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



Santa Barbara International Film Festival Wraps Its 37th Edition

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 2022 Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) has officially wrapped.



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA â?? MARCH 12: A view outside the Arlington Theatre at the Closi

The 37th Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival presented by UGG closed with a special screening of DIONNE WARWICK: DONâ??T MAKE ME OVER, with the iconic singer in attendance. The documentary followed Warwick as she smashed through cultural, racial, and gender barriers to become the soundtrack for generations and a voice fighting for humanitarian causes. Featured

interviews with Burt Bachrach, Gladys Knight, Gloria Estefan, Snoop Dogg, Bill Clinton, and many more!

This year was the festivalâ??s first-ever hybrid in-person/virtual format. Nevertheless, it didnâ??t stop the Phase Two Oscar juggernaut from featuring Hollywoodâ??s top talent. Despite herculean efforts to claim the wildly heralded tributes and panels are only window-dressings for the film program, no one actually believed it.



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA â?? MARCH 05: (L-R) Anne Thompson, Zach Baylin, Kenneth Bra

For example, the Directorâ??s Panel/Tribute honored all five Oscar-nominated directors: Paul Thomas Anderson (LICORICE PIZZA), Kenneth Branagh (BELFAST), Jane Campion (THE POWER OF THE DOG), Ryusuke Hamaguchi (DRIVE MY CAR), and Steven Spielberg (WEST SIDE STORY).

But it was the American Riviera Award tributing Penelope Cruz that was the most evident example of the festival promoting Oscar talent. Passionate cinephilic SBIFF Executive Director Roger Durling led the nearly two-hour-long conversation with Cruz sporting a red cape dress by Chanel. Durling lobbed a few well-placed â??soft ballâ?• questions and Cruz swatted them into the stratosphere as the audience was treated to several clips from Cruzâ??s exceptional filmography. Undoubtedly, Cruz moved up into the top tier of the Best Actress category, and deservedly so. She is a major talent and her work in Spanish auteur Pedro Almodovarâ??s *Parallel Mothers* is her most seasoned and mature performance to date.



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA â?? MARCH 08: PenÃ©lope Cruz and SBIFF Executive Director P

Following Cruzâ??s conversation with Durling, she was treated to a surprise personal message from **Sophia Loren.** While presenting the award Loren told Cruz, â??The day I met you on the set of *Nine* more than twelve years ago, I knew that you would be part of my life forever. I knew I found a sister, a daughter, a colleague, and a great, great friend.â?•

In juxtaposition to the Durling-led conversation, The Hollywood Reporter Awards Columnist, the affable Scott Feinberg, poked and prodded the boisterous and energetic Will Smith and the reserved and talented Aunjanue Ellis during the festival Outstanding Performers of the Year Tribute for their work in the Richard Williams biopic *King Richard*. Richard Williams is the father of tennis greats, Serena and Venus Williams. Smith is considered a front-runner for Best Actor as is Ellis for Best Supporting Actress.



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA â?? MARCH 06: (L-R) Aunjanue Ellis, Will Smith, and Scott Feinb

Smith is seeing the competition heat up though with *The Power of the Dog* lead, the cerebral Benedict Cumberbatch, making a splash, and who, coincidentally, was at the festival receiving the SBIFF Cinema Vanguard Award presented by *The Power of the Dogâ??s* Oscar-nominated writer/director, Jane Campion! Campion lavishes high praise on Cumberbatch (see clip).

The Variety Artisan Awards, honoring those nominated for an Academy Award in below-the-line categories, the various panels, and the Virtuosos round out the festivalâ??s Oscar-laden focus.



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA â?? MARCH 12: (L-R) Madelyn Hammond , Lynn Harris, Jessica

Not to take anything away from this yearâ??s films put together by The Los Angeles Critic Associationâ??s, Claudia Puig. Puig was determined to showcase more films representative of the greater Santa Barbara community.



A Place in the Field

Luckily, I had the good fortune to bend Puigâ??s ear on the sidewalk outside the Fiesta Five screening venue singing the praise of the directing debut of Nicole Mejia, *A Place In the Field,* while thanking her for programming such a film directed by a woman, produced primarily by a woman, and shot by a woman depicting a veteran dealing with unresolved war-time conflicts. Unabashedly, Puig communicated an Uber was arriving in two minutes and confided that there were a few last-minute additions worth checking out.



Nitram

Little did I know in that very moment, that one of the last films screening on Friday night in a slot up against the festivalâ??s biggest and most prestigious award, the Maltin Modern Master Award honoring the Aaron Sorkin-penned, *I Love Lucy* leads, Nicole Kidman, and Javier Bardem would be the blistering backstory of the Australian Port Arthur Massacre on Tasmania, Nitram, featuring a monumental, â??one for the agesâ?• performance by Caleb Landry Jones as the lead Nitram (Martin spelled backward) for which he received Best Actor in Film from the illustrious Cannes Film Festival. Fortunately, a second screening occurred on Saturday afternoon. I did attend the second screening as I had watched virtually Leonard Maltinâ??s truncated performance on Friday evening with Kidman and Bardem.



Big Crow

Another film Puig brought forth was a Native film, *Big Crow,* a narrative documentary on the legend Cheryl Big Crow, a 1980â??s standout basketball player and visionary of the Lakota people. Like many films this year, *Big Crow* did not feature a sold-out audience. Due to COVID and by design, fewer passes and diminished capacities were the norms with masks required along with proof of vaccination or negative test within the previous 72 hours to have a seat for any of the festivalâ??s offerings.

A short-form documentary with vivid colors and a female subject matter, *Fresh to Frightening: The Shannon Green Story*, on Santa Barbaraâ??s, world-renowned Yacht Racing photographer epitomized Puigâ??s determination to show more films representative of Santa Barbara. *Fresh to Frightening* s is â??a kinetic and gorgeously shot documentary which captures the beauty and energy of sailing and yacht racing while it also introduces us to a dynamic woman and the art of her photography.â?• Indeed.

I can honestly say, I did not see a bad film. In reality, there were only two kinds of films this year â?? good and better!

Here are the award-winning films for the 2022 Santa Barbara International Film Festival:

Audience Choice Award sponsored by The Santa Barbara Independent: Rachael Moriarty and Peter Murphyâ??s **RÃ³ise and Frank (Mo ghrÃ¡ buan)**

Best Documentary Short Film Award: Jordan Matthew Horowitzâ??s **LALITO 10**

Bruce Corwin Award â?? Best Live-Action Short Film: Marilyn Cookeâ??s **NO GHOST IN THE MORGUE (PAS DE FANTÃ?ME Ã? LA MORGUE)**

Bruce Corwin Award â?? Best Animated Short Film: Zacharias Kunukâ??s **THE SHAMANâ??S APPRENTICE**

Best Documentary Award: Jon-Sesrie Goffâ??s **AFTER SHERMAN**

Jeffrey C. Barbakow Award â?? Best International Feature Film: Shawkat Amin Korkiâ??s **THE EXAM (EZMÃ?N)**

Best Middle Eastern/Israeli Film Award: Dina Amerâ??s **YOU RESEMBLE ME (TU ME RESSEMBLES)**

Best Nordic/Dutch Film Award: Marianne Blicherâ??s **MISS VIBORG**

Nueva Vision Award for Spain/Latin America Cinema: MartÃn Barrenechea and NicolÃ¡s Brancaâ??s **9**

Panavision Spirit Award for Independent Cinema: Shasha Nakhai and Rich Williamsonâ??s **SCARBOROUGH**

Social Justice Award for Documentary Film: Emma Macey-Storchâ??s **GEETA**

ADL Stand Up Award, sponsored by ADL Santa Barbara/Tri-Counties, the Skinner Social Impact Fund, and Steve & Cindy Lyons: Jordan W. Barrow and Matt Edwardsâ??s **OUR WORDS COLLID**E.

The films were chosen by jury members Carlos Aguilar, Justine Bateman, Dupe Bosu, Julie Carmen, Annlee Ellingson, Tim Grierson, Beandrea July, Elizabeth Lo, Scott Mantz, Jose Novoa, Gil Robertson, Charles Solomon, Angie Wang, Steve Zahn, and Anthony & Annette Zerbe.



SBIFFâ??s Programming Director Claudia Puig.

> â??We are so thrilled to have had our slate of 200 films from 54 countries so well-received by festivalgoers. A few films even elicited standing ovations. We are very proud that filmmakers came from as far as Nepal, Iran, and Ugandaâ??and many countries in betweenâ?? to attend with their films. We thank all the wonderful filmmakers and our enthusiastic Santa Barbara audience for making this such a joyful return to theaters, and a celebration of terrific world cinema.â?• commented SBIFFâ??s Programming Director Claudia Puig.

In addition, the festival offered several free screenings and a few with Q&Aâ??s including:

The Power of the Dog and Q&A with Jane Campion

Licorice Pizza and Q&A with Paul Thomas Anderson and Alana Haim

Belfast

King Richard and a Q&A with Reinaldo Marcus Green and Aunjanue Ellis

Selena

Silver Linings Playbook and a Q&A with David O. Russell and editor Jay Cassidy

Until next year, Iâ??ll see you at the movies!

Category

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hollywoodglee