

Update: Day 5 Highlights from the Santa Barbara Film Festival

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Glenn Close receives Modern Maltin Masters Award, Melissa McCarthy receives Montecito Award, and the women of Hollywood speak out

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (February 4, 2019) â?? The 34th Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) kicked off the fifth day of the festival with the Womensâ?? Panel moderated by Madelyn Hammond, followed by honoring Oscar Nominee Glenn Close for *The Wife* with the Maltin Modern Master Award and Melissa McCarthy with the Montecito Award for *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* The women came out in full force on Sunday.



Glenn Close speaks onstage at the Maltin Modern Master Award Honoring Glenn Close during the 3

Hammond, producer of Deadlineâ??s Contenders events, moderated the phenomenal Womenâ??s Panel which consisted of nine Oscar nominated females including Louise Bagnall, writer-director of the animated short *Late Afternoon;* Hannah Beachler, production designer for *Black Panther;* Nina Hartstone, sound editor on *Bohemian Rhapsody;* Ai-Ling Lee, a double nominee for Sound Editing and Sound Mixing on *First Man;* Domee Shi, director of Pixarâ??s animated short *Bao;* Marina de Tavira, Best Supporting Actress for *Roma;* Lynette Howell Taylor, Producer of Best Picture nominee *A Star Is Born;* Betsy West, director of the Feature Documentary *RBG;* and Rayka Zehtabchi, recent USC graduate and among Oscarâ??s youngest nominees as Director for the documentary short *Period. End of Sentence.*



Pictured left to right; Madelyn Hammond, Louise Bagnall, Hannah Beachler, Nina Hartstone, Lynette

From a 500 page bible Hannah Beachler built to create the Wakanda civilization, a high school project turned short documentary by Rayka Zehtabchi and resounding applause for Betsy West when discussing *RBG,* the women of hollywood brought laughs and serious insight to an awestruck crowd. Gender disparity and female discrimination was a hot topic in which all the women noted the need for expanding the landscape of females in the industry and Lynette Howell-Taylor and West continuing to discuss the importance of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.



Leonard Maltin, left, and Glenn Close speak onstage at the Maltin Modern Master Award Honoring G

After yesterdayâ??s postponement due to weather conditions, SBIFF was finally able to welcome *The Wife* actress **Glenn Close** for a special tribute and award presentation. Film critic **Leonard Maltin** led a career retrospective discussion with Close and at its conclusion she was presented with the **Maltin Modern Master Award**.

Highlights from the conversation with Close include:

- Maltin described Close as â??one of the greatest actresses on the planetâ?• and also said â??I donâ??t think there is any facet of show business that she hasnâ??t attempted and succeeded at.â?•
- Close was greeted with an enthusiastic and lengthy standing ovation when she came onstage at the beginning of the program.
- About 12-13 minutes into the interview, Closeâ??s dog Pip ran on-stage to join her. When Pip showed up, Maltin remarked, â??Youâ??re about to be upstaged.â?• The audience was very amused and there were a lot of â??ooohs,â?• â??awws,â?• and applause. CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE CLIP.
- **Close on *The Wife*:**
    - The film almost didnâ??t get made â?? it took the producers 14 years to get the money together and Close was attached for 5 years.
    - Novel was written by Meg Wolitzer and Jane Anderson adapted it into a screenplay.
    - When she received the script she thought it was interesting and unlike other things that sheâ??s done before so she said that they could put her name on the project and see how that could help.
    - She met with Bjorn Runge (accomplished Swedish director who had not yet made an English language film) and â??there was something about him that I really really liked.â?•
    - They had to wait to wait another year because Bjorn got sick and they decided to wait for him rather than attach a new director.

- â??I think of him as a total collaborator in my performance because he trusted the close-up, he knew where to put the camera, and he knew how to light our faces. My performance â??The Wife,â?? a lot of it is just in close-up, and without his wonderful instinct about that I donâ??t think it would have had the impact that it has.â?•
- She had never worked with Jonathan Pryce before this film.
- The film was made in the late fall of 2016, before the #MetToo movement, premiered at TIFF, Sony bought it and then decided to hold a year before releasing it.

- **Close on â??Fatal Attractionâ?•:**
  - She did more research for this role than any other character she has ever played.
  - She read the script in one sitting and she auditioned for the part.
  - When she got the part she took the script to two psychiatrists because she wanted to know if the behavior of the character was possible and what would cause it.
  - She has a foundation that combats the stigma around mental illness and when she mentioned it during the conversation, the audience responded with applause.
  - â??I ended up with great compassion and empathy for that character.â?•
  - The background that was created for the character was that she was incested by her father over many years and Close studied what that meant in order to prepare for the role.
  - People were so upset by the original ending (where Closeâ??s character kills herself and Michael Douglasâ?? character goes to jail because his fingerprints are on the knife) that the studio decided to re-shoot it, much to Closeâ??s dismay.
  - She fought against the re-shoot for two weeks and recounted how she expressed her frustration to director Adrian Lyne, producer Stanley Jaffe, and co-star Douglas â?? â??What if they did it to your character? What if they did it to you? What would you say? What would you say?â?• Douglas, she recalls, responded by saying â??Babe, Iâ??m a whore.â?• This anecdote garnered a hearty laugh.
  - She also called William Hurt for advice because she felt like she was betraying the character by making â??her into somebody that would kill somebody.â?• He told her that she put up the fight but if the studio isnâ??t budging then â??you owe it to the company and to the director and to your fellow actors to go ahead with it.â?•
  - Looking back Close said she realizes the studio was right because, â??After such a disturbing film, the audience needed catharsis.â?•
  - â??Itâ??s a very American ending.â?•
- **Close on costumes:**
  - â??I consider the costume designer of anything Iâ??m doing a full collaborator â?? as important as the director.â?•
  - â??It really helps me to put together the character together in my mind.â?•
  - She has kept her costumes since â??The World According to Garp,â?• and the living collection / archive is housed in a facility at Indiana University for students. The collection also includes some of her red carpet looks.
- **Close on â??Reversal of Fortuneâ?•**:
  - It was one of the best script she ever read.
  - â??Everything for me begins with what I read on the page.â?•
  - â??It was so clever and so original to have someone in a coma narrate a film.â?•
  - As she prepared for the part, Close was unable to speak with anyone who actually knew Sunny Von BÃ¼low.

- â??I think the script, as brilliant as it is, was written very much from a manâ??s point-of-view and you donâ??t really get under the skin of Sunny. Itâ??s more reacting to her behavior. I always wondered if I was able to talk to people that knew her, how that would change my performance.â?•
- Close also recounted a hilarious anecdote about how after the film opened, she walked into the Ivory Restaurant in London one day and heard a voice say, â??I was Jeremy Ironsâ?? understudy.â?• And it turned out that the voice belonged to Klaus Von BÃ¼low. Upon hearing this story, Maltin remarked, â??Thatâ??s a tough one to top.â?•

- **Close on what she wants from a director:**
  - She said she wants a director to provide her with â??the assurance and atmosphereâ?¦to try things that might be different.â?•
  - â??Itâ??s kind of fascinating that a lot of directors donâ??t really get what actors do and feel that the only way to direct them is to manipulate them.â?• She doesnâ??t like directors like that and doesnâ??t think that great directors do that.
  - â??Albert Nobbsâ?• director Rodrigo Garcia admitted to Close that he was afraid of rehearsal because he had never had them before. â??He said a lot of directors are afraid of rehearsal because they think theyâ??ll see the actor do exactly what he wants and then theyâ??ll never be able to do it again.â?•
- **Close on Cruella de Vil:**
  - She loved fairy tales and the Disney witches.
  - She said that Cruella is a â??classic witch.â?•
  - â??I was thrilled because I thought, that puts me in a great tradition.â?•
  - â??I worked very hard â?? it was a John Hughes script â?? and I felt very strongly that she wasnâ??t mean enough. That they were trying to water her down.â?•
  - In the original cartoon, Cruella was mean so Close got permission to pull lines from the cartoon when she constructed the character for the live action version.
- **Close on â??Damagesâ?•:**
  - In asking her about â??Damages,â?• Maltin noted that the show came before A-list movie actors would do television as regularly as they do now.
  - Before â??Damagesâ?• she had done a season on the FX show â??The Shieldâ?• and it was great.
  - Close insisted that she has always believed in television because her second onscreen credit was a television movie called â??Something About Amelia.â?• The film dealt with the issue of incest and she filmed it right after â??The World According to Garp.â?• When her agent told her that the TV movie would ruin her film career, Close remarked, â??Well the English do it, why canâ??t we?â?•
- **Close on â??Albert Nobbsâ?•:**
  - She spent 20 years with the role â?? first performed it off-Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club.
  - She learned mime for the role.
  - â??The character just stayed with me.â?•
  - It took 14 years to bring the film together.
  - Because so much time passed between originating the role on the stage and the start of production on the film, Close had to make sure that she was still right to take on the role because she said, â??At this point I was afraid that my face would get in the way.â?• She thought to herself, â??How can I play this character if all they can see is Glenn Close?â?•

  - She went to special effects makeup artist Matthew Mungle for a solution.
  - â??The fact that so much time had gone, I think made the ultimate Albert so much deeper and richer and heartbreaking.â?•
  - Close thinks that not enough people saw the film because it was released at the wrong time of year.
- **Close on producing:**
  - â??Sarah, Plain and Tallâ?• was the first thing that she produced.
  - â??A lot of it is to create roles for myself. It sounds selfish, but if youâ??re not getting them then go and create them.â?•
  - â??You should never sit around and wait for the phone to ring. You should be out there with your iPhone, with whatever it is, creating stuff that is your voice.

SBIFF Executive Director Roger Durling asked Close to accept the award in honor of his father, who was a huge fan and took Roger to see her performances on the stage in New York ever since the 1970s.

Close was very moved when she accepted the award. â??I am very, very blessed to be able to do the thing that I love most in the world,â?• she told the audience afterwards. â??Iâ??m standing up here representing all the people that have been my collaborators all these years. I would not be here without them. I am deeply, deeply grateful to you, who have gone to see my work and are here today. It means a tremendous amount to me. And I am so touched to have this award with Leonardâ??s name on it â?? a man who has given so much to our industry, who is one of the greats.â?•

For a few brief moments during her speech, Pip once again managed to steal the spotlight when he decided to roll around on the ground in front of the podium (much to everyoneâ??s amusement).



Melissa McCarthy, left, and Anne Thompson speak onstage at the Montecito Award honoring Meliss

Later that evening, a sold out and lively crowd greeted *Can You Ever Forgive Me?*â??s **Melissa McCarthy** as she entered the stage to receive the **Montecito Award**. McCarthy sat in conversation with IndieWire Editor at Large, Anne Thompson, to discuss her beginnings on stage, what she learned

from her time at Groundlings, and her future behind the camera.

Some highlights from the evening included:

- When discussing her early days on comedy stages McCarthy discussed how she â??never walked into a room where a guy didnâ??t tell me, â??Take your shirt off!â?? and they are just yelling. They would keep yelling until you have to embarrass them but then you spend four of your five minutes eviscerating them.â?•
- Before hitting it big, McCarthy recounts how she worked as a nanny and a waitress in both New York and Los Angeles.
- **On her early work:**
  - â??What happened to my voiceâ?• McCarthy exclaimed after a series of clips played on the screen from *Go*, *Charlieâ??s Angels*, and *The Nines*. â??My voice was so high. Itâ??s like Iâ??ve been smokin Paul Malls all these years.â?•
  - McCarthy credited friend Jennifer Cooling for making a call to a casting agent to get her seen for her first gig for which she ended up getting the part, and an agent following.
- **On *Gilmore Girls*:**
  - Reminiscing on how â??Sookieâ?• was originally to be played by Alex Borstein who was contractually obligated to *MadTV* at the time, McCarthy is still in awe that her first job lasted for seven years.
  - â??I really loved doing that show. It was such a great group of people. I felt really lucky to be a part of something like that.â?•
- **On *Bridesmaids* and working with Kristen Wiig:**
  - When reading for the part with Kristen for Judd Apatow and Paul Feig, â??Kristen and I were improvising so much in the room and Paul and Judd were in awe. At some point I started talking about dolphin play.â?• The crowd erupted in laughter.
  - â??Everyday of that movie was heaven.â?•
  - Thompson and McCarthy dove deep into one of the most memorable scenes from that film
    - I donâ??t think we knew what we were doing while it was happening. It was like oatmeal with like some ketchup in it and somebody was like, â??does this vomit look ok?â?? And I have this picture of Paul like pouring it on me and I was like â??we are being professional.â??â?•
    - â??None of us wanted it to be the gross out scene but we all started talking about how embarrassing it would be while you are trying to maintain your dignity and everyoneâ??s body is disintegrating in front of you. It became about us bonding in the weirdest possible way.â?•
- **On *The Hangover*:**
  - When speaking on her scene in the pawn shop with Bradley Cooper, â??I thought I wonder if anyone has ever just shunned him off like this. I thought, this is probably good for him.â?•
  - Working with Zack Galifianakis: â??Thatâ??s kind of like Zack. It just kinda happened. It wasnâ??t written as being that cruel to the woman that was playing my mother. Once the gloves are off and everyone is ready to go for it, if you go too far your director will protect you and not use it but every now and then you go hard and it works.â?•
- **On producing and directing:**
  - â??I like the building of a project from the beginning up as much as I like being in front of the camera.â?•

- â??You have to really fight for good material. I kept saying why is every part such a bummer. Can I just have a point of view? Can I be more than bland? I donâ??t know how to play pleasant.â?•
- â??I like the person that you see walking through the grocery store and youâ??re like â??well today is purple huh.â?? Youâ??re on your own beat. Those are the characters I fall in love with.â?•
- â??I am ready to direct. I did some *Mike and Mollyâ??s* and I did a short for the Oscars and I loved it. I would like to not be in it. I just want to be there and concentrate on the people in it.â?•



Melissa McCarthy, left, and Richard E. Grant speak onstage at the Montecito Award honoring Meliss
McIntyre/Getty Images for SBIFF)

McCarthyâ??s *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* co-star **Richard E. Grant** presented the award and began his presentation with a google translation of the meaning of McCarthy, loving. â??I have yet to meet anyone who doesnâ??t have loving words to say about her.â?• McCarthy accepted her award giving thanks to the Santa Barbara International Film Festival for â??shining a light on these types of movies.â?•

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