

Festival Favorite Award From 2020 Sundance Film Festival Announced

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Giving Voice Wins Audience Vote



A still from *Giving Voice* by James D. Stern and Fernando Villena, an official selection of the Docume

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **February 4, 2020**

Park City, UT â?? Sundance Institute announced *Giving Voice* as the winner of the Festival Favorite Award, selected by audience votes from the 128 features screened at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, which took place in Park City, Salt Lake City, and Sundance, Utah, from January 23â??February 2, 2020.

The Festival Favorite Award is the 29th and final recognition bestowed on this yearâ??s features, including juried prizes and category-specific Audience Awards; others were announced at a ceremony

in Park City on February 1, and a full list is available here. Runners-up and close contenders for the Festival Favorite Award â?? besides the Audience Awards per category given out on Saturday, titles that also ranked high with festivalgoers include *Boys State, On The Record, Binti, Crip Camp, The Fight, The Reason I Jump, Softie, Uncle Frank,* and *Welcome to Chechnya*.

Giving Voice, directed by James D. Stern and Fernando Villena, follows the lives of six students as they compete against fellow high schoolers from around the country in the riveting, high-stakes August Wilson Monologue Competition in New York City. As they hone their individual performances, Wilsonâ??s singular talent and artistry empower them to find their own voice and persevere in an increasingly complicated world. The film was produced by James D. Stern, Karen Bove, Fernando Villena, Schoen Smith, and Craig Piligian.



John Cooper

â??This film is a compelling and inspiring portrait of six remarkable young people as they discover their power,â?• said John Cooper, Director, Sundance Film Festival. â??Weâ??re thrilled that it resonated with audiences at this particularly exciting moment in our culture, where we see the next generation of leaders, artists, and change-makers stepping out, speaking up, and finding their voice.â?•

Runners up for the Festival Favorite, as ballots were counted, include:

Boys State / U.S.A. (Directors: Jesse Moss, Amanda McBaine, Producers: Amanda McBaine, Jesse Moss) â?? In an unusual experiment, a thousand 17-year-old boys from Texas join together to build a representative government from the ground up.

On The Record / U.S.A. (Directors: Kirby Dick, Amy Ziering, Screenwriters: Kirby Dick, Amy Ziering, Sara Newens, Producers: Amy Ziering, Kirby Dick, Amy Herdy, Jamie Rogers) â?? A brilliant former hip hop executive grapples with whether to go public about her rape by one of the most powerful men in the music industry. A gripping and profound examination of race, gender, intersectionality, and the toll sexual abuse takes on survivors and on society at large.

Other close contenders for the Festival Favorite were:

Binti / Belgium (Director and Screenwriter: Frederike Migom, Producer: Katleen Goossens) â?? Twelve-year-old Binti dreams of becoming a famous vlogger like her idol Tatyana. But when the police raid her home, and try to deport her and her dad, they are forced to flee. Together with her friend Elias she now plots the perfect plan to stay in the country. *Cast: Bebel Tshiani Baloji, Mo Bakker, Joke Devynck, Baloji.*



Crip Camp photo courtesy of Sundance Institute

Crip Camp / U.S.A. (Directors: Nicole Newnham, Jim LeBrecht, Producers: Sara Bolder, Jim LeBrecht, Nicole Newnham) â?? Down the road from Woodstock in the early 1970s, a revolution blossomed in a ramshackle summer camp for disabled teenagers, transforming their young lives and igniting a landmark movement.

The Fight / U.S.A. (Directors: Elyse Steinberg, Josh Kriegman, Eli Despres, Producers: Elyse Steinberg, Josh Kriegman, Eli Despres, Maya Seidler, Peggy Drexler, Kerry Washington) â?? Inside the ACLU, a team of scrappy lawyers battle Trumpâ??s historic assault on civil liberties. As the president separates families, blocks abortion access, expels transgender soldiers, and rolls back voting rights, these gutsy attorneys struggle to stop an unpredictable adversary with unlimited resources.

The Reason I Jump / United Kingdom (Director: Jerry Rothwell, Producers: Jeremy Dear, Stevie Lee, Al Morrow) â?? Based on the book by Naoki Higashida this immersive film explores the experiences of nonspeaking autistic people around the world.

Softie / Kenya (Director and screenwriter: Sam Soko, Producers: Toni Kamau, Sam Soko) â?? Boniface Mwangi is daring and audacious, and recognized as Kenyaâ??s most provocative photojournalist. But as a father of three young children, these qualities create tremendous turmoil

between him and his wife Njeri. When he wants to run for political office, he is forced to choose: country or family?

Uncle Frank / U.S.A. (Director and screenwriter: Alan Ball, Producers: Alan Ball, Peter Macdissi, Michael Costigan, Jay Van Hoy, Bill Block, Stephanie Meurer) â?? In 1973, when 18-year-old Beth and her uncle Frank take a road trip from Manhattan to Creekville, South Carolina for the family patriarchâ??s funeral, theyâ??re unexpectedly joined by Frankâ??s lover Walid. A story about family, forgiveness, and our inherent power to choose who we want to be. *Cast: Paul Bettany, Sophia Lillis, Peter Macdissi, Steve Zahn, Judy Greer, Margo Martindale.*

Welcome to Chechnya / U.S.A. (Director: David France, Producers: Alice Henty, David France, Askold Kurov, Joy A. Tomchin) â?? This searing investigative work shadows a group of activists risking unimaginable peril to confront the ongoing anti-LGBTQ pogrom raging in the repressive and closed Russian republic. Unfettered access and a remarkable approach to protecting anonymity expose this under-reported atrocityâ??and an extraordinary group of people confronting evil.

The 2021 Sundance Film Festival will run from Thursday, January 21â??Sunday, January 31, 2021.

The Sundance Film Festival

The Sundance Film Festival has introduced global audiences to some of the most groundbreaking films of the past three decades, including *Sorry to Bother You*, *Wonâ??t You Be My Neighbor?*, *Eighth Grade*, *Get Out*, *The Big Sick*, *Mudbound*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Whiplash*, *Brooklyn*, *Precious*, *The Cove*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Reservoir Dogs* and *sex, lies, and videotape*. The Festival is a program of the non-profit Sundance InstituteÂ®. 2020 Festival sponsors include: Presenting Sponsors â?? Acura, SundanceTV, Chase Sapphire, AT&T; Leadership Sponsors â?? Adobe, Amazon Studios, DIRECTV, Dropbox, Netflix, Omnicom Group, Southwest AirlinesÂ®, Stella Artois**Â®**, WarnerMedia; Sustaining Sponsors â?? Audible, Canada Goose, Canon U.S.A., Inc., Dell Technologies, Fire TV, GEICO, High West Distillery, Hulu, IMDbPro, Lyft, Unity Technologies, University of Utah Health; Media Sponsors â?? The Atlantic, IndieWire, Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, Variety, The Wall Street Journal. Sundance Institute recognizes critical support from the State of Utah as Festival Host State. The support of these organizations helps offset the Festivalâ??s costs and sustain the Instituteâ??s year-round programs for independent artists. Look for the Official Partner seal at their venues at the Festival. sundance.org/festival

Sundance Institute

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and media to create and thrive. The Instituteâ??s signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. Sundance Co//ab, a digital community platform, brings artists together to learn from each other and Sundance Advisors and connect in a creative space, developing and sharing works in progress. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences and artists to ignite new ideas, discovering original voices, and build a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *The Farewell, Late Night, The Souvenir, The Infiltrators, Sorry to Bother You, Eighth Grade, Wonâ??t You Be My Neighbor?, Hereditary, RBG, Call Me By Your Name, Get Out, The Big Sick, Top of the*

Lake, Winterâ??s Bone, Dear White People, Little Miss Sunshine, Beasts of the Southern Wild, *Fruitvale Station, State of the Union, Indecent, Spring Awakening*, *A Gentlemanâ??s Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join Sundance Institute on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.



(Source: Sundance media press release)

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1. #Sundance
2. Sundance
3. Sundance Film Festival

Tags

1. Giving Voice

Date Created
February 4, 2020
Author
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