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Author(s)	Bob Salmaggie
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LA SALAMANDRE

BOB SALMAGGIE: A neat little movie has slipped unceremoniously into town. It's called LA SALAMANDRE, The Salamander, and while it is spoken in French, with subtitles of course, it is actually Swiss made. Are you ready? Now that in itself is surprising, because the film industry in Switzerland is almost as rare as the cuckoo clock is common.

The director of LA SALAMANDRE is Alain Tanner, a forty two year old film critic no less, who decided that he was tired of seeing bad movies. Isn't everyone? And so he wrote and directed his own. He's done rather handsomely. LA SALAMANDRE is an engrossing commentary on a rebellious young working girl, a modern misfit who constantly rejects her gross proletarian life style, because it stifles her spirit and sense of freedom.

Rosamund, as she is called, has been accused of trying to murder her nagging old uncle with his own Army rifle. Months after the scandal has died down, and Rosamund has gone free, two writers approach her with intentions of doing a screenplay on the incident. But slowly both men find themselves falling in love with the enigmatic Rosamund. So much so that they are unable

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to complete the script. In the offing, they discover that even as Rosamund is being crushed by the gnawing pressures of her petty workaday world, so too are they being obliterated in the bleak, limited vistas of their own narrow lives.

Director Tanner gives his characters some really interesting lines and observations of social substance. And the people are always doing little inconsequential things that are so much a part and parcel of everyday life. He's very good at that.

Boulogniere, petit and a Julie Harris look alike, is completely disarming as Rosamund. She is a marvelous actress. To be sure, Tanner has been influenced, and not lightly either, by such as Godard and Truffaut, in approach and characterwise. His movie bristles with anger and impatience, but also brims with optimism. He's a director with something to say and something to offer. For an offbeat, odd shaped cinema treat, you might try LA SALAMANDRE.

This is Bob Salmaggie.