



...And Music

Director: Michel Lam, Canada, 2008, 75 minutes

At the Sacré-Cœur School in Sherbrooke, Quebec, music is not just a subject, it is the only subject. It infuses every aspect of education, from math to physical education. Director Michel Lam's exquisitely made documentary is filled with the gentle rhythms of life in the classroom; you can almost smell the chalk dust hanging in the air. Lam, himself an alumnus of Sacré-Cœur, returns to follow three students over the course of one year.

On the first day of school, the stillness of an empty classroom is broken by the sound of a solitary cello. But as the kids arrive from their summer holidays, the hallways begin to reverberate with sound. While older students are out of practice, kindergarten students are fitted with tiny instruments. Alexis is learning to play the violin and to ride the school bus. Rachel, sporting a mouthful of braces, listens to Shania Twain; she has little use for classical music. Anne-Catherine, between childhood and teenagehood, clings to the solidity of her cello. As the school year moves from fall, to winter, to spring, the kids prepare for the final concert, and the excitement and sadness of the year's end resounds.

Imbued with a warmth that neither sentimentalizes nor belittles its small subjects, *...And Music* is a thoughtful look at how learning an instrument informs every level of education, adding a depth of meaning and possibility.

PRECEDED BY:

The Happiness Project

Director: Christopher Mills, Canada, 2009, 6 minutes

The natural cadence of peoples' speech can sometimes carry beautiful melodies. Charles Spearin, a founding member of the rock collective Broken Social Scene, interviewed his Toronto neighbours looking for those 'accidental' melodies. He then arranged them into songs based loosely on the theme of happiness.