

The Divine Order

Cert 12A Switzerland 2017 96 mins

Crew

Director Petra Volpe
/ Screenplay
Cinematography Judith Kaufmann
Film Editing Hansjörg Weissbrich
Original music Annette Focks

Cast

Marie Leuenberger Nora Ruckstuhl
Maximilian Simonischek
Hans Ruckstuhl
Rachel Braunschweig Theresa
Sibylle Brunner Vroni
Marta Zoffoli Graziella
Bettina Stucky Magda

Synopsis

Switzerland, 1971. Cocooned from the political and sexual revolutions taking place in many other western countries, Nora endures the domestic tyranny of life in her small village. She's bored with housework, and wants to get a job, but her husband forbids it, and it's against the law for her to go against his wishes.

That's when Nora begins to notice all the small ways in which men are allowed to control the women in their lives, and the right to vote for women suddenly seems increasingly necessary...



Booking Information

Distributor: eOne

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Reviews

Its hard to believe that three years after the car strikes that would go on to inspire Nigel Cole's *Made In Dagenham*, women in Switzerland were only just being given the vote. Petra Biondina Volpe's similarly crowdpleasing film - the title of which neatly refers to the battle faced by women with both church and state - celebrates the gradual move towards suffrage through the fictional lives of a young family. It is far from trapped in time, however, also exploring some of the factors that arguably still stand in the way of global equality today.

...Volpe keeps the mood light for the most part.....but underneath the humour, there are serious points being made about the way that men, particularly in the past, held the keys to a woman's freedom. It is the men, not the women, that get to vote on whether women's voices should be heard - a reminder of how men still retain many positions of power of women to this day. It also serves as a nudge to men about the dangers of everyday sexism, the attitudes that come to Hans and the male members of his clan as naturally as breathing.

The characters may be a bit on the 'standard issue' side but the performances fill them out admirably. Leuenberger makes Nora's gradual awakening to gender issues feel like the sun coming out on a dreary day, brimful of unexpected warmth. Nora isn't a trailblazer in the expected sense, but that's exactly what makes her special. She represents those 'everywomen' - determined, uncelebrated souls who discovered - possibly only after taking it - that every movement begins with a first step.

Amber Wilkinson, Eye for Film, February 2018

....No prior knowledge of Switzerland's political evolution is necessary to guess the conclusion of *The Divine Order*, as its feel-good narrative telegraphs much of what's to come. Yet thanks to its director's sturdy guidance and Leuenberger's fine lead performance as Nora, whose resolve is coloured by doubt and trepidation, the film never feels stilted or preachy; rather, it radiates an infectious admiration for the courage shown by its heroines in the face of immense obstacles.

Nick Shager, Variety, April 2017 (at the Tribeca Film Festival)

Film Facts

- ★ The film had its international premiere at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival. It was Switzerland's submission for the 90th Academy Awards Best Foreign Language Film, but it wasn't short-listed.
- ★ Although Swiss women were granted the right to vote in 1971, it wasn't until 1981 that Swiss voters approved an equal rights amendment to their constitution. And, until 1985, women still had to legally obtain their husband's approval if they wanted to get a job.

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