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'Love, Simon'

By Derek Zemrak

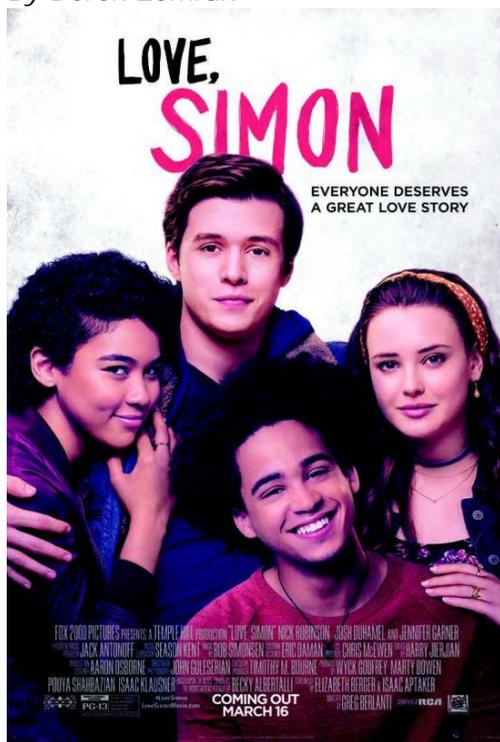


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In the vein of the great John Hughes' films of the 1980s, "Pretty in Pink" and "Sixteen Candles," the teen romcom (Romantic / Comedy) "Love, Simon," which is based on the 2005 novel "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda," is now playing at the Orinda Theatre.

"Love, Simon" is an important film as it is the first coming-out film distributed by a major film studio (Fox 2000 Pictures) that is rated PG-13. The studios have released previous gay coming-out movies in the past few years, such as "Moonlight" (2016) and "Call Me By Your Name" (2017), but both were rated R. The PG-13 rating will give more teens an opportunity to see "Love, Simon."

The story centers around Simon (Nick Robinson from the television sitcom "Melissa & Joey") who is dealing with coming out. He soon befriends another young man online from his high school who is struggling with the same issues. Although they both have not revealed to each other who they are, their friendship and support grows.

When the protagonist in the movie, Martin (Logan Miller, "The Walking Dead") finds out Simon's secret, he begins blackmailing him. The film has all the right elements: a solid script with humor, meaning and a positive message for the movie-going audience. The casting is spot on with several very talented young actors (Kathrine Langford, "13 Reasons Why"), Alexandra Shipp ("X-Men: Apocalypse") and Keiynan Lonsdale ("The Flash"). Some strong supporting roles with Golden Globe winner

Jennifer Garner ("Alias") and Josh Duhamel ("Transformers") as Simon's supportive parents. When Simon's dad has a discussion with his son about being gay, it will bring a tear to your eye.

In the movie a Ferris wheel is used as a metaphor that "Life has its ups and downs" but when is the right time to get on or off? "Love, Simon" is a charming crowd pleaser which was evident at the press screening when the teens in the audience cheered and applauded numerous times throughout the movie. Go see "Love, Simon."

The movie is rated PG-13 for thematic elements, sexual references, language and teen partying. The total running time is 1 hour and 49 minutes.

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