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By Sophie Braccini



Annemarie Dueringer portrays lovely Louise. Photo provided Annemarie Dueringer was lovely when she was young; the Swiss actress who is playing Louise in the upcoming International Film Showcase screening of "Lovely Louise" at Orinda Theatre is still amazingly charming in her late 80s, obviously as strong as the character she portrays. "Lovely Louise" is an endearing bittersweet comedy, but don't get fooled by the title; Louise is not as lovely inside as she is outside, and the frail woman has more than one trick up her sleeve.

In the movie directed by Bettina Oberli, Louise and her son André are living a peaceful and somewhat mediocre life together, frozen in time, and mostly devoted to the reminiscence of Louise's budding Hollywood career that she gave up to take care of André, played by Stefan Kurt. The lovely sepia picture is smashed to smithereens with the arrival of Bill (Stanley Townsend), a character who first appears to be one of Louise's fans.

The three main characters, starting with Louise, are cast to perfection, but André's transformation needs special mention. It could be shown in any acting class under the title: How to go from dull to seductive, or How to show the transformation of a character from half-dead to vibrant.

To an American audience, the Swiss-German film may run at a pace that can be a bit frustrating at times. Audience members should take the opportunity to relax and let the slower pace of life win them over. Enjoy this movie for what it is: a poignant slice of life, bittersweet but hopeful, that leaves no unpleasant after taste, just a gentle smile and the desire to dance through life following a lighter beat.

"Lovely Louise" will play at the Orinda Theatre for one week beginning Sept.19. For showtimes, visit http://lamorindatheatres.com. This showing is part of the International Film Showcase that screens distinguished foreign films each month that have been highlighted at festivals or abroad, and have never been commercially released in the area; some will never be available to rent or download. For more information about the showcase, visit http://internationalshowcase.org/.

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