

# Portland International Film Festival 2015

## French Language Films

*Compiled by Dennis Stevens  
from the official schedule of the PIFF*

Festival Webiste: [www.nwfilm.org/festivals/piff/](http://www.nwfilm.org/festivals/piff/)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Locations</u>
Alléluia	Belgium/France	2/7 2/13	9:30pm 8:30pm	Cinema 21 Fox Tower

Updated for the Internet era, Du Welz's remake of the classic *The Honeymoon Killers* is based on the true story of '60s serial killers Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, who met women through personal ads, moved in, and then murdered them. Here, lonely Gloria meets conman Michel through an online dating service and quickly falls for his charms. When she discovers he's swindled both her heart and her wallet, she agrees to help him seduce other women just so she can be with him. Gloria's obsession with Michel turns their relatively innocent hustle into something much darker when she jealously murders his subsequent love interests. This violent and frenetic tale of sex, lust, and obsession plays with genre conventions with wicked delight. In French with English subtitles.

Belle and Sebastian	France	2/8 2/13 2/16	12:30pm 6:00pm 12:30pm	Moreland Theater Moreland Theater Whitsell Auditorium
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Set during World War II in the French Alps, *Belle and Sebastian* is based on a beloved 1960s French TV series featuring resourceful young Sebastian and the giant mountain sheepdog he calls Belle. Sebastian is a lonely six-year-old boy who dreams of the day his mother will return from America—the place that his adoptive grandfather tells him she's gone. He finds needed companionship with "the beast" that local farmers are convinced is killing their sheep—an enormous sheepdog that quickly proves anything but dangerous, instead becoming the boy's best friend and protector. With Nazis rooting out the Resistance fighters helping Jewish refugees cross the border, Belle and Sebastian soon prove their courage.

Felix & Meira*	Canada	2/6	8:45pm	Whitsell Auditorium
		2/8	1:00pm	Cinema 21

Winner of the Audience Best Canadian Feature at the Toronto International Film Festival, *Felix & Meira* is set in Montreal's Mile End neighborhood, characterized by a mixture of hipsters and Hasidism, which coexists amicably but independently. When Meira, an Orthodox Jewish wife and mother with an undercurrent of rebelliousness, meets Félix, a middle-aged atheist-loner adrift grieving the recent death of his estranged father, Félix hopes her religious devotion will provide insight into his loss. Though she rebuffs him at first, a mutual, slow-blooming affair takes shape that will present Meira with a difficult fork in the road: remain within the community she has always known or pursue an uncertain future outside of it. In French, English, and Yiddish with English subtitles.

Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*	Israel	2/10	5:45pm	Whitsell Auditorium
		2/12	5:30pm	Cinema 21

"Gett" is Hebrew for a divorce decree—something that is very difficult to get in Israel, where rabbinical courts hold jurisdiction and mutual consent is required. This riveting drama follows the five-year struggle of Viviane Amsalem (Ronit Elkabetz) to break from her loveless marriage to husband Elisha (Simon Abkarian). A powerful examination of the roles of men and women in a religious society. *Gett*, the winner of two Israeli Film Awards including Best Film and Best Supporting Actor, is an absurdist journey into the enigmas of a couple and a society caught between tradition and modernity. This year's Israeli submission for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. In Hebrew, French, and Arabic with English subtitles.

The Liberator	Venezuela	2/12	8:30pm	Fox Tower
		2/15	6:00pm	Cinema 21

Arvelo's lush film tells the epic personal story of Venezuelan military and political leader Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), who played a crucial role in freeing Latin America from the grip of the Spanish Empire. The caddish aristocrat-turned-revolutionary fought more than a hundred battles—never conquering, but "liberating"—that led to the founding of the first union of independent nations in Hispanic America. "Bolívar manages to rile the troops with passionate speeches on freedom, equality, and dignity—themes that resonate today be it in Ferguson, Missouri or Ukraine. . . . The writing here is as refined as it is moving."—*Los Angeles Times*. In Spanish, English, and French with English subtitles. This year's Venezuelan submission for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar.

Marie's Story	France	2/6	5:45pm	Fox Tower
		2/8	6:15pm	Moreland Theater

Inspired by the life of Marie Heurtin, *Marie's Story* is a playful, inspirational, and moving emotional journey between teacher and student set in the 19th century French countryside. Fourteen-year-old Marie arrives at a school for deaf girls run by Catholic sisters. Born deaf and blind and trapped ever since in a world of darkness and silence, she is, at first, wild, disheveled, and nearly unreachable. But the idealistic Sister Marguerite feels a deep and instant need to free her from her sensory prison. Featuring fierce performances by newcomer Ariana Rivoire as the courageous young woman struggling to connect to the world and Isabelle Carré as her idealistic mentor, *Améris* has fashioned a story that awakens the heart and the senses.

On the Way to School	France	2/8	4:00pm	Whitsell Auditorium
		2/14	4:00pm	World Trade Center

Plisson's César-winning documentary extols the true worth of getting, and getting to, an education. Shot in Kenya, Patagonia, Morocco, and the Bay of Bengal, the film follows the perilous journeys of four children on their ways to school: Jackson crosses the savannah on foot, avoiding elephants; Carlito rides on horseback across lonely plains and rushing rivers; Zahira treks over treacherous Atlas Mountain passes; Samuel, in his antediluvian wheelchair, is pushed by his brothers over sand dunes and through swamps. While the breathtaking cinematography reveals the splendor of their homelands and the dangers of these voyages keep you on the edge of your seat, at the heart is the children's resilience and their unstoppable yearning to learn and improve their lives. Ages 10+.

Timbuktu	Mauritania	2/7	6:45pm	Whitsell Auditorium
		2/10	6:00pm	Moreland Theater

Not far from Timbuktu, now ruled by religious fundamentalists, mild-mannered herdsman Kidane lives peacefully in the dunes with his wife and daughter. In town, the people suffer, powerless, from the regime of terror imposed by the Jihadists; music, laughter, cigarettes, even soccer have been banned. Every day, the new improvised courts issue tragic and absurd sentences, and when Kidane accidentally kills a neighbor, he is forced to confront the chaos head on. Set in the early days of the jihadist takeover of northern Mali in 2012, Sissako's drama delivers a warm and often humorous condemnation of religious intolerance. This year's Mauritanian submission for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. In French, Arabic, and Bambara with English subtitles. Ages 13+.

Tu Dors Nicole	Canada	2/7	1:30pm	Cinema 21
		2/9	6:00pm	Moreland Theatre

Infused with absurdist humor and a sense of ennui, Lafleur's film hones in on young adults at existential crossroads. Twenty-something Nicole is adrift after college, working a dead-end summer job in her small Quebec hometown and spending evenings with her best pal, Véronique. When her older brother Remi unexpectedly returns with his bandmates in tow, disrupting the girls' wheel-spinning summer, it becomes clear to Nicole that something must—and will—change. Shot in luminous black and white and infused with a sultry melancholy, Tu Dors Nicole captures that liminal stage where the fading yet familiar attachments of youth still seem far more appealing, precious, and real than the limitations of the grown-up world. In French with English subtitles.

A Year in Champagne	US/France	2/10	6:00pm	World Trade Center
		2/15	6:00pm	World Trade Center

Only sparkling wine produced within the boundaries of the Champagne region is truly "Champagne." Wine importer Martine Saunier leads us on a tour of six Champagne makers to see how they make their product, from small independent producer Saint-Chamant to the illustrious houses of Gosset and Bollinger. Most Champagne is not just the product of a specific year and Signature house styles are creations that happen behind closed doors and in the miles of cellars beneath the countryside. Pull back the curtain and see how the people of a cold, tough land with a grim history of wars and conflict triumph in producing the drink of joy, seduction, and celebration. In Champagne, they don't sell Appellations, they sell Brands, many of which have been famous for 200 years. In English and French with English subtitles.

Short Cuts 4: Fresh French Shorts	2/14	1:00pm	Whitsell Auditorium
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*Note: all of the following short films will be shown at the one date, time and location above.*

Aïssa	France
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Aïssa is Congolese, residing illegally in France. She claims to be a minor, but the authorities believe she is over 18, which means she could be deported. In order to establish whether or not she can remain in the country, a doctor gives her a physical examination.  
9 Minutes

5 meters 80	France
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This delightful animated fantasy pairs animal life with an aquatic sport to beguiling effect. 5 minutes.

Cargo Cult	France
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It's the middle of WWII and inhabitants of a remote Pacific island are captivated by mysterious cargo gods who appear to drop good fortune by the crateful. Inspired by true events. 12 Minutes

Mr. Hublot                      France/Luxembourg

Mr. Hublot finds his reclusive life turned upside down when he overcomes personal obstacles to do a good deed.

12 Minutes

The Audition                France

François, a young actor, goes to a casting call that proves surprising.

14 Minutes

The Runaway                France

Laktar, a youth worker in a home for juvenile delinquents in Marseille, accompanies Sabrina, one of his wards, to court where she will be tried for an earlier crime. He sets off confidently, convinced that their efforts will be rewarded.

22 Minutes

Ogre                            France

A house on the beach. Inside, an overweight man remains confined, observing from behind his curtains the young girls in their swimsuits. He waits for the night.

15 Minutes

Millionaires                Belgium

All her life, Christian and Ludo's mother played the same numbers in the lottery but never won a single penny. After her death, the two brothers decide to continue the family tradition.

16 Minutes