

# 'Two Lives' a Fascinating and Dark Movie

By Sophie Braccini



Actresses Juliane Köhler and Liv Ullmann star in "Two Lives." Photo provided

This month's International Film Showcase in Orinda features "Two Lives" ("Zwei Leben"), which portrays the cruel destiny of people crushed by historical events beyond their control and the inhumanity of a totalitarian regime. The film, based on true events, is skillfully crafted and constructed – a noir mystery where glimpses into the past peel away layer after layer the lies that are covering a terrible truth.

The story begins during the occupation of Norway by Nazi Germany during World War II, when a Norwegian girl, Ase Evensen, falls in love with a German soldier who later dies on the Eastern Front. She gives birth to a little girl, Katrine, who is taken away by the occupying forces to be

raised in a Lebensborn orphanage set up by the Nazis for foreign-born Aryan children. In the 1940s, hundreds of such children were taken from their mothers, many of them ending up in East Germany behind the iron curtain. The film is set in 1990 after Germany's reunification. A law firm intent on gaining compensation for these victims of deportation seeks Katrine, who escaped East Germany and reunited with her mother in adulthood. As one young lawyer's inquest develops, an even darker picture begins to emerge.

This German drama was written and directed by Georg Maas, based on real facts and a novel by Hannelore Hippe. It's an unbelievable story of manipulation, betrayal, and murder,

and of the Stasi – the secret police agency of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

The movie is gripping and played with remarkable talent, especially by the two main actors, Juliane Köhler (Katrine) and Liv Ullmann (Ase), who gives a touchingly restrained and sensitive performance. There are a few weaknesses in the plot; some elements are not well explained or completely plausible, but it is nonetheless enthralling.

The visual beauty of the movie is also worth noting. The scenes set in the 1940s are filmed in mute tones with splashes of red; the present day is filmed in a magnificent Norwegian countryside, wave-battered and wind-scoured, streaked with rain and snow.

The themes include guilt, resilience, the supremacy of love above all else, and the power of destiny. German filmmakers continue to courageously explore the darkest hours of their country's past, from Nazism to the Stasi.

"Two Lives" will open Aug. 29 for at least one week at the Orinda Theatre, the only Bay Area venue showing this year's Oscar finalist from Germany.

## Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

## Two Local Blood Drives Address an Urgent Need

Submitted by Sara O'Brien



**American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross and the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church are partnering for a blood drive from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6 at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane. The drive comes at a time when the Red Cross has a great need for donors to help prevent a blood shortage. Right now blood products are being distributed to area hospitals almost as quickly as donations are com-

ing in, maintaining the urgent need.

"The need for blood is constant," said Sara O'Brien, Red Cross Northern California Blood Services communications manager. "Patients are depending on generous blood donors to roll up a sleeve and give blood to prevent a shortage." One person who counted on blood being available is Adriana Aboumrad, a senior at Saint Mary's College who had leukemia as a child and is currently in remission. Her mother, Leanne, says it was the community of donors who really helped Adriana to get through her surgery and recovery.

While walk-ins are welcome, donors may save time with an appointment. Visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and insert sponsor code Moraga925.

Local residents can also donate blood at the Second Annual City of

Lafayette Blood Drive on Monday, Sept. 15. The Red Cross blood mobile will be parked outside the city offices at Desco Plaza, 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Call Administrative Assistant Dana Anderson for more information and to set up an appointment: (925) 284-1968.

"Without the countless number of people who donate blood, I wouldn't be graduating college this spring," said Aboumrad. "Donating blood truly saves lives and one day it could save yours."

## Lafayette Little League Hits Home Run for ALS

Submitted by Matt Chaney



Photo provided

In 2008, Lafayette Little League began a philanthropic program to support the Golden West Chapter (GWC) of The ALS Association (ALSA) and a Lafayette resident with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The program, called Runs For ALS, allows LLL teams and families to pledge a monetary value for each run their team scored during the regular season. The typical pledge is 50 cents per run.

In the first five years LLL generated just over \$25,000 through Runs For ALS. This year they have raised the bar. The league has collected and is donating \$10,000. "There are really not enough words or ways to express the gratitude for this level of support from our community," said GWC-ALSA board of directors member Matt Chaney. "This donation will help fund the

GWC to continue their world class effort to find a cause, treatment and cure for this horrific disease through their national research program."

In addition to funding research the GWC also provides care services to ALS patients and families throughout 85 percent of California and is a leader in local and national advocacy efforts. The GWC was given a four star rating by Charity Navigator in 2013 and continues to be one of the top organizations fighting ALS on all fronts.

"Thank you Lafayette Little League teams, families, board of directors and especially Craig Bocks for the continued support of Runs For ALS and the efforts to bring an end to this debilitating disease," said Chaney. "Together you are making a difference."

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