HOLLYWOODGLEE, LLC
1226 N Salsipuedes Unit C 1(805)704-5994 |https://hollywoodglee.com Larry@HollywoodGlee.com



CYNTHIA ERIVO, TARON EGERTON, AND ALDIS HODGE SHOW OFF VOCALS SINGING FAVORITE KARAOKE SONGS AT THE 35TH ANNUAL SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

VIRTUOSOS AWARD PRESENTED TO ALDIS HODGE, AWKWAFINA, BEANIE FELDSTEIN, CYNTHIA ERIVO, TARON EGERTON, FLORENCE PUGH, AND TAYLOR RUSSELL AT THE 35TH ANNUAL SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (January 19, 2020) â?? Day 4 of the 35th Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival presented by UGG concluded with a star-studded evening with the presentation of the Virtuosos Award, which recognizes a select group of talent whose noteworthy performances in film have elevated them into the national cinematic dialogue.

This yearâ??s honorees included: Awkwafina (*The Farewell*), Taron Egerton (*Rocketman*), Cynthia Erivo (*Harriet*), Beanie Feldstein (*Booksmart*), Aldis Hodge (*Clemency*), George MacKay (*1917*), Florence Pugh (*Midsommar*), and Taylor Russell (*Waves*).

The tribute, held at the historic Arlington Theatre in Santa Barbara, was moderated for the tenth year by Turner Classic Movies host and IMDb special correspondent Dave Karger, who engaged in one-on-one discussions with each of the nightâ??s honorees to take a look back at their flourishing career and recent noteworthy performances.

The one-on-one discussions were followed by a group panel discussion, also moderated by Karger. Following the conclusion of the panel discussion, Santa Barbara local and legendary actor Christopher Lloyd presented each honoree with their award.

Highlights from the evening include:

Aldis Hodge on working with Alfre Woodard in the film *Clemency*: â??As an actor and an artist, I always seem to put myself around teachers. I love to get around education and an environment

thatâ??s going to help elevate and grow me. Being around someone as masterful as miss Woodard â?? thatâ??s exactly what youâ??re going to get. Sheâ??s a fantastic actress, a fantastic scene partner, a fantastic leader. So for me, it really was a privileged education.

Awkwafina on using her real name, Nora Lum, for her on-screen credit in the future: â??I think in the beginning, Awkwafina really was someone to kind of like take the stage fright and the nervousness and the neuroses and the overthinking. But I think more and more as I grew up, I realize they are the same person. And when I see the name Awkwafina on like a chair back or a call sheet, itâ??s the name I chose for myself. That means something to the 15-year-old girl that was like â??itâ??s a great idea to name yourself Awkwafina. Which years later â?? regrettable â?? but itâ??s fine. Itâ??s an homage to that, and I donâ??t think Iâ??m ready to lose it yet.â?•

Beanie Feldstein on young girls admiring her for her role in *Booksmart*: â??Sometimes Iâ??ll just see two young girls come walk up to me and I just put my arms out, and itâ??s so fun and itâ??s so lovely. Itâ??s just a joy. We made this movie for everyone, but itâ??s a testament and celebration of young women, and we just wanted to do this generation proud because theyâ??re so engaged with the world in a way that evenâ?¦I was at that age. But I feel like young people today are invested in their society at such a young age and itâ??s so inspiring and we really wanted to celebrate that in *Booksmart* .â?•

Cynthia Erivo on getting emotional during the Sesame Street tribute at the Kennedy Center Honors: â??I think thereâ??s something so endearing about the stories that Sesame Street would tell. It included everybody. No one was excluded from something like Sesame Street. So when I was watching the montage of the things that went by, it just made me feel like a kid again. I felt like these people really wanted to include all the children in the world. No one was different, no one was apart.â?•

Florence Pugh on her performance as Amy March in *Little Women*: â??[Greta] wanted Amy to be more than just the girl that burned the book and ended up with the guy, and she was excited to maybe let people see themselves in Amyâ?¦When we made it, it felt great and lovely. Through Amy in this version, the audience finally gets to see how rough and how tough it was for women, and how clever she was for her to choose the life that she had.â?•

George MacKay on working on the film *1917*: â??Itâ??s like a play and a film together, and that process of being involved right from the beginningâ?¦we had to choreograph the entire film. We had to suss out the emotional rhythm and the pace of the entire piece because it dictated the actual length of the set.â?•

Taron Egerton on winning a Golden Globe for *Rocketman*: â??You know, Iâ??m from a really rural part of the UK. Iâ??m from the middle of Wales, and the Golden Globes feels like something that happens to other people. So to be there, to be nominated was incredibleâ?¦to win was just really wonderful.â?•

Taylor Russell on how her personal experience translated to her role in *Waves*: â??Thereâ??s a lot in my life that I think prepared me for this role. I have two brothers, and that connection is really important to meâ?¦I know what it feels like to love somebody and not *like* them. I knew what a relationship was like with a brother, so I had that and felt that with Kelvin right away.â?•

The final portion of the program was a true crowd-pleaser as Karger brought out all eight honorees for a panel discussion. The audience got a special treat when Karger asked what each personâ??s go-to karaoke song is, which then escalated to the honorees breaking out into song on stage.

Provoked by Erivo, Hodge sang a few lines of his favorite karaoke song, â??Gold Diggerâ?• by Jamie Foxx ft. Kanye West. He then prompted Erivo to sing her song, â??We Donâ??t Need Another Heroâ?• by Tina Turner. While Erivo was belting out a few bars from the song, Feldstein pretended to faint in her chair as the audience cheered for more. Egerton also volunteered to sing part of his favorite karaoke song, â??Faithâ?• by George Michael.

Other topics of discussion included favorite movies of all time, dream roles and the films that surprised them the most this year.

Following the panel discussion, actor Christopher Lloyd presented each honoree with their award. The evening concluded as the talented group of actors laughed and mingled in a VIP afterparty.

Last yearâ??s recipients of the Virtuosos Award were Yalitza Aparicio, Sam Elliott, Elsie Fisher, Claire Foy, Richard E. Grant, Thomasin McKenzie, John David Washington, and Steven Yeun.

The 35th Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival runs from January 15-25, 2020. For more information, and to purchase tickets, festival passes and packages, please visit www.sbiff.org.

About the Santa Barbara International Film Festival

The Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts and educational organization. Over the past 34 years, SBIFF has become one of the leading film festivals in the United States â?? attracting 95,000 attendees and offering 11 days of 200+ films, tributes and panels, fulfilling their mission to engage, enrich, and inspire people through the power of film. We celebrate the art of cinema and provide impactful educational experiences for our local, national and global communities.

SBIFF continues its commitment to education and the community throughout many free educational programs and events. In June 2016, SBIFF entered a new era with the acquisition of the historic and beloved Riviera Theatre. After a capital campaign and renovation, the theatre is now SBIFFâ??s new state-of-the-art, year-round home, showing new international and independent films every day. In May 2019, SBIFF opened its own Education Center in downtown Santa Barbara on State Street to serve as a home for its many educational programs and a place for creativity and learning.



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1. #SBIFF
2. Santa Barbara International Film Festival
3. SBIFF Virtuosos

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hollywoodglee