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'The Weasels' Tale': a gift from Argentina celebrates 10 years of IFS

By Sophie Braccini



CYNICAL. CHEATING. WICKED. ADORABLES.



GRACIELA BORGES OSCAR MARTÍNEZ LUIS BRANDONI MARCOS MUNDSTOCK CLARA LAGO NICOLÁS FRANCELLA

THE NEW FILM BY THE ACADEMY AWARD® WINNING DIRECTOR FOR "THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES"
THE WEASELS' TALE
 DIRECTED BY
 JUAN JOSÉ CAMPANELLA

Image provided

Ten years ago Jo Alice Canterbury from Orinda and Efi Lubliner from Lafayette invented a local movie distribution system out of their common love of foreign films: the International Film Showcase. This December, they are celebrating 10 years of presenting monthly foreign gems to the community by offering a free viewing, online, of the Argentinian thriller/comedy "The Weasels' Tale (El cuento de las Comadrecjas)" by Oscar-winning director Juan José Campanella.

Mara Ordaz was a legendary movie star in her time. The Argentinian actress was one of the only two foreign actresses to win an Oscar. Now in her late 70s, the elder diva lives in the decaying glow of her past glory, in a property that, like her, used to be magnificent but is showing the marks of old age. She lives with three male companions: her husband, a former second tier actor, an old screenwriter and a former director. Their peaceful life is disturbed only by their daily bickering and bantering, and the killing of weasels that are pestering their chicken coop; until two unscrupulous real estate developers set their eyes on their property. Thus begins a life-size chess match, with many surprising twists and turns, until the very end.

This movie is Campanella's 11th production and bares the traits of the director's mastery. "The Weasels' Tale" has none of the darkness and complexity of "The Secret In Their Eyes" that earned Argentina its second

Oscar in 2009. This movie is humorous, ironic, irreverent, daring at times, with a veil of darkness coming from the frailty of the main protagonists' old age. But if they are old and sometimes vulnerable, the ancient folks are not defenseless. In fact the audience will discover in them resourcefulness, sometimes even deviousness, that is nothing but quite invigorating, especially to a mature audience.

The acting of all the protagonists is world class. Graciela Borges, as Mara, plays her own role somehow. She was crowned one of the greatest Argentinian actresses of all times. She made her debut at age 14 in 1955 and has enjoyed a long acting career. She plays with such humanity the fallen star who has retained all the narcissism of her past status. She is at the same time unbearable and touchingly vulnerable. The trio of older gentlemen around her are priceless. Barbara and Francisco, the two young protagonists hold their own on par with the rest of the cast.

The movie is an ode to aging without compromising any of one's fighting spirit, whatever it might cost.

This beautiful film is a fitting gift to the community from the IFS. Lubliner and Canterbury say that it is not easy to find good foreign comedy that will appeal to an American audience, and they are sure that this one will. Every year the duo of Lamorindans go to the Palm Springs film festival to see as many as four foreign movies a day and get to meet directors and distributors from all over the world. They relish this decade of cinematographic adventure during which they have built a solid network in the industry and brought gems to the community at the Orinda Theatre.

Now, of course, all is online and attendance on the little screen has not been equivalent to the great following the IFS built at the Orinda Theatre over the years. Lubliner and Canterbury nonetheless decided that the anniversary had to be celebrated and this is why "The Weasels' Tale" is offered online for free to those who send an email to Efi@edcsystem.com to ask for a free pass. The offer is valid during the entire month of December.

The epic Taiwanese movie "Raining in the Mountain" is also available online at <http://internationalshowcase.org/>

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