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## A Spotlight on Artistic Excellence: California Independent Film Festival begins Nov. 9 in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Photos provided

On Saturday, Nov. 11 the festival offers a free morning viewing of "E.T." on Orinda Theatre's big screen. Lubliner believes there is nothing that compares with the experience of watching a movie on the silver screen and he hopes that parents will take that opportunity and offer it to their children.

Lubliner describes the movies that he and his team have chosen as high-quality crowd pleasers, not avant-garde artsy films. They can nonetheless be thought provoking, such as the three double features offered - something rarely done in this country. The first double feature couples the documentary "Sean Connery vs. James Bond" with "The Hill," Connery's favorite film. The second double feature combines the documentary about Maurice Chevalier, "A Straw Hat in Hollywood" with the movie "Gigi" featuring Leslie Caron with Chevalier. The third double feature connects two documentaries that are extraordinary tales of two women, one a very young Mongolian girl who wants to become an Eagle Huntress, while the other is an accomplished mountaineer in search of meaning in "Beyond the Summit."

Music will also be heard during the festival. "Il Boemo," a Czech movie in Italian, tells the true story of Czech composer Josef Mysliveček in 18th century Venice. The festival director said that since "Amadeus" he had not seen a movie like this. "Piano Forte" is set during the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw where the best young pianists from around the world showcase their virtuosic talent. The Israeli movie "Karaoke" is a bittersweet comedy about a couple in their late 60s who meet a glamorous neighbor who is going to shake their world. The projection will be followed by a karaoke experience offered to the movie goers in the Orinda Theatre lobby. Finally, in the musical genre, the festival will once again present a marvelous singalong version of "Grease." Lubliner says that this is going to be an annual event as people really enjoy it. Last year, 200 to 300 attended, singing -- and some even dancing.

Several films from France are presented at the festival. The opening night features "Driving Madeleine," a true treasure of a movie featuring French singer and actress Line Renaud, now 94 years old, playing the role of 92-year-old Madeleine who is driven from the house she loves to a retirement community where she will end her life. The entire movie is about the taxi drive that will take unexpected turns down memory lane. The taxi driver is played by Dany Boone, who is in real life Renaud's spiritual son. Because of Renaud's age, and because of her long life in show business and fighting for feminist causes, this film has the feel of a testament; a sweet and tender farewell to the public she loved and who loved her so much.

Another great film from France will be shown during the festival, "Full Time," a poignant thriller with Laure Calamy about a hard-working woman trying to make her way in a society that is very harsh to the disenfranchised. It is one of the amazing portraits of women presented in the festival along with "LA Civil" taking place in Mexico and "Gyeong-ah's Daughter" from South Korea.

There are many other fantastic films to be seen during the eight days of the festival. You can get a pass for the entire festival, or part of it, or also to buy individual tickets. The program is available online at [www.caiff.org](http://www.caiff.org) and includes trailers for all the films as well as links to buy tickets.

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