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## One Week Showing of 'The Miracle of Bern' in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

A very positive and emotional film, "The Miracle of Bern (Das Wunder von Bern)" by director Soenke Wortmann, which opens April 17 at the Orinda Theatre, is set in 1954 Germany - a country still very much affected by World War II. It is a tale of redemption and rebirth. Two stories intertwine: The German national soccer team is on its way to the World Cup while a father returns home after 12 years in a Siberian prison camp.

The movie is built on a historical backdrop. In 1954 Russian authorities released the last German prisoners of war. Three million of them were captured at the end of WWII. Russians considered them responsible for the atrocities that were committed by the Wehrmacht against Russian populations in the Soviet Union. The soldiers were sent to forced labor camps, like Russian political prisoners. The Soviet authorities estimated that 300,000 soldiers died in the camps while German estimates were 1 million.

When Richard Lubanski returns home, he is a disconnected man who tries to regain his place and authority as the head of the family. Of course, things have changed. His wife, Christa, is managing a cafe and has been able to raise and feed her family. His daughter, Ingrid, and son Bruno are strong-willed teenagers. His second son, Matthias, was born a few months after he left. He never knew

he existed.

Matthias, 11, is a sweet kid passionate about soccer, and he is a huge fan of Helmut Rahn, a talented but turbulent soccer player known as "The Boss." Rahn is selected to the national team and soon leaves for Bern, Switzerland, where the World Cup will take place. Rahn has chosen Matthias as his mascot.

As the story unfolds, Richard almost loses ground with his family and with the society around him as his incomprehension and his inability to communicate settles over the household. Christa does not appear in many scenes, but she is a pivotal character, understanding and compassionate.

Meanwhile, the German team is plagued with doubts and difficulties, and has to battle its own demons. An important part of the movie is the moment when a supporter says, "We lost the war; we will lose the final also."

There is no need to be a soccer fan to be deeply touched by this film. A father estranged from his family manages to find his way back into their hearts when he finally opens up and shows the depth of his suffering. A sports team galvanizes a whole country as it shows everyone the path to regained pride.

Released in Germany in 2003, the film was an enormous commercial success. It accurately captures the atmosphere in Europe during the '50s as it rises from ruin. The actors are solid. Louis Klamroth, who plays young Matthias, is excellent, and Peter Lohmeyer, who plays Richard, is his father in real life and a well-known German actor.

The film will open for a one-week engagement beginning April 17 at the Orinda Theatre as

part of the International Film Showcase. For information, visit [lamorindatheatres.com](http://lamorindatheatres.com).

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

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