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Kiwanis Fundraiser



From left: Aidan Mahaney (20) and Augustas Marciulionis (3) Photo Tod Fierner

Success continues to breed success for Randy Bennett and the Gaels

By Jon Kingdon

With a streak of 16 straight years making it to the post-season, (17 in total), a No. 5 seed the last two years in the NCAA tournament along with five West Coast Conference Coach of the Year honors, Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett, starting his 23rd season leading the Gaels, is able to keep things in perspective.

Bennett reacted with a shrug when informed that Saint Mary's was the favorite to win the WCC and even chosen by one analyst to make it to the NCAA final four. "Teams change because players are different, but this is not unfamiliar territory for us," Ben-

nett said. "We've been picked to win the league before and whether we're picked or not, it doesn't matter, but the point is valid though it isn't affecting anything. It's all about getting better and our team goals are pretty high. There are going to be challenges and it's going to be hard to get it done so all we can do is to bring it every day and that's our mental thought process, though we are getting a little bit more national attention."

This is a team with an interesting mix of youth and experience made up of 10 freshmen and sophomores and five juniors and seniors. However, four of

the sophomores had significant playing time last season led by guards Aidan Mahaney and Chris Howell, forward Joshua Jefferson, and center Harry Wessels. "The most comforting thing for me is that most of our guys know our system so we've been able to move pretty fast as far as teaching, putting stuff in and advancing," Bennett said. "Our leadership's intact with our older players like Alex Ducas, Mitchell Saxen and (Harvard transfer/redshirt) Mason Forbes. It's actually a pretty good balance this year and that's the way you want it."

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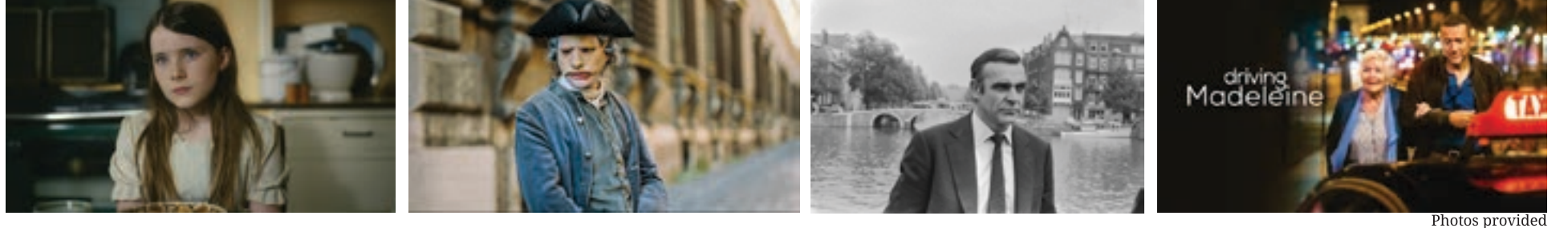
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NOV 9 - 16, 2023

RETURNING TO THE ORINDA THEATRE

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

By Sophie Braccini



The California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) 25th edition starting this week at the Orinda Theatre is quite simply a quality cinematic extravaganza, featuring many great films and documentaries. It is a platform for showcasing diverse and creative voices of independent filmmakers from around the world.

CAIFF will feature over 25 films coming from 14 different countries; nine documentaries; and 14 Bay Area premieres. The program created by Efi

Lublinter, Jo Alice Canterbury and Lucinda Boyle is all about the festival's commitment to bringing fun, amazing quality storytelling and events like no other. From the opening night with the delightful French film, "Driving Madeleine," to the Irish closing film, "The Quiet Girl!" - Oscar finalist for Best International film - the festival is a dense stream of films and events for all audiences, including families.

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.

Lublinter 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.

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