



Xavier Dolan's *It's Only the End of the World* to be Canada's Oscar foreign-language film submission

Description

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By Jessica Wong, CBC News

3rd time 27-year-old filmmaker tapped as Canada's Oscars pick

Canada is pinning Oscar hopes on Xavier Dolan's latest film, *It's Only the End of the World*.

The drama, about a terminally ill man returning home to his estranged family, will be Canada's official submission to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences — the group behind the Oscars — for consideration in the best foreign-language film category at the upcoming awards.

The announcement was made Friday in Montreal, with 27-year-old Dolan chosen by a 23-member Telefilm Canada committee comprising government and film industry representatives from across the country.

"The film has already been a very rich experience," Dolan told media gathered in Montreal. "It's a gift."

This is the third time Dolan has been tapped as Canada's Oscar pick: he was earlier selected as the foreign-language film submission in 2009 for his startling debut *I Killed My Mother* and again in 2014 for *Mommy*.

"Back when *Mommy* was selected two years ago, we had the opportunity to talk about the film in many places and communities. It was such a journey and we're ready to embark on that again,"

Dolan said.

“There’s no doubt [this film] will move members of the academy as it has engaged thousands of movie-lovers to date,” Telefilm executive director Carolle Brabant said in a statement.



Marion Cotillard and Vincent Cassel play a married couple in Xavier Dolan’s *It’s Only the End of the World* (Photo credit: eOne)

Known in French as *Juste la fin du monde*, Dolan’s drama is based on a play of the same name by the late French writer Jean-Luc Lagarce and features a star-studded cast of French actors, including Gaspard Ulliel, Léa Seydoux, Vincent Cassel, Nathalie Baye and Marion Cotillard.

The selection of Dolan is further vindication for the young filmmaker and the movie, which was panned by a host of American critics upon its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May.

However, *It’s the End of the World* closed Cannes by winning two awards – the prestigious Grand Prix and a prize from Cannes Ecumenical Jury – and earned a spot at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this month.

“I don’t think today is an appropriate day to cry over spilled milk,” Dolan said Friday about past criticism.

“This is about what is next. Not what is gone already.”

Canada’s tradition of Francophone picks

Oscar organizers limit the foreign-language film category to non-American productions that primarily feature dialogue in languages other than English.

Hence, Canada’s choices have overwhelmingly been French, although we’ve also submitted Kim Nguyen’s French- and Lingala-language child-soldier tale *War Witch*, Deepa Mehta’s Hindi-language romantic tragedy *Water* as well as *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* and *The Necessities of Life*,

both starring main characters speaking Inuktituk.



Canadian directors whose movies have been Canada's official picks for Oscar best foreign-language film consideration include, from left, Denis Villeneuve, Xavier Dolan, Deepa Mehta, Zacharias Kunuk and Im Nguyen (Canadian Press)

Canada's past three submissions for Oscar consideration were:

- *Félix et Meira*, Maxime Giroux's French and Yiddish-language drama about an unlikely romance
- *Mommy*, Dolan's celebrated French-language mother-son drama
- *Gabrielle*, Louise Archambault's French-language coming-of-age tale about a developmentally challenged woman.

Over the years, Canada has made the foreign-language film Oscar short list seven times, most recently in 2013 for Nguyen's *War Witch*. Past contenders have also included *Monsieur Lazhar* (directed by Philippe Falardeau), *Incendies* (directed by Denis Villeneuve) and Mehta's *Water*.



Quebec filmmaker Denys Arcand is Canada's lone foreign-language film Oscar-winner. He picked up the prize in 2004 for his film *The Barbarian Invasions*, which was his third movie nominated in the category. (Photo from Getty Images)

The country's lone foreign-language Oscar winner, however, is Denys Arcand, who triumphed with 2003's *The Barbarian Invasions* after having previously been a contender for his films *The Decline of the American Empire* and *Jesus of Montreal*.

Nominations for the 89th Academy Awards will be announced Jan. 24, 2017, with the awards gala to follow on Feb. 26.

(Source: <http://www.cbc.ca>)

Category

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2. Cannes
3. Toronto International Film Festival

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