



MARIE HEURTIN (MARIE'S STORY) is a Second Quarter 2017 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Here's Kino Ken's review of that dvd film.

17 of a possible 20 points

****** of a possible *******

**France 2014 color 95 minutes subtitled live action feature biopic drama
Escazal Films / France 3 Cinema / Rhône-Alpes Cinema Producers: Denis Carot,
Serge Hayat, Sophie Révil**

**Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance
(j) designates a juvenile performer**

Points:

- 2 Direction: Jean-Pierre Améris***
- 1 Editing: Anne Souriau**
- 2 Cinematography: Virginie Saint-Martin***
- 2 Lighting: Olivier Godaert***
- Special Visual Effects: Jean-François Michelas**
- 1 Screenplay and Dialogue: Jean-Pierre Améris, Philippe Blasband**
- Script Supervisor: Delphine Régnier**
- 2 Music: Sonia Wieder-Atherton***

- 2 Art Direction: Vincent Dizien Production Design: Franck Schwarz
Costume Design: Daniele Colin-Linard*
Makeup: Emmanuelle Brechet*
Props: Emmanuel Galtier**
- 2 Sound
Supervising Sound Editor: Olivier Walczak*
Sound Effects: Christophe Bourreau*, Juliette Heintz*, Hubert Teissedre*
Dialogue Editor: Anne Gibourg*
Sound Mixers: Emeline Aldeguer*, Laurent Lafran*
Sound Remixing: Emmanuel Croset*
Casting: Tatiana Vialle***
- 2 Acting**
- 1 Creativity**
- 17 total points**

**Cast: Isabelle Carré* (Sister Marguerite), Ariana Rivoire (j)* (Marie Heurtin),
Brigitte Catillon* (Mother Superior), Noémie Churlet* (Sister Raphaëlle),
Gilles Treton* (Monsieur Heurtin, Marie's father), Laure Duthilleul*
(Madame Heurtin, Marie's mother), Martine Gautier (Sister Véronique),
Patricia Legrand (Sister Joseph), Sonia Laroze (Sister Elizabeth), Valérie Leroux
(Sister Blandine), Fany Buy (Sister Marthe), Noémie Bianco (Sister Anne),
Eline De Lorenzi (Sister Clothilde), Tiphaine Rabaud Fournier
(Sister Marie-Ange), Sandrine Schwartz (Sister Sandrine), Dimitri Radochevitz
(Old Doctor), Christophe Tournette (The priest of Mazière), Stéphane Margot
(Laborer), others**

**MARIE HEURTIN (a.k.a. MARIE'S STORY) is a 2014 French film biopic about
the relationship between Sister Marguerite, a hearing nun, and Marie Heurtin, a
young deaf and blind country girl who had not received any oral or signing
education. At the age of twelve, Marie was delivered by her father to the Larnay
Institute in France, a residential convent school for deaf girls. Being blind as well
as deaf, the newcomer represented more than a mild challenge for staffers.
Additionally, she behaved in a feral manner, lacking all social etiquette.**

Extremely egoistic and utterly incapable of communicating with caregivers, Marie had to be kept segregated from peers. She was a threat and an alluring curiosity to them, precipitating a situation which could easily deteriorate into bullying or worse.

Sister Marguerite Germain, a tubercular young woman with no prior educational background or experience working with deaf children, felt it incumbent to volunteer her services as language instructor for Marie. Assisting in that regard would be colleague Sister Raphaëlle, herself deaf, who had considerably more insight into the inner world of non-hearing juveniles.

It was this ancillary individual who made clear to Marguerite the necessity of first civilizing a barbarian before attempting linguistic overtures. The sooner, the better. Educating a neat, disciplined, clean, attentive child would be much easier than trying to communicate with a totally rebellious, unbridled, dirty savage.

How this was brought about forms the core of director Jean-Pierre Amèris's film. Huge expenditures of patience, colossal physical struggles, and periodic waves of uncertainty brought about ultimately an intimate bond, both emotional and tactile, between Sister Marguerite and involuntary pupil.

Love itself was insufficient to bridge the gap between their worlds. Much more was required. Time appeared to favor the recalcitrant partner in a race between life and death for the soul of a severely alienated child.

Marguerite fortunately had access to the writings of Abbé Charles-Michel de L'Épée, a pioneer in using sign language for communication with the deaf. He had opened a school for them in Paris as early as 1760, paving the way for Catholic involvement with the surd. His teaching method with modifications became Marguerite's guide. However, L'Épée had not worked with blind-deaf individuals. Resources used to train Helen Keller and Laura Bridgman seem to have been unknown and unavailable to the French nun attempting to break through a barrier of silence to sightless Marie.

Her story is told simply and chronologically, heavily emphasizing connections between nature and Marie's intact senses of touch, smell, and taste. It was significant Marie came out of a rural loving family who had never withheld affection from its youngest member. This kept her open to receiving messages

from the outside world. Even when messengers were strangers whose intentions couldn't be comprehended.

Various scene setups in this French production resemble those used by William Gibson in his play about Helen Keller, *The Miracle Worker*. A family unable to cope with uncouth aggressive child, mealtime battles, temper tantrums, resistance to being instructed by an outsider, childish rapture when left to experience water, balkiness at sharing a recreational prop – all these replay similar situations used in Arthur Penn's 1962 black-and-white film of Gibson's drama. *MARIE'S STORY*, however, benefits from a far more attractive shooting location in Alpine foothills, splendid color cinematography, and a completely focused performance by authentically deaf teenager Ariana Rivoire as Marie.

Sites employed as settings are much hillier and more rural than could be easily found in the current Poitiers region where the actual Larnay Institute is located. So scenery is counterfeit. Yet gorgeous.

In the final third of this drama, enforced separation of its two main subjects, first by Sister Marguerite's illness and then by her death, brought about understanding and acceptance of life's endless cycle by Marie. These abstract certainties pulled her into a final outreach, one affirming the spiritual dimension's sovereignty over death and corporal existence, a cardinal tenet of her mentor's religion. Before their parting, a family reunion brokered by Marguerite allowed Marie's parents the chance to see for themselves her progress in communication ability, personal hygiene, spelling, and understanding social relationships. Though the girl couldn't accompany Marguerite beyond the grave, she had attained to a maturity where trust and affection might be mutually shared with kinfolk as well as adults at her convent school. An epilogue informs audiences those gifts of compassion and tutelage would not be limited solely to members of the Heurtin clan.

Making this potentially saccharine tale palatable and involving despite a predictable plot line is actress Isabelle Carré's commendably restrained, moving performance as Sister Marguerite. She never descends to stereotypical responses or eccentric, irrelevant mannerisms in an arduous, taxingly combative role.

Matching her is novice film actress Ariana Rivoire, who embodies the essential sensuality of Marie in one memorable circumstance after another, managing to keep it earthy, yet devoid of any lustfulness. At age nineteen when the film was made, Rivoire brings lively creative intelligence and vigorous dynamism to her part, fusing her own character with Marie's quite winningly.

Cinematography is both appropriate and refreshingly varied in utilizing close-ups, tracking shots, and overheads.

Crisp editing keeps action advancing comfortably from start to end, with no annoying lags or spasmodic leaps.

Meaningful dialogue is conveyed as frequently by signing as speech, a remarkable achievement in itself.

Even more attractive are impeccable sound effects recording, optimal clarity of lighting, and a classical music score alternating between cheery buoyancy and wistful melancholy. The score is a perfect fit for Marguerite's peaks and troughs as she battles Marie's isolationism, ravages of her own lung impairment, and enforced separation from cherished student.

Due to extremely intense grapplings and considerable intimate violence, MARIE HEURTIN is unsuitable for viewing by preadolescents. Mature teens aged sixteen and older may find it compelling. The film makes a worthy European counterpart for adults to THE MIRACLE WORKER.

DVD bonuses on this Film Movement release are a theatrical trailer of some two minutes in duration and a twenty-seven minute making-of documentary featurette with telling insights into the personalities of two chief actresses and the manner in which certain key scenes were photographed.

Along with the main feature of MARIE HEURTIN (MARIE'S STORY), this dvd includes the short film MAADARAANEH (MOTHERLY). Below is Kino Ken's review of that film.

8 of a possible 20 points

** of a possible *****

Iran 2013 color 13 minutes subtitled live action short drama Rooz Film
Producer: Vahid Nikkhah Azad

**Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance
(j) designates a juvenile performer**

Points:

- 1 Direction: Navid Nikkhah Azad**
 - 1 Editing: Navid Nikkhah Azad**
 - 1 Cinematography: Majid Sabagh Behrouz**
Still Photographer: Sina Rashidi
 - 1 Lighting**
 - 0 Screenplay: Navid Nikkhah Azad**
Music
Art Direction
 - 1 Locations**
 - 1 Makeup: Jalal Amiri Marand (Makeup Designer), Sahar Mohammadi**
 - 1 Sound Editor and Mixer: Ehsan Afsharian Sound Recordist: Nima Ezzat**
 - 0 Acting**
 - 1 Creativity**
- 8 total points**

Cast: Shirin Bina (Mother), Sajjad Deyrmina (Amir), Safoora Kazempour (Stranger), Marieh Mashallahi (Taraneh), Arshia Sadeghi (j) and Amirali Sedaghati (j) (Boys)

MAADARAANEH (MOTHERLY) is a short color live action drama from Iran. The 2013 theatrical release has good intentions, but not particularly impressive achievements. Its thematic point – internal beauty of character triumphs over external cosmetic appearance – is hardly a debatable proposition. Though politically quite safe.

With two romantic leads depicted as handicapped individuals and a third principal supposedly blind, the movie leisurely strolls through a public park over the course of some thirteen minutes during which a blind mother ferrets out information about her son's fiancée.

Her primary concern: Is she a beauty?

His main worry: Will Mom approve his choice of a wife?

The girl herself, sightless as her prospective mother-in-law, is torn between fear of rejection by Amir's parent and inadequate time to audit tapes of lessons made by her lover for the next day's classes.

Of course, mother and Taraneh are agreeably brought together for a conversation by a seeing third party roped into acting as go-between. Amir finds them occupying the same park bench as he approaches in his wheelchair and draws the obvious conclusion they harmonize.

A pleasant trifle, by no means representative of profoundly affecting dramas Iran has previously created and exported. It's poorly subtitled, with lettering undecipherable all too often due to speed of dialogue and insufficient contrast in background. While content is suitable for all ages, the defect cited above will definitely deter all but the hardiest adult viewers of foreign fare.