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



Philippine revenge drama wins Venice Film Festivalâ??s top prize

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

By Agnieszka Flak | VENICE

A nearly four-hour long movie about a womanâ??s thirst for revenge and her feelings of forgiveness after 30 years in jail for a crime she did not commit won the Venice Film Festivalâ??s top prize on Saturday.

Director Lav Diaz has described â??Ang Babaeng Humayoâ?• (â??The Woman Who Leftâ?•) as a testimony to the struggles of the Philippines after centuries of colonial rule.

â??This is for my country, for the Filipino people, for our struggle, for the struggle of humanity,â?• the 57-year-old said as he accepted the Golden Lion award for his black-and-white movie.

Diaz, who at the Berlin Film Festival in February had premiered a film that ran over eight hours, said he hoped the latest recognition would create more appreciation for longer movies.

â??Cinema is still very young, you can still push it,â?• he said.



Director Lav Diaz, center, poses with actress Charo Santos-Concio, left, and actor John lLoyd Cruz, right, as they attend the photo call for the movie *Ang Babaeng Humayo (The Woman Who Left)* at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival in Venice, Italy, September 9, 2016. (Photo credit: REUTERS/Alesandro Bianchi)

Twenty U.S. and international movies featuring top Hollywood talent and auteur directors were in competition at the worldâ??s oldest film festival, in its 73rd outing this year. The event is seen as a launching pad for the industryâ??s award season.

All the movies that won awards were examples of directorsâ?? â??lack of compromise, (their) imagination, original vision, daring, and a kind of pure identity,â?• said Sam Mendes, known for directing James Bond movies â??Skyfallâ?• and â??Spectreâ?•, who headed the jury. â??Itâ??s taken me out of my comfort zone.â?•

Mendes said he hoped the awards would help the films get distributed.

The runner-up Grand Jury prize went to Tom Fordâ??s thriller â??Nocturnal Animalsâ?•, the second feature by the celebrated fashion designer.

The Best Director award was shared by Russiaâ??s Andrei Konchalovsky for the Holocaust drama â??Raiâ?• (â??Paradiseâ?•) and Mexicoâ??s Amat Escalante for â??La Region Salvajeâ?• (â??The Untamedâ?•).

Commenting on Escalanteâ??s drama, which opens with a naked woman being pleasured by a tentacled creature, jury member and Venezuelan director Lorenzo Vigas said the movie affected all the judges emotionally.

â??We liked the lack of sentimentalism. We felt he really took risks making the film. Itâ??s a film that pushes the medium forward,â?• he said.

American Emma Stone took the Best Actress prize for her role in the musical â??La La Landâ?• and Argentine actor Oscar Martinez was named Best Actor for his performance in the comedy-drama â??El Ciudadano Ilustreâ?• (â??The Distinguished Citizenâ?•).

German actress Paula Beer received the Marcello Mastroianni Award acknowledging an emerging performer, for her role in post-war drama â??Frantzâ?•.

Noah Oppenheim took the best screenplay award for his work on Pablo Larrainâ??s â??Jackieâ?•, about first lady Jacqueline Kennedy in the aftermath of the assassination of her husband U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

The special jury prize went to Ana Lily Amirpourâ??s cannibal-survivor fairytale â??The Bad Batchâ?•. While the film earned mixed reviews, the jury appreciated its spirit.

â??Someone has made a very individual, very personal vision, whatever you think of it; that alone, the act of making that film is astonishing,â?• Mendes said.

(Additional reporting by Sarah Mills and Hanna Rantala, Editing by Robin Pomeroy and Richard Chang)

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*Featured photo courtesy of ASAC Images/Biennale Cinema/Hazel Orencio

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