

DORCHESTER FILM SOCIETY
2024/25 SEASON



ROSE

(Language: Danish, French, German, English)

Director: Niels Arden Oplev

UK Release: 2024

Running time: 106 minutes

Presented by Dorchester Film Society, 13 November 2024

“Based on the true story of director Niels Arden Oplev’s own two sisters, *Rose* is a heartwarming movie about love and devotion --- particularly sisterly love. It stars Sofie Gråbøl, a well-known Danish actress, as Inger, who suffers from schizophrenia.

Ellen (Lene Maria Christensen), Inger’s sister, and her husband, Vagn (Anders W. Berthelsen), are taking Inger to Paris on a bus tour in the summer of 1997. Once the threesome boards the bus, Inger proceeds to announce that she suffers from schizophrenia, immediately alarming half the people in the group, including Andreas (Søren Malling), whose son, Christian (Luca Reichardt Ben Coker), is instantly drawn to Inger.

After a rocky beginning, including Inger insisting upon a burial for the dead porcupine she finds at a German rest stop, the tour group arrives in Paris. It soon becomes apparent that the tour guide’s French is limited, so to everyone’s surprise, Inger takes over proving her fluency in the language. She even manages to save the day when they arrive too late at the D-Day Museum in Normandy.

But Inger has an ulterior motive for being in Paris. She has in her possession a letter from her first love, Jacques (Jean-Pierre Lorit), whom she believes still lives in the city. When Christian locates him, Inger, Ellen, Vagn and Christian embark on an adventure that will change their perceptions of love.

Oplev, who also wrote the screenplay for *Rose*, has created a truly wonderful film around this eight-day journey. The characters are richly drawn, and the actors do a splendid job bringing them to life. Gråbøl is especially effective as Inger, who realizes she suffers from mental illness, but still wants a life worth living. It’s a marvelous, zany performance --- one that definitely frustrates Ellen and Vagn. But Christensen and Berthelsen are up to the task. Vagn’s patience is beyond admirable and poor Ellen’s exasperation is understandable.

DORCHESTER FILM SOCIETY
2024/25 SEASON



The entire ensemble is fantastic in their efforts to illuminate Oplev's moving familial depiction of two sisters and their deep love for one another. *Rose* is surprisingly humorous and distinctly poignant --- a beautiful tribute to his own siblings.

David: Based on the true story about a woman diagnosed at the age of 20 with schizophrenia, *Rose* is a Danish film certain to capture the hearts of any serious filmgoers. Anchored by the absolutely wonderful portrayal by Sofie Gråbøl as Inger, we follow her on a trip to Paris with her sister Ellen (Lene Maria Christensen) and brother-in-law Vagn (Anders W. Berthelsen).

Many travellers smartly choose to ride a guided tour bus when visiting a foreign country. The group of vacationers in *Rose* had no idea what they were in for with Inger in their midst. Shortly after their bus takes off for Parisian sights, Inger announces she is a schizophrenic, and before long she is explaining her sexual exploits with an ex-boyfriend to a pre-teen lad named Christian (Luca Reichardt Ben Coker).

Unfortunately, Christian is the son of Andreas (Søren Malling) who is also on the bus with his wife, Margit (Christiane Gjellerup Koch). The father immediately adopts a hostile attitude towards Inger --- there's one in every crowd.

When the travellers arrive at a museum featuring an exhibit about D-Day in Normandy, it is closed for the day and the managers refuse to open it despite the desperate pleas of the people. However, Inger speaks fluent French and convinces the museum keepers to open the facility, thus salvaging the day for all. She becomes an instant hero, even to Andreas, if only temporarily.

The relationship that builds between Inger and Christian makes for heartwarming comedy/drama. Ellen, as Inger's caretaker, along with help from her husband, is believably tolerant of Inger's frequent odd behaviour. Besides, it was their idea to bring Inger along on the trip.

The entire cast is perfect. But it is Gråbøl's marvellous performance that makes the film so special. Writer/director Niels Arden Oplev's screenplay hits all the right notes. He imbues Inger with frequent moments of clarity and normalcy that make her condition that much more pitiable. And Inger's search for her ex-beau Jacques (Jean-Pierre Lorit) --- who resides in Paris and may have contributed to her mental state with their breakup --- is logically staged.

**DORCHESTER FILM SOCIETY
2024/25 SEASON**



Oplev was at the helm of Scandinavia’s highest grossing film of all time, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2010). He knows how to extract top performances from a cast.

Rose is not to be missed.”

Jeanne and David Kaplan, *Kaplan vs. Kaplan*, November 10, 2023

“Danish film-maker Niels Arden Oplev, director of the original *Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* with Noomi Rapace, has written movingly about the true story behind his very personal new film. It is inspired by his sister who has schizophrenia, perhaps triggered by heartbreak she experienced in her personal life as a teenager working in her gap year in France, but who in middle age went on a cathartic healing journey back to that country with her sister and brother-in-law.

Sofie Gråbøl (star of the Scandi noir TV hit *The Killing*) plays a fictional version: Inger has schizophrenia and lives in residential care; she is about to take a bus trip to France with her caring, if nervous, sister Ellen (Lene Maria Christensen) and Ellen’s bullish, good-natured husband Vagn (Anders W Berthelsen). It is a tense experience, because Inger still talks frankly about the invisible creature called “Goldensun” who speaks to her and encourages her to self-harm, and also because she also has a habit of making loud, sexually inappropriate comments, to the uptight and heartless disapproval of a mean guy on the bus who would prefer not to be anywhere near this person. But this man’s sweet 12-year-old son, inevitably more innocently compassionate, makes friends with Inger.

Unfortunately, the film is saddled with treacly liberal good taste, and watching Gråbøl’s elaborate impersonation of someone with schizophrenia, freaking out a bad person on a bus ... well, it’s impossible not to think of Lars von Trier’s satire *The Idiots* from 1999, about an anarcho-situationist prankster cult of people pretending to have cerebral palsy in public places to confront and discomfort the caring bourgeoisie. For all that it is based on a true story, this film’s characterisation and narrative are massaged into a kind of sentimental drama. It rings false.”

Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*, 24 June 2024

DORCHESTER FILM SOCIETY
2024/25 SEASON



“Inger (Sofie Gråbøl), a schizophrenic woman, embarks on a bus trip from Denmark to Paris with her sister, Ellen (Lene Maria Christensen), and Ellen's husband, Vagn (Anders W. Berthelsen). Along the trip, she bonds with Ellen while befriending a young boy, Christian (Luca Reichardt Ben Coker), whose father, Andreas (Søren Malling), treats her with contempt.

Writer/director Niels Arden Oplev has woven a heartfelt story about sisters who go on a journey together. Their journey is not only a physical one, but also an emotional and psychological one that displays their unconditional love. When Inger introduces herself on the bus, she bluntly informs everyone that she's schizophrenic. Ellen explains to the other passengers that Inger has a tendency to share every thought that crosses her mind. She even says out loud that she wishes she could strangle Ellen. One of the passengers, Andreas, judges Inger for her disorder, but Christian and Ellen don't. Fortunately, Rose sees and treats her as a human being, warts-and-all. Kudos to Oplev for showing empathy toward her. She comes across as intelligent, honest, sad, angry, regretful, witty and surprisingly funny at times, so she's hard to fit into a box and very complex which makes her all the more relatable. She has both likable qualities and unlikable qualities.

Oplev has a wonderful handle on exposition because he doesn't reveal right away where Inger's emotional trauma comes from nor does he resort to the use of flashbacks too often. Her trauma has something to do with the painful memories of her ex-lover, Jacques (Jean-Pierre Lorit), from a few decades earlier. There's a somewhat contrived, but nonetheless heartfelt subplot where Inger briefly gets to reunite with Jacques with the help of Christian. The dialogue during those moments sounds too "on-the-nose." Another contrived scene occurs when Inger convinces the staff at a museum through emotional blackmail to re-open the museum after closing so that Andreas can fulfill his dream of visiting it. She falsely claims that he's schizophrenic which is played for laughs, but it's not very funny. In another scene, Andreas gets into trouble accidentally while he flies into a fit of rage. Those issues aren't systemic, though, and they don't diminish that film's emotional resonance either.

Sofie Gråbøl gives a genuinely heartfelt and raw performance while finding Inger's emotional truth. Much of the film's poignancy comes from her performance more than it does from the screenplay. Her emotionally generous performance opens the window into Inger's heart, mind and soul very wide while concurrently allowing the audience to empathize with her. Writer/director Niels Arden Oplev moves the film along at just the right pace while rarely going

**DORCHESTER FILM SOCIETY
2024/25 SEASON**



too slow or too fast. The scene that feels the most rushed is when Inger confronts Jacques out-of-the-blue. Moreover, the scene where Andreas gets into trouble has awkward editing when it transitions to the next scene without any mention of what had happened or how he had gotten out of trouble. He's among the few characters in the film who doesn't have much of a character arc and seems more like a one-note caricature. Fortunately, *Rose* remains a poignant and cathartic journey grounded in humanism, a truly special effect. At a running time of 1 hour and 46 minutes, it's a warm, bittersweet and captivating story about unconditional love.

Avi Offer, *NYC Movie Guru*, November 13, 2023