



LA FAMILLE BÉLIER

Spring
Season
2016

Release: 2014
Cert (UK): 12A
Language: French
Runtime: 106 mins
Director: Eric Lartigau
Writer: Victoria Bedos
Cinematographer: Romain Winding
Cast: Karin Viard, Francois Damiens, Louane Emera



Promoted as France's Number 1 film of the year, the film soars by grace of its wonderful screenplay, grounded firmly in everyday reality, dealing with issues large and small. The starting point for the humour smorgasbord is the situation comedy that is central to the narrative. This is compounded by the clever use of slapstick that evolves naturally through the circumstances. The icing on the cake is the rich poignancy that acts as a counterpoint, turning our laughter into tears.

When the film begins, we quickly understand how much the whole family relies on Paula - to translate between their silent worlds and that of everyone else. Life is chaotic in the farm house where the family lives, with communications a mix of animated sign language and Paula's verbalisations.

Paula's selection into the school choir is a major plot point and Fabien Thomasson (Eric Elmosnino), the choir master is a hoot. 'Singing is your personal septic system' he tells his students. Watch out for the scene when Gabriel (Ilian Bergala), the Parisien boy on whom Paula has a crush comes to the farm to rehearse their duet, not realizing her family is deaf. There are no shortages of surprises and the film is filled with priceless moments.

