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International film showcase features two excellent murder mysteries

By Sophie Braccini



The International Film Showcase features one French and one Italian film this month. Not available on any other platform, these two diverse murder mysteries will bring suspense and intellectual pleasure into movie lovers' homes.

Lise, 18, is "The Girl with a Bracelet" in the French film directed by Stephane Dumoustier. The teenager lives in an affluent neighborhood near the seaside. She wears a bracelet - not the charming type on her wrist, but a monitor on her ankle -- as she is accused of having murdered her best friend and is on house arrest pending trial.

Most of the movie takes place within the confines of the courthouse. As the director described it in an interview he wanted his film to be close to what really takes place in such settings today, but his primary objective was to depict doubt - what it's like to be a parent of a teenager whom you have to trust, while

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accepting that there are parts of their lives that escape you and that you might never understand.

Lise, played by remarkable newcomer Melissa Guers, has always denied being the culprit of the murder, but she remains aloof and almost incapable of sharing emotions. Day after day more incriminating evidence is collected against her, yet there is no definite proof. The battle between the prosecutor and Lise's lawyer is tensed, suspenseful but not overly theatrical.

The parents' disarray is expressed beautifully by actors Roschdy Zam and Chiara Mastroianni. The father is strong but his armor at times cracks, and the mother confesses her powerlessness to the judge. The director takes the audience step-by-step toward the truth but leaves the teen's mystery intact.

The Italian movie, "The Invisible Witness" directed by Stefano Mordini, is also a murder mystery, but of a completely different type. It is not as much Italian as the French movie is French. The convoluted plot itself, the original dramaturgy, the rhythm, could be American.

It is a highly effective movie that leads the spectators through many rebounds and turns at a fast pace. Adriano Doria (Riccardo Scamarcio), a very successful young businessman is accused of murdering his mistress. She is found dead in a locked hotel room where he is with her, slightly injured. No one else could have entered or exited the room.

Virginia Ferrara (Maria Paiato), an attorney who has never lost a case, is sent to him to save Doria, just a few hours before his arrest. Between the two, a game of lies and truths begin to uncover the mystery and devise a strategy. Who is good, who is bad - and finally, who is who and who did what are the many questions where answers are hidden in a clever maze. There is an interesting battle of wits on a timer that will entertain the spectators.

Both movies can be accessed on the IFS site for a fee. Details can be found online at <http://internationalshowcase.org/>

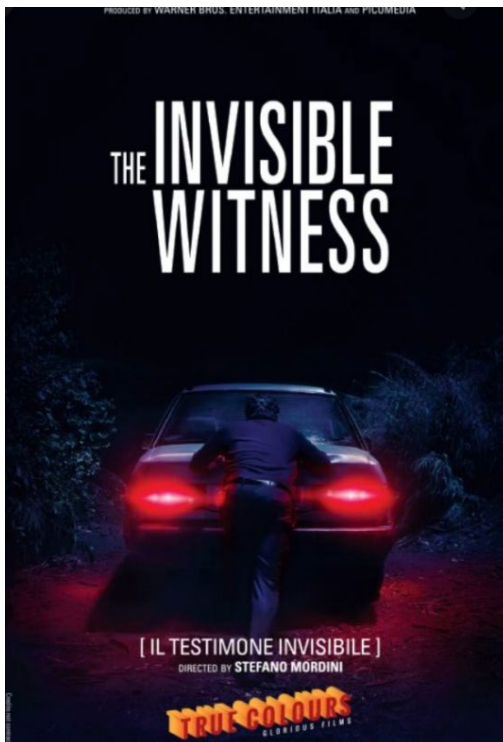


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