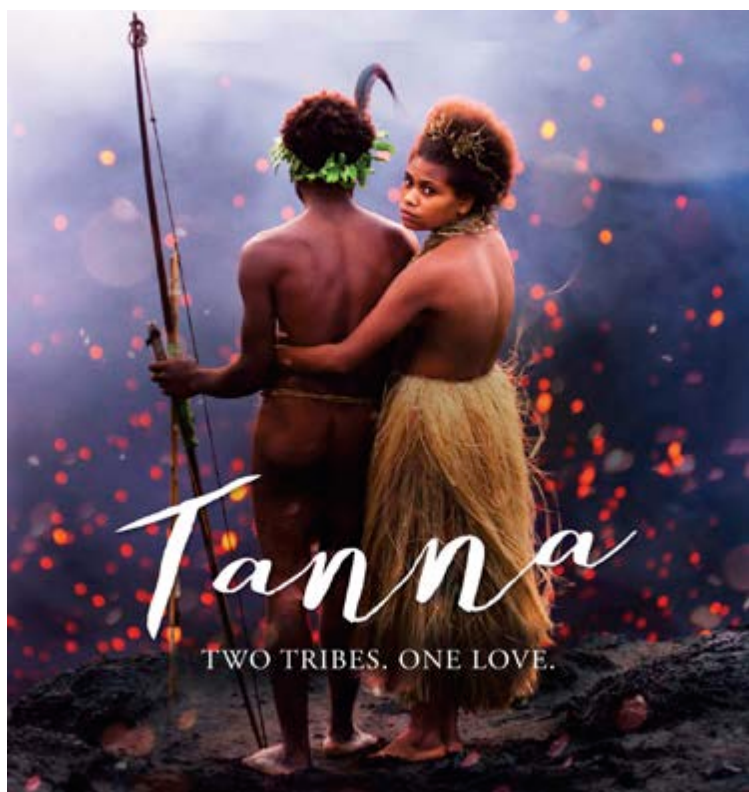


# 'Tanna' is a Genuine Story Of Love Among The People Of Vanuatu

By Sophie Braccini



Tanna Photo provided

“Tanna,” is a movie and a voyage to the small South Pacific island of Vanuatu; rarely has a fiction been so close to reality. It is a geographical exploration, and even more importantly, an ethnological voyage; it is a love story; it also shows the challenges faced by a self-governing people almost

overtaken by those who conquered them. In this movie, the people of Tanna show us how to stay true to one’s traditions while continuing to be relevant as the world changes around them.

“Tanna” will play at the Orinda Theater for a week starting on Oct. 7, part of the International

Film Showcase that, almost every month, shows a foreign movie not yet released locally.

“Tanna” recounts a true story that took place there in 1987, told and played by the children of those who lived it. According to ancestral ways, it is the parents that decide who marries whom. Marriage is a way to create peace and to mix the different tribes. This rule was never challenged until a young couple fell in love and tried to change the “kastom” (custom).

The story is simple and has been told many times, in many different ways, by many different cultures. But the questions that are asked here are not trivial. First we are curious about these people who run around wearing grass skirts or penis sheaths. We suffer for them when we see that this small number of humans, living on an island of only 210 square miles kill each other over old grudges that do not make any sense to us. We wonder with them about the nature of love, of attachment, of belonging and identity. And we want them to be able to preserve their island of uniqueness in our ocean of conformity.

It is a drama, of course, with

moments of lightness and joy. The people of Tanna teach us a lesson as they gain heightened awareness and understand the futility of their disputes.

One of the most remarkable features of this movie, and why it is an absolute must-see, is that it is as close as it could ever be to real life. The two Australian directors, Martin Butler and Bentley Dean, came from the documentary field. They decided together to create a fiction on Tanna, they went there with that desire but no real storyline. What inspired them was that this group of people living so close to our civilization and its facilities have deliberately decided to live without it.

While living on the island they were told the love story and decided this would be their movie.

The film is performed entirely by the Yakel tribe on Tanna. As Butler explains it the chief plays the chief, the medicine man plays the medicine man, etc. The only person not from the Yakel tribe is Wawa, the young girl, because all the girls from the village were too shy and would never look the young man in the eye or get close to him. The young girl who plays

Wawa is from a village close to the coast.

When the two directors arrived on Tanna, the villagers, who live without electricity, had never seen a movie before. After seeing one on the laptop of the two producers, they decided to go along.

There was no script to the movie. Every day, the directors would gather with the villagers and discuss what they wanted to achieve.

Butler and Dean came back to the island in 2015 to show the movie to the islanders. The devastating cyclone Pam had killed many, and even if there was no casualty in the Yakel village, all the habitations and many trees had been destroyed. They nonetheless gathered to see the movie.

Dean says that the next morning they gave the two men the best review ever. “The chief of the village came to us and said, ‘We know you and Martin came here with your idea to make a film with your equipment and stuff, but we just want to inform you that we consider this our film.’”

More information at [www.lamorindatheatres.com](http://www.lamorindatheatres.com).

# A Full Baroque Experience Opens Pacific Chamber Orchestra’s Season

By Sophie Braccini



The Pacific Chamber Orchestra. Photo provided

The Pacific Chamber Orchestra is coming back to Lamorinda this season with Brilliant Baroque, a full experience with Bach and those that influenced him.

“The purpose is to come away with an idea of how all these creations interacted with each other,” says director and conductor Lawrence Kohl. The Moraga-based maestro founded the orchestra over 20 years ago and is gradually building its audience in Lamorinda. This 2016/17 season is opening on Oct. 7 at the Lafayette Community Center.

Kohl composes his programs to deepen his audience’s understanding of music and therefore its pleasure. This one is no different, taking the epitome of Baroque art, Johann Sebastian Bach, and presenting along with his work, some of the music of those who preceded him.

“Bach was such a complete composer and absorbed everything that came before him,” says Kohl who acknowledges that he could not present all the influences, but chose three composers from the Italian, French and German schools to give a flavor of the roots of Bach’s music.

The first part of the concert will feature Girolamo Frescobaldi’s Toccata, Johann Pachelbel’s Canon and Gigue, and François Couperin’s La Sultane. The second part will be the performance of Bach’s brilliant Orchestra Suite No. 3. The second movement of that suite was later arranged by Bach for violin as the famous and deeply moving Air on the G String.

Kohl says that Frescobaldi was really known for exploring the motives and emotion in instrumental music. “His work tried to bring out emotions with harmonies and melodies, what is mostly done with choral work,” he explains.

Couperin is quite intricate, something that can be seen in Bach with complicated counter-

point and his interest in compositional architecture. Pachelbel is in a way quite simple, not as dense as a Couperin would be, with an economy of notes in order to achieve what needs to be achieved, within a precise musical form.

“This power with simplicity influenced him too,” says Kohl.

He states that Bach’s works are not intricate to be intricate, that they have a gestalt about them where everything fits within. “That is one of the elements that makes his music so powerful,” says Kohl. The notes serve the architecture and the architecture serve the notes.

The concert will also feature a harpsichord concerto by Johann Christian Bach, Bach’s youngest son. “It will be interesting to have both the juxtaposition of the late Renaissance-early Baroque influence on the family, then the son who was already moving on toward the Classical period,” says Kohl.

Bay Area virtuoso harpsichordist Michael Peterson will be playing in Lafayette. Many of his current and most recent projects are based on music from the high Baroque period. He says that he draws inspiration from historical sources and uses them to help connect the music with his audience. All the musicians of the Pacific Chamber Orchestra are professionals and recording artists performing on the most prestigious stages.

This season’s program includes three other concerts. The February concert is called Global Gem, a string program with diverse composers spanning continents and areas: Shostakovich, Piazzola, Caliendo and Mozart. The April program will perform Brahms’ breathtaking Symphony No.1 and Elgar’s Cello Concerto with Bay Area virtuoso cellist Nina Flyer.

Kohl and his musicians have also conducted interactive music classes in the Bay Area

schools, specifically in Lamorinda at Wagner Ranch Elementary School in Orinda. To continue to develop this presence, the or-

chestra is looking for more members to join the orchestra’s board.

The Oct. 7 concert is at 7:30 p.m. and will be repeated in

Livermore on Sunday the 9th at 2 p.m. More information and tickets are available at [www.pacificchamberorchestra.org](http://www.pacificchamberorchestra.org).

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