in June all the way in Overland Park, Kan.

Historically, Miramonte's team has had great success in qualifying a large number of students to both of these tournaments, but this year has been one of the most triumphant yet. This year, head coach Kristen Plant will lead a team of 36 students to the State Tournament, and 10 students to the National Tournament.

"These speakers have worked harder than ever to make it so far

in the competition, and will undoubtedly represent Miramonte well in the upcoming prestigious tournaments," says Miramonte junior and team member Fatima Hasanain. "There is no doubt that the team's success would not be possible without the endless support of the Educational Foundation of Orinda and all the hardworking volunteers that make such trips possible. The entire Miramonte public speaking team extends its sincerest gratitude to EFO for its continued support in helping the program thrive."

Hello from Boston

Scoping out the Boston Marathon finish line two days ahead of the big race were Brad Alban, Miramonte High School's track coach (left), his twin sister Brianna, a Boston student and 2014 marathoner, and Orinda native Tim O'Brien, a marathoner in both 2013 and 2014 raising funds for Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. (See related story in the Lamorinda Weekly archives: <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0803/Grace-and-Passion-Lamorinda-marathoners-to-show-their-love-for-Boston-a-year-after-bombing.html>.)



Photo courtesy Leslie O'Brien

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