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VANCOUVER IFF '93

FINLAND



LA VIE DE BOHEME

Finland, 1992, 100 minutes

Director: Aki Kaurismäki **Production Company:**
SputnikOy / Pyramide Prods. / Films A2 / Swedish
Film Institute / Pandora Film / Canal Plus
Executive Producer: Klaus Heydemann
Producer: Aki Kaurismäki **Screenwriter:** Aki
Kaurismäki **Cinematographer:** Timo Salminen
Editor: Veikko Aaltonen **Leading Players:** Matti
Pellonpää, Evelyne Didi, André Wilms, Kari
Väänänen, Christine Murillo, Jean-Pierre Léaud
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With his acerbic sense of humour, mordant wit, and his ability to mix the bittersweet with the tragicomic, Aki Kaurismäki has garnered a worldwide reputation as one of contemporary cinema's most brilliant clown-poets. *La vie de bohème*, loosely based on the same story as Puccini's opera (Kaurismäki calls it his "revenge" on Puccini), shows him at the height of his powers; it's a funny, sardonic picaresque that follows the misfortunes of three down-and-out artists living the not-so-romantic bohemian life in Paris. Rodolfo, a refugee from Albania and a "great" painter, Marcel, a "great" French poet, and Schaunard, a "great" Irish composer, meet by chance while chasing the ever-elusive franc and avoiding creditors. They become drinking companions and fast friends. Enter Mimi and Musette, two country belles lost in the maelstrom of the big city. This being a "melancholy comedy which, incidentally, is actually a melodrama" (Kaurismäki), romance soon gives way to tragedy. . . .

Shot in evocative black-and-white with direction and décor that range from the surreal and the kitschy to the sublime, *La vie de bohème* is vintage Kaurismäki.

Selected Filmography: *Hamlet Goes Business* (87), *Ariel* (88), *The Match-Factory Girl* (89), *I Hired a Contract Killer* (90)