

Days of Francophonie Festival Celebrates French Culture With Films, Performances

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French is the language of romance, and diplomacy, spoken by Napoleon, des Cartes, and Sartre and when we hear it, we almost exclusively think of France but the language of love reaches far beyond the borders of just one country, and draws in many nations to its linguistic embrace.

From Canada to Congo, French is the official language of 29 countries, and is spoken in many more, making it the world's second largest language bloc after English. French ambassador Jean de Glinasty calls it "one big family," and Days of Francophonie, which runs through the end of March, is a festival celebrating the language and francophone culture in all its forms.

Organized by the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF), a global body representing French-speaking nations, Days of Francophonie is an annual event that takes

place in cities around the globe. In Russia, this year's program promises to be particularly rich, as the festival coincides with the official Year of French-Russian Language and Literature.

An abundance of musical, literary and theater events are taking place all over the country, from poetry readings in Rostov-on-Don by Canadian-Inuit poet Josephine Bacon to a blues-rock concert in St. Petersburg by French-Moroccan rising star Hindi Zahra.

The crown jewel of Days of Francophonie, however, is the Francophone Film Festival, which runs till Tuesday in Moscow.

"This is a rendezvous that the public looks forward to, and one which has sold out the last three years," said Christine Laumond, audiovisual attaché at the French Embassy.

This year the Francophone Film Festival presents 18 French-language films (16 dramas and two documentaries) from Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, and France.

Because 2012 is the Year of French-Russian Language and Literature, the films were all chosen with literature in mind. Some films depict the lives of famous writers, as is the case in Patrick Cazal's documentary "The Tribulations of Mr. Sartre and Miss de Beauvoir on the Road to the Caucasus," a film with remarkable original footage from a 1963-1965 trip to the Caucasus taken by Jean-Paul Satre and Simone de Beauvoir. Cazal's film will be screened on Sunday.

Also of note is "I am Not Here to be Loved" by director Stéphane Brizé, who will be present for a question-and-answer session after the showing of his film on Sunday.

Francophone Film Festival runs until Tuesday. 35mm. 47 Ulitsa Pokrovka. Metro Krasniye Vorota, Kurskaya. Tel. 780-9145. www.kino35mm.ru

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