

Juliette Binoche and Kristen Stewart are high wattage stars in 'Clouds of Sils Marioa,' one of the featured films at the Portland International Film Festival, and one of the pictures expected to get a theatrical release.

Iorld in Focus

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stakes that didn't always seem to add up, and the filmmaker employs me. Still, the story never lacks for interest. (Plays again on Wednesday Feb. 18)

"Belle and Sebastian," based on a beloved French novel and adapted from a popular 1965 television series, is built around the friendship between a motherless six-year-old boy and a mountain dog who his village treats as a threat. Set in the Alps during the German occupation ous parallels between the threats experienced by the dog and those experienced by the villagers at the hands of the Nazis, and the storytelling all around is pretty clumsy and over-simplified, even allowing Binoche. Though mostly in English, for its intention to be a family film. That said, the boy and dog are immensely likeable, and the scenery of the Alps is gorgeous. It was a huge hit in France and has the potential to please audiences here as well. (Plays an international star (not unlike heragain on Friday, Feb. 13 and Monday, Feb. 16)

And now for a couple to watch for in theaters soon:

The festival run for "71" is past, but it will be released theatrically in mid-March and is worth watching for. It stars Jack O'Connell, recognizable from the less-arresting recent film "Unbroken," as an English army recruit sent over to Belfast in 1971 at the height of the northern Ireland conflict termed "the

Troubles." More honestly than most war movies, it depicts a tangle of betrayal, divided loyalties, lies, and double-crosses that certainly charsome flashy touches that fell flat for acterized that conflict but is actually the very stuff of war. But you don't need a lesson in Northern Island politics to follow what is happening when this young soldier gets left behind, unarmed, in hostile territory. While focusing on depicting this particular story with tension and immediacy, director Yann DeMange also manages to illuminate some things that are true of all such conflicts. It's ausin 1943, the film intends some obvipicious work for a first feature film

> I expect that "Clouds of Sils Maria" will also get a theatrical run, if only because of its high wattage stars, Kristen Stewart and Juliette the film feels very French-that is, the story is very mannered and frequently solipsistic, concerned more with subtle shifts in perspective than with plot dramatics. Binoche plays self) who is at a personal and career crossroads, and Stewart plays her very capable personal assistant. Both women are excellent and the film provides a credible window into what that kind of life might be like, including the insecurities and selfdoubt that plague particularly women in film industry. In the end, though, it is a lot of talking and it's not clear that anything satisfying ever hap-

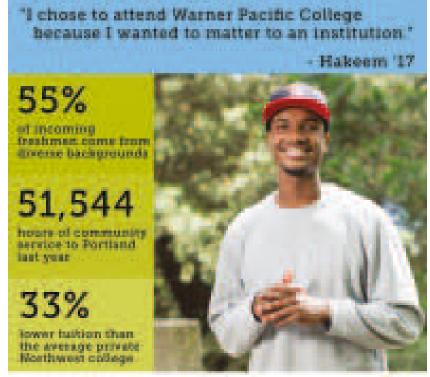
There is still a week and a half

nity to see more films from all over the world. Films will play all over the city and you can buy advance tickets on the festival's website, festivals.nwfilm.org/piff38, by

box office at the Mark Building, Portland Art Museum, 1119 S.W.

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to go, so don't miss the opportu- phone at 503-276-4310 or at the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. You can find her movie blog at





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