



For Immediate Release

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Focus on French Cinema, the 16th annual festival of French and Francophone film presented by the Alliance Française of Greenwich welcomed close to 11,000 viewers to the 2021 “Virtual” edition, honoring the “Cinema of Belgium” from April 21- April 30, 2021. Included in the 2021 slate were 13 newly released films including 6 U.S. Premieres as well as a fascinating selection of pre- recorded “zoom” interviews for all films with talent from the film industry.

Even with closed cinemas, canceled FFC events and a modified format in 2021 FFC Chair, Renée Amory Ketcham acknowledged that “FFC2021” had great success with the first ever virtual platform. **The 10 Films in 10 days format (Dix Films en Dix Jours)** welcomed a larger and more diverse audience due to the ability to reach out to many in the tri- state area that might not have been able to attend “in-person”. On-line **“Educational Screenings”** to both public and private schools offering Q & As with actors and directors increased the number of students of all ages to 25,000 since FFC opened in 2005.

Director of Programming, Joe Meyers noted that “there were daunting challenges and risks in putting on the first virtual Focus on French Cinema festival, so the success of April’s festival in terms of quality and numbers was doubly satisfying. After being forced to cancel last year’s in-person FFC in the early days of the pandemic, we weren’t sure what for the 2021 edition might take. But, inspired by other festivals that went virtual in 2021—especially our longtime partner Cinemania in Montréal—we entered a new world of at home film exhibition. Thanks to the dedication of the FFC team and crucial technical assistance from our friends at Cinemania—we were able to share one of the best slates of movies with a bigger audience than ever. It was especially satisfying to be able to interview many of our film artists via zoom and to share the results with the audience. We were able to record the thoughts of actors, writers and directors who might not have been able to join us in-person in a non-pandemic year. It was a special treat for me to talk with rising star, Noémie Merlant who carved out an hour for us while in the middle of making another film.”

FFC2021 announced that the **“Audience Award,”** the award for most popular film tabulated by an on-line survey this year was given to ***Summer of ’85 (Été 85)*** directed by François Ozon that Director of Programming, Joe Meyers feels is “destined to become a modern classic.” ***Summer of ’85*** was set to premiere at Cannes in 2020 and was nominated for 10 César awards.

Visit www.focusonfrenchcinema.com for photos, festival presentations and zoom interviews.

