



PRESS STORIES

Publication: The Journal News (Westchester, NY)
Date: March 29, 2007
Author: Kevin Canfield
Title: **Cinema Français returns to Purchase**

To fans of French movies, Claude Brasseur is something of a marvel. In a career that has spanned 50 years, Brasseur has appeared in more than 100 films and been nominated five times for Cesar awards, France's answer to the Oscar.

So it's no wonder that the organizers of the third annual Focus on French Cinema festival are thrilled to welcome Brasseur for this year's event starting tomorrow at Purchase College's Performing Arts Center.

"For him to come and join us for the weekend is extraordinary," says Renee Ketcham, co-chair of the festival, which is put on by the Alliance Francaise of Greenwich along with Purchase College and movie distributor French Feeling Films.

If Brasseur's appearance - he'll be on hand for tomorrow night's screening of his latest movie, "The Family Hero" - is the event's headliner, there are plenty of other reasons why the festival deserves a look.

The first film, tomorrow at noon, is "Bon Voyage," a grown-up comedy about Parisians trying to beat the Nazis while at the posh Hotel Splendide in Bordeaux. Rolling Stone magazine called the film "sexy, suspenseful fun, and gorgeous-looking to boot." French cinema stalwarts Isabelle Adjani and Gerard Depardieu star.

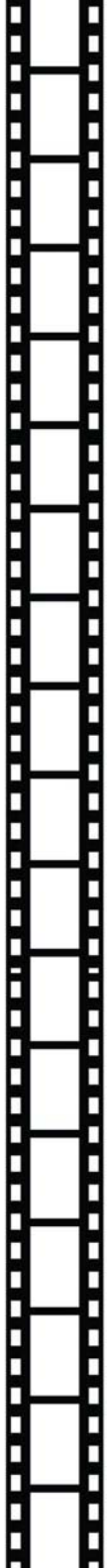
The film will be accompanied by a question and answer session with Geoff Field, a European History professor at Purchase.

"Viva Laldjerie," showing at 3:30 p.m., tells the stories of three women living in modern-day Algiers and dealing with generational conflicts and the specter of terrorism.

Michelle Stewart, a Cinema Studies professor at Purchase, and Habiba Boumlik, a French professor at the school, will lead a Q&A after the film.

Saturday's lineup includes a domestic drama ("Gilles Wife," which screens at noon), some family fare ("Call Me Elisabeth," 2:30 p.m.), a film about a thug who'd rather be an actor ("The Audition," 5 p.m., to be followed by a question and answer session with director/screenwriter/star Luc Picard) and a movie about an unusual method of dealing with intra-office standoffs ("Fair Play," 8:30 p.m., with a post-film question and answer session with director Lionel Bailliu and Purchase professor Anne Kern).

Sunday brings four more movies: "Little Jerusalem," at noon, is set in a low-income Jewish community outside Paris. "Handyman," 2:30 p.m., is about a professional slacker, and will be followed with a question and answer session with filmmaker Michel Leclerc. "A Ticket to Outer Space," 5 p.m., is a space-travel comedy - described as a French answer to "Spaceballs."





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The festival ends with "L'Enfant," 7 p.m., a big winner on the festival circuit about a young man who sells his child, then tries to get him back. Purchase professor Greg Taylor leads the question and answer session afterward.

Several of the stories have an international feel. "L'Enfant" is set in Belgium, "The Audition" is from Quebec.

"We want to have a really good mix so that the viewers are immersed in many aspects of French culture from all over the world," Ketcham says.

The complete schedule and ticket information can be found at focusonfrenchcinema.com.

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