

Carrying a torch in 'Wild Mountain,' enlightening 'Louis'

Wild Mountain Thyme (8/10): 102 minutes. PG-13. Rosemary Muldoon (Emily Blunt) has been carrying a torch for seemingly oblivious neighbor Anthony Reilly (Jamie Dornan) all her life. Lots of things made this movie stand out, not the least of which are the gorgeous Irish countryside, the outstanding cinematography (Stephen Goldblatt), and the wonderful music (Amelia Warner). The acting is outstanding; these are characters who are believable, aided by a terrific script. The two leads are greatly helped by the supporting players like Christopher Walken, who plays Anthony's father, Tony; Jon Hamm, who plays Anthony's American financial genius cousin, Adam — who also becomes smitten with Rosemary — and Dearbhla Molloy, who plays Rosemary's mother, Aiofe. All the characters are realistic, but Aiofe really captured me. Blunt plays Rosemary as a strong woman who pursues her man with a vengeance without being emasculating, which is a treat. Anthony, for his part, seems almost doomed by his alexithymia. Dornan captures this brilliantly. Walken's performance deserves an Oscar nomination, at least. In theaters and on demand: wildmountainthymemovie.com/watch-at-home/

Your Honor (8/10): 10-episode TV series. This is a remake of the 2017 Israeli TV series "Kvodo," with Bryan Cranston in the title role as a judge whose son gets involved in a car accident that causes mon-

umental problems. Filled with tantalizing tension. Showtime.

Room 2806: The Accusation (8/10): Four-episode documentary telling the shocking story of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who was the head of the International Monetary Fund and a favorite to be elected Prime Minister of France. He was accused of rape in 2011 by a Sofitel Hotel housekeeper and this goes deep into his background and the grisly details of the entire affair giving equal time to the alleged victim. Netflix.

Louis van Beethoven (7/10): 120 minutes. NR. Presenting a view of Beethoven that is at odds with my original perception of him, it is enlightening despite the flaws. It presents Beethoven at three periods of his life, as a nine-year-old prodigy (Colin Putz), as a fledgling young man in his late teens (Anselm Breggott), and as a man, deaf and near the end of his life (Tobias Moretti). All give fine performances. It jumps back and forth and this is somewhat disconcerting because there are no comfortable segues, but the main story is of him as a teenager, socially unsure, but confident of his talent. The film spends a lot of time on a romance that emphasizes his lack of experience. One of the flaws of the film is that Mozart is played by Manuel Rubey, who is 40 years old and looks older. If Beethoven and Mozart did meet, which is historically uncertain, it would have been in 1787, when Beethoven was 16 and Mozart was 30. The

At the Movies with Tony Medley



imagined meeting would have been far more believable if the actor playing Mozart looked much younger than he does in this film. In German. Prime.

Ava (5/10) 96 minutes. R. What the hey? Jessica Chastain plays the titular character, but it is just a bunch of nonsense. There are a lot of fights, with the diminutive Chastain (5'3") putting down not just one or two men, but in one scene, all alone, she bests what looks like the entire Pittsburgh Steelers defensive team with a few offensive linemen thrown in. The fights are brutal but totally absurd. As in most of these things, our protagonist, Ava, takes bone-breaking, killing blows, but bounces up time and again to keep fighting. Not so her adversaries, however. She puts dozens of them down for the permanent count, emerging only with a couple of scratches on her face. Director Tate Taylor, who ably directed the conversion of "The Girl on the Train" (2016) to the screen, does a very good job from a weak script that needs some sort of factual basis. As it is, this is nothing but action with no explanation or meaning. Prime.

Mank (3/10): 131 minutes. R. This is a story of the writ-

ing of the script for the Orson Welles (Tom Burke) magnum opus, "Citizen Kane" (1941). And its purpose is to minimize Welles' contribution and give credit to Herman Mankiewicz (Gary Oldman). Director David Fincher has made no secret of his disrespect for Orson Welles. But the film is no credit for Mank because it pictures him as a drunken, egotistical bore. In fact, Welles took Mank's unworkable, unfilmable gargantuan 250-page script and whittled it down to what many believe is a classic. According to Robert

Carringer, author of "The Making of Citizen Kane" (1985), who had access to the full script files at RKO, "The full evidence reveals that Welles' contribution to the 'Citizen Kane' script was not only substantial but definitive.... Major revisions begin as soon as the script passes into Welles' hands."

This new film itself is almost unwatchable. "Mank" is dark (thanks to the black and white cinematography) and Mank is a hateful, obnoxious slob. Fincher wanted the film to look as if

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PUPPETEERS and clown puppets entertain family audiences as they have for 58 years in Los Angeles.

Marionettes

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pet theater with contributions ranging from \$5 up to some really, really generous gifts, said board treasurer and Brookside resident Vivian Gueler, BBMT can now, with the goal met, return from pure survival mode to concentrate on grant writing and educational goals for 2021.

Over the past year, BBMT has lost approximately \$500,000 in revenues due to the COVID-19 closures, and the theater company continues to miss \$30,000 in revenue per month. But for now, at least, the basic needs of the theater have been met. The doors (or curtains) remain open, and now the focus can turn to the mission of the puppet theater, which is to educate, celebrate and rejuvenate puppetry and the allied arts.

Programming changes

In addition to online programming instituted at the beginning of the pandemic lockdowns, such as pre-recorded performances, music, arts and crafts and other programs

for kids, the puppet theater has introduced the Marionette Mobile.

The mobile is a custom, retrofitted box truck that folds out into a stage area. It is designed to bring socially distanced performances and ice cream delivery to outdoor spaces throughout Los Angeles, when public health guidelines allow.

For now, through Thurs., Jan. 7, you can view some of the marionette magic at the Santa Monica Pier. Visitors can take a free, outdoor stroll and peek through the windows of the merry-go-round to see a retrospective of BBMT's history.

The Bob Baker Marionette Theater was founded in 1963 by Bob Baker and Alton Wood when they transformed a run-down scenic shop at 1345 W. 1st St. into a puppet theater. In 2009, the building was named a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Recently, the theater has moved to Highland Park. Bob Baker passed away in 2014 at the age of 90.

For more information, visit bobbakermarionettetheater.com.



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