

MOVIE REVIEW

Film Clips

'Kubo and the Two Strings' is Full of Life Lessons

By Derek Zemrak



Monkey (voiced Charlize Theron) watches as Beetle (voiced by Matthew McConaughey) teaches Kubo (voiced by Art Parkinson) how to fish with a bow and arrow in animation studio Laika's epic action-adventure "Kubo and the Two Strings," a Focus Feature release.

Credit: Laika Studios/Focus Features

Laika Entertainment, the talented stop-motion animation studio located in Hillsboro, Oregon, 967 miles from Hollywood, has produced four Oscar worthy films in the past seven years, including "Coraline" (2009), "ParaNorman" (2012) and "The Boxtrolls" (2014). Laika's latest movie is "Kubo and the Two Strings."

This time around, as in all Laika films, the lead character is a young child, Kubo (voiced by Art Parkinson, Rickon Stark from "Game of Thrones") whose peaceful world comes crashing down on him when he summons a revengeful spirit from the past. Kubo and his friends, the monkey and the beetle, join forces to unlock the secret legacy.

Two Oscar recipients, Charlize Theron and Matthew McConaughey, lend their voice talents to the film. Theron plays the wise Monkey and McConaughey is Beetle, the comic relief of the story. Kubo beholds a magical instrument, (yes, with two strings) that he uses to battle the Moon King and his minions to save his family. Along the way Kubo learns some of life's reasons; like why did he lose one eye and about his deceased father – a fallen samurai.

One may think that "Kubo and the Two Strings" is a Japanese folk tale but it is not. It has tales in myths for ancient Japanese culture but is an original story by Shannon Tindle and Marc Haimes. The movie is directed by Travis Knight who was the lead animator on "The Boxtrolls," "ParaNorman" and "Coraline." The animation is amazing, the scenery is stunning and should be seen on the big screen.

This film is rated PG because some parts may be too scary and complicated for very young children. Please respect the PG rating. "Kubo and the Two Strings" will earn Laika its fourth Best Animated Feature Nomination but it has one little thing in its way to winning the Oscar – Pixar.

The 19th annual California Independent Film Festival is just three weeks away, starting at 6 p.m. on Sept. 8 at the Rheem Theatre. Over 30 filmmakers from around the world will be attending the weeklong festival. Meet Ellen Gerstein, a Los Angeles filmmaker and see her short film "Come Away With Me."

Hope to see you at the festival and remember; CAIFF has "Something for Everyone from Around the World."

Filmmaker Spotlight: Ellen Gerstein By Lindsay Pirkle, CAIFF Festival Director



I am Ellen Gerstein a Los Angeles filmmaker, member of Women in Film, the Alliance of Women Directors and The Actors Studio. My international award winning short film, "Come Away With Me," is an official selection at The California Independent Film Festival screening at noon on Sunday, Sept. 11 in the Shorts Program C: Love and Friendship.

It is about an interracial couple, sweethearts in the 60s, who were torn apart by war and social pressure. The character Michael is a war hero suffering from PTSD and Alzheimer's. Michael is played by Charlie Robinson ("Mom," "Night Court," "Antwon Fisher," "Hart of Dixie"). I play Anne (recurring roles in "Shameless," "Whole Truth"). I also wrote the original song for my film "Come Away With Me Tonight." It is performed by Hollie Cavanagh from American Idol and features Luis Eric Gonzales from Earth, Wind & Fire on horns

My film was an all-female production. I produced, directed and acted, Julie Janata was co-producer and editor, Victoria Sampson (a CAIFF Alumni) did the sound design and Polly Morgan was the cinematographer. I love interviews and will be available before, during and after the film festival.

Weather Wizard Will Wow SIRS 171 -- Sept. 7

Spencer Christian, KGO (Ch 7)'s lively meteorologist will be the featured speaker at the Wednesday, Sept. 7 luncheon of Lamorinda SIR Branch 171. Christian has also reported on travel, trains, wine! Time: 11:30 am, Holy Trinity Serbian Church, 1700 School St., Moraga. Walk-ins welcome; lunch is only \$15.



Advertisement for Lamorinda Audiology. Text includes: Quality Hearing Aids • In Ear Monitors • Ear Mold Impressions. FREE Consultations, FREE Hearing Screenings and now taking Blue Cross, Blue Shield and Medicare. Dr. Erik M. Breitling, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA. 3744 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 100, Lafayette. (925) 262-4242 www.LamorindaAudiology.com

Service Clubs Announcements

Advertisement for Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Text includes: We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com. August 26: Africa, through the African lens. September 2: BREXIT with Fred Stambaugh. The Lafayette Arts and Wine Festival is coming to you. Where our Teardrop trailer will make its debut!

Advertisement for Lafayette Rotary Club. Text includes: Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting. Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. August 25: Officer Holcombe on Fraud and ID Theft Prevention. September 1: Karen Mulvaney, Friendship with Louis Zamperini - WWII prisoner of war featured in the movie Unbroken. www.rotarylafayette.org www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

Advertisement for Soroptimist of 24/680. Text includes: Please join us for our next meeting: WHEN: Wednesday, September 7th Social 5:30-6:00 p.m. Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. WHERE: The Buttercup Grill 660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek. Soroptimist 24-680 says "No More" For more information, contact: Regina Englehart @925-876-9076 or go to: soroptimist24-680.org

Not to be missed

OTHER ... continued

Brain Remodeling: You Can Change Your Brain and Your Health. Come for a workshop at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 31 for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging with Linda Fodrini-Johnson of Eldercare Services. You will learn: How you can repair damage done by stress to your brain, Simple ways to

change your chromosomes and the power of "mindfulness." Limited Seating. No fee. Class intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.

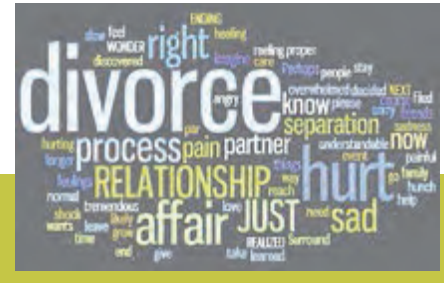
The Contra Costa County Library is hosting its annual book giveaway through Sept. 4. The book giveaway is located in the shipping and receiving area at Library Administration

in Pleasant Hill, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 Monday through Saturday p.m. and is closed on Sundays. Books are available on a first-come, first-served basis and members of the public are advised to bring their own boxes or bags to transport materials. For general questions, please contact library administration at libadmin@ccclib.org or (925) 646-6423.

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Divorce Recovery Workshop

9/22 - 11/3 | 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.



If you are going through the pain of losing a significant relationship and might benefit from our Divorce Recovery Workshop, please register online at LOPC.org. Questions? Contact Becki at (925) 283-8722 x221, or email becki@LOPC.org. Deadline to register 9/15



Where everyone is welcome, nobody is perfect, and anything is possible with God. 49 Knox Dr, Lafayette, CA 94549 • LOPC.org • (925) 283-8722 • #LOPC