

'Lost Illusions' – how great literature can give birth to excellent entertainment

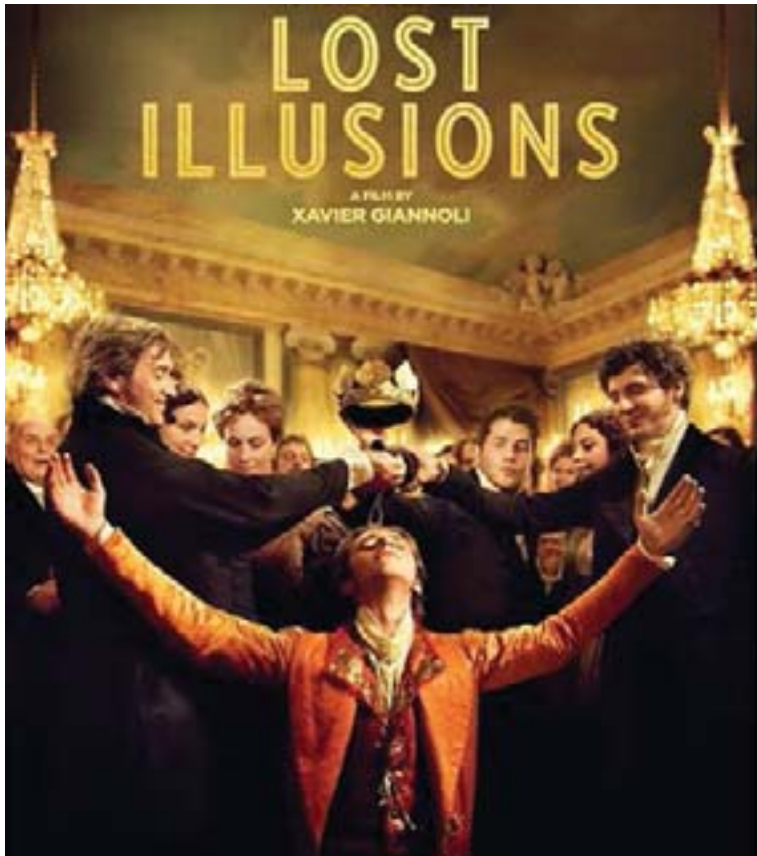


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By Sophie Braccini

Honoré de Balzac wrote "The Human Comedy" during the first part of the 19th century in

France. There, without any indulgence and with great sharpness, he painted a changing world where capitalism was emerging, where social classes were intermingling in a big post revolution maelstrom, where those who had the guts and not too many scruples could reap the benefit of a changing world order. It was an exciting time, it was a cruel time. It was the time of youth like Lucien de Rubempré, the hero of the movie "Lost Illusions" presented on Aug. 26 at the Orinda Theatre for a week. The French movie with English subtitles has all the ingredients of the novel and makes for supreme entertainment, with many elements of reflection about our time, as the human comedy of today may play on a different stage, but the characters are the same.

Rubempré is a romantic young man who dreams of becoming a published poet. He feels he is vegetating in his small provincial town. His only door into the sophistication he craves is Madame de Bargeton, an aristocrat married to a rich

but rustic old husband. She and Rubempré become lovers and when she escapes to Paris and her family, he follows suit. The young man is thrown without preparation in a complicated world in which social codes evade him. Soon cast away from his patroness he has to fend for himself and finds an outlet for his wit in writing for controversial liberal publications. The gifted young man soon makes the choice to master the rules of that world full of deceitfulness and manipulation and starts his own social climb, at the expense of his conscience. But the enemies he made during his ascension will use his vanity to summon his demise.

The times described here are that of the beginning of capitalism. Profit, fakes and pretense are leading the dance. Industrialists and bankers are the growing power that will soon take on everything. Investments are made in liberal publications that are still legal and proliferating, and financial corruption reigns. For the non-aristocratic and poor per-

son who wants to succeed, compromise is the inescapable step.

Some players in the Human Comedy are pure. Some are redeemed by real talent, or by love. Most will not survive and the naive will perish.

The actors cast in the main roles are delightful. The innocent, the rotten, the hypocrite, the righteous are portrayed perfectly. The cinematography is beautiful, the old Paris, the palaces, the wretched quarters, the places of pleasure, the costumes, all add to the eyes' pleasure given by the film. It is a long movie, two and a half hours, but the rhythm is such and so much is happening that time flies watching it. Long after the movie ends, the characters of the story stay with the spectator. It is hard to remain untouched by this dive into the roots of our capitalistic world.

"Lost Illusions" will run at the Orinda Theatre for one week starting Aug. 26, brought to Contra Costa County by the International Film Showcase, a Lamorinda nonprofit. Tickets at Orindamovies.com

Community Open House at Lafayette Community Garden, Aug. 28



Submitted by Janet Thomas

The Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center is celebrating its 11th year with a Community Open House from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 28. The event is free and will feature inspirational speakers: Jim 'Doc' Hale will share fascinating information about the people who lived on this land for centuries before the 1800s; and a beekeeper from Mt. Diablo

Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

Janet Thomas at the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center

Beekeepers will talk about the amazing nature of bees and art of beekeeping.

In addition to the speakers, there will be guided tours of the garden, information on raising chickens, master gardening, family crafts, edible treats, iced tea and lemonade, and an opportunity to walk a labyrinth and see the garden's Miwok Village.

Garden members will be on hand to answer gardening questions and show off a variety of gardening methods and practices including hinged

covers that prevent critters from eating crops, vermiculture (worm composting), mulching, a butterfly garden, deer resistant plantings and so much more.

If you have questions, you can call (925) 946-0563.

1,000 backpacks distributed during Backpack Giveaway

Submitted by Barry Behr

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley made a donation of 100 school backpacks including school supplies for family members of the Monument Crisis Center of Concord, and on July 30 Kiwanis Club members assisted the staff distributing 1,000 backpacks to

underserved youth in Contra Costa County. The Club would like to thank the members of the community for supporting its fundraising activities during the year, allowing the Club to provide contributions and assistance for those in need.

For further information about the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, visit <https://moragavalleykiwanis.org>



Photo provided

Moraga Lions' Achievement Awards presented



Stanley: Ray Casabonne, Len Lyford (winner), Stephanie Brown (parent), Joseph Lyford (parent)



Saint Perpetua: Ray Casabonne, Moraga Lions; Wyatt D'Amato, winner; Crystal D'Amato (parent)



Saint Perpetua: Ray Casabonne, Moraga Lions; Dominic Silvestri (parent), Kyra Silvestri (winner), Melissa Silvestri (parent)



Joaquin Moraga: Jamie McLeod, (parent), Dan Hagan, Moraga Lions Stella McLeod, winner; Matt McLeod (parent)



Joaquin Moraga: Tami Pearson (parent), Sophie Pearson, winner; Mike Pearson, (parent), Dan Hagan, Moraga Lions

Submitted by Ray Casabonne

The Moraga Lions at the end of the 2022 school year gave its annual Achievement Awards to the follow-

ing students at local middle schools: Joaquin Moraga, Saint Perpetua School, Stanley, and Orinda. Joaquin Moraga – Sophie Pearson, Joaquin Moraga – Stella McLeod

Saint Perpetua – Kyra Silvestri Saint Perpetua – Wyatt D'Amato Stanley – Len Lyford OIS – Ava Ranzal

OIS: Sydnie Souza (teacher), Diane Bode (teacher), Mary Ranzal (parent), Ava Ranzal (winner), Megan Natal (asst. principal), Dan Hagan (Moraga Lions), Noana Pinto (parent), Celeste Pinto (winner), Susan McGill (teacher), Michelle Reese (counselor)

Photos provided