

26<sup>th</sup>  
Santa Barbara  
INTERNATIONAL  
**Film**  
FESTIVAL

# OPENING NIGHT

January 27, 2011

By Robert F. Adams / Special to CASA

**THURSDAY NIGHT** marked the arrival of the 26th edition of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, held at the Historic Arlington Theatre. Special guests included Congresswoman Lois Capps, Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider, as well as City Council Members Grant House, Dale Francisco, and Bendy White, and California Assemblyman Das Williams, among others. Lynda.com, a software education firm, is the major sponsor of the festival this year. The co-founders, Lynda Weinman and husband Bruce Heavin mentioned that the Festival "is a superb fit for our company," and "are thrilled to be the major contributor to this premier cultural event." Also seen were Gilles Paquet-Brenner, the director of the opening night film *Sarah's Key*, and writer/director Paul Brickman, director Andy Davis, producer Frank Donner, and actor Anthony Zerbe, among others.

Once inside, board President Jeffrey Barbakow welcomed the sold-out audience and event sponsors, and Director Roger Durling, stated that the Festival "is a demonstration of democracy at its best, allowing the free exchange of ideas, while having none of the nasty partisanship that currently plagues politics." The Arlington crowd was introduced to a 16-year old, whiz kid from London, Harry Bossert, who created a Lego animation introduction sequence, set to a rap-and-rhythm song called *Megaphone* from local musician Parry Gripp.

Introducing the evening's film, the director Gilles Paquet-Brenner said, "it has always been my dream to be in California premiering a movie." He further stated at the warm ovation that "I never knew I had so many friends in Santa Barbara" and mentioned that as he "gained rights and began preparations for making the film, the book became a runaway best seller, and as this was happening, this made the film easier to finance."

*Sarah's Key* is a compelling account of a young girl in France, Sarah, and her harrowing experience being part of the deportation to concentration camps of Jewish French citizens in 1942 Paris. The film darts back and

forth and between the present and the past as a reporter, Julia, played by Kristin Scott Thomas, slowly uncovers the story and implications develop between her present day situation and the horrific legacy of the French collaboration. The film was one of the very best of opening night films, and had a great deal of convincing historical detail, based on a book of the same name written by Tatiana De Rosnay. The cast was exceedingly good including Kristin Scott Thomas's portrayal as the protagonist. This was riveting subject matter, and the film successfully translates the book to the screen.



**Roger Durling**, SBIFF Executive Director



**Gilles Paquet-Brenner**, Director of *Sarah's Key*, opening night film

Following the screening of the film, guests enjoyed the spectacular opening night Gala held in the open courtyards of Paseo Nuevo. Architect Britt Jewett, from Studio 7, put together intriguing geometric architectural constructions. A team of professionals and students worked for months on these set pieces and the architect stated, "the design theme was based on the 1960s iconic French film *Breathless* and represent the rhythms of editing and ideas associated with Godard's classic film." A wonderful and well-attended event, the crowd fully enjoyed this kickoff party, including food from local restaurants as well drinks provided by festival sponsors.

For ongoing events and screenings at SBIFF visit [www.sbfilmfestival.org](http://www.sbfilmfestival.org) or call 963-0023.

## Out and About at the Film Festival

Reviews by Robert F. Adams / Special to CASA

**HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS** from a wonderful first weekend of film screenings:

**Exporting Raymond** - Filmmaker and comedy writer Phil Rosenthal was on hand to introduce this humorous documentary about his quest to bring his hit television show *Everybody Loves Raymond* to Russian audiences. This film reveals the perplexing show business world in Moscow, uncovering amusing cultural differences between Hollywood and Russian culture. The filmmaker's answers to questions from our film festival audience added to the hilarity of this award-winning and funny saga.

**The Whistleblower** - A vivid account, based on a true story, of a Kansas police officer that exposes corruption in post-conflict Bosnia.

The director Larysa Kondracki explores the world of forced prostitution and the enslavement of young women. This masterfully realized film is already winning awards for its dark portrait of official peacekeeping efforts.

Rachel Weisz is compelling as the courageous policewoman, with wonderful appearances by the respected Vanessa Redgrave and the engaging David Strathairn.



**Harry Bossert**, created a Lego animation introduction sequence for SBIFF 2011



**Jeffrey Barbakow**, SBIFF Board President and **Margo Barbakow**

## ANIMATION: PROGRAM ONE

- Outstanding imagination is at work in the animation field this year with entries from a multitude of international sources. This excursion into fantasy was rich with highlights including the universal themes of *The Lost Thing* (Australia), which has been nominated for an Oscar this year, as well as the poignantly artful *Le Cirque* (Canada), the delightfully romping *Mobile* (Germany), and the metaphysical simplicity from *On the Water* (Netherlands).

**The Last Lions** - Spectacular photography is the highlight of this documentary from the celebrated Botswana filmmakers, Derek and Beverly Joubert. According to the filmmakers "we are trying to bring awareness to the fact that only 20,000 lions are left, down from a population of 450,000 fifty



**Mark Sylvester**, VP Cinema Society and SBIFF Board Member; **Kymberlee Weil**; **Lynda Weinman**, and **Bruce Heavin**, Co-Founders of Lynda.com, SBIFF 2011 presenting sponsor

years ago." This exquisite nature film explores the fight for survival of a female lioness living on Botswana's wild and beautiful Okavango Delta. The storm scenes alone will make you feel that you are part of this rare natural environment.



**Phil Rosenthal**, Writer/Director of *Exporting Raymond*

**Gigola** - An exercise in style, this film, directed by Laure Charpentiere, illustrates the decadence of the underworld scene of the Pigalle sex district of Paris of the early 1960s. The performances from the European cast are engaging, as well as the glimpses into an unusual world. The art direction and the costumes of this visually elegant journey into the past are highlights to watch for.

**Robert F. Adams**, a Santa Barbara landscape architect, is a graduate of UCLA's School of Theatre and Film, as well as Cal Poly. He has served on the film selection committees for the Aspen Film Fest and the SB International Film Festival. Email him at [robert@earthknower.com](mailto:robert@earthknower.com).



**Alice Medina**, **Heejae Moon**, **Robert Adams**, **Francesca Sinocruz**, **Sophia Kang**, and **Trish Do** from Orange Coast College's Architecture Club took part in building the "BREATHLESS" entrance of the after party



**Derek and Beverly Joubert**, Directors of *The Last Lions* and **Mike DeGruy**, REEL Nature Programmer



**Harvey Wolf**; **Janet Wolf**, SB Second District Supervisor; **Barbara Boros**; **Peggy Jo House**, and **Grant House**, City of SB Councilmember

# ANNETTE BENING

January 28, 2011

By Alex Henteloff / Special to CASA

## THE FIRST AWARD GIVEN AT THE FESTIVAL

this year was The American Riviera Award honoring Annette Bening. As expected she is beautiful and charming, and so straightforward in giving of herself as actor and artist. As moderated by Roger Durling, who personally participated in preparing the marvelous film clips shown, we came to understand how grounded she is in her craft and how that craft differs in theatre and in film.

Ms. Bening spoke of the importance of detail and how the text is the holy grail in the theatre but that film is primarily a visual medium so the way one works differs with the demands of the project. How fortunate are we that she works so magnificently in both media. (Mr. Durling became a fan after seeing her on Broadway, in the '80's, in her first play there, for which she received a Tony nomination. Recently in L.A. as *Medea* she was spellbinding!) Her award was presented to her by Kevin Costner who directed her in *Open Range*. His simple praise said it all, "she's a director's best friend, a prepared actress."

Mother of four, married to Warren Beatty, four-time Oscar nominee, including this year for *The Kids Are All Right*, Annette Bening is truly a celestial wonder.



Annette Bening with husband Warren Beatty

## Film Reviews

Reviews by Alex Henteloff / Special to CASA

**THE 26TH ANNUAL SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** opened with the U. S. premier of *Sarah's Key*, the best opening presentation I have seen at this wonderful event.

*Sarah's Key* opens with a beautiful child, "Sarah" (Melusine Mayance), lying in bed amid delightful squeals of laughter; it's pure bliss. The Gendarmes arrive, it is Paris, 1942, and the horror begins. The scenes are stunning, in jostling, disorienting close-up. The scene then shifts to the present where "Julia" (Kristen Scott Thomas), an American reporter in Paris is assigned to a piece on the 60th anniversary of the "Vel d'Hiv Roundup", an infamous two-day round up by the Vichy French of Parisian Jews in 1942. Her investigation narrows to a family, then on a single child, "Sarah" (Melusine Mayance), who cannot be accounted for. The story lurches back

and forth in time which sets off an intense drama as "Julia" uncovers a painful past that overlaps events in her life with the fate of that child 60 years ago. Giles Paquet-Brenner directs this Belgian film with compassion and unerring sensitivity aided by stellar performances from Ms. Thomas,

young Ms. Mayance (spellbinding, compelling), and Aidan Quinn (as "William Rainsferd," the character who connects the two stories). It is heart wrenching.

**Other delights include:**

**Simple Simon:** a quirky comedy about "Simon" (Bill Skarsgård) a young man with Asberger Syndrome who lives in a cocoon universe that he must leave to find the perfect girl for his brother so the three can live together forever. His idiosyncrasies are captivating and exasperating and by venturing into the real world he learns that all he knew was not always true. Vibrant, imaginative, and loaded with images favoring primary colors, *Simple Simon* is a charming film.

**We Still Live Here:** Anne Makepeace's newest documentary is an amazing story. It tells of the re-birth of a lost language from a tribe of indigenous peoples from Cape Cod, the Wampanoag. Beginning with her dreams, "Jesse" pursues visions and sounds that lead her to find the lost written language of her ancestors. "Jesse's" story is heroic both personally and culturally.

**Nostalgia for the Light:** A provocative exploration of the cosmos and political history is put under the microscope (telescope) of filmmaker Patricio Guzman as he uses the setting of the world's largest radio telescope, high in the Chilean mountains to affect a dialog between astronomers and the descendants of "The Disappeared", the thousands who vanished under the reign of Chilean Dictator Pinochet.

**The First Grader:** The true story of "Maruge" (Oliver Musila Litondo), an 84 year old Kenyan who survived the struggle for independence from the British and tribal conflicts, who wants to go school and learn to read as promised.



Kevin Costner (right) presented Annette Bening with the American Riviera Award

Director Justin Chadwick gets fine performances from Mr. Litondo and from Naomie Harris as "Jane" the feisty, caring schoolteacher who takes the old man into her overcrowded school room and the images of 'the bush' contrasting with the city government offices are quite telling.

**Alex Henteloff**, a member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with over 40 years experience in the theatre, has spent most of his professional career as an actor. Email him at [papaalex@verizon.net](mailto:papaalex@verizon.net).



Alex Henteloff

# James Franco

## Revenge of the Freaks and Geeks

January 29, 2011

By Erin J. Smith / CASA

## RUSHED FROM THE HEART OF HOLLYWOOD

where he was rehearsing for the upcoming Academy Awards ceremony where he will be co-hosting with Anne Hathaway, actor James Franco sprinted up the red carpet to accept the Outstanding Performance of the Year Award at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. Franco was honored by the festival for his Academy Award nominated performance as Aron Ralston in *127 Hours*.

"I didn't realize I'd have to speak," laughed Franco, as he settled into an interview with Leonard Maltin at the Arlington and a look back at his body of work.

Franco was born and raised in Palo Alto, California. Although his father wanted him to go into mathematics, Franco started at UCLA as an English major only to drop out a year later to his pursue his dreams of becoming an actor. "I didn't want to wait," said Franco, whose parents weren't too thrilled with the decision to leave UCLA to enroll in acting classes. "I was living on a couch

in Sherman Oaks, and I didn't have a car, so I got a job at the only place where I could walk, which was McDonalds." When he landed his first paying job in *Pacific Blue* – what Franco described as "Baywatch on bikes" – he called his parents from a pay phone. "I think that might be the most excited I've been to land a role," he said.

It wasn't until Franco joined the cast of the now cult-classic TV series *Freaks and Geeks* that he really made his break. The set was a virtual playground for the future of comedy – along with Franco, the cast included Seth Rogen, not to mention the show's executive producer, Judd Apatow. Franco, Rogen, and Apatow would reunite for a little film called *Pineapple Express*. "I was drawn to comedy," said Franco, who, after working on projects like *James Dean*, *City by the Sea*, and the *Spider-man* films, had been spending too much time in his 'tortured actor place'. "It really changed the way I approached movies," said Franco. "I realized that when you work with



Leonard Maltin

people you like and believe in, it makes it so much better."

"The academic stuff has taken the pressure off of acting," added Franco, who made the decision to return to his studies while working on the final *Spider-man* movie. "For a long time, acting was how I derived my identity, but now I don't feel the need to control movies in a way that isn't my job.

I've allowed the acting to become more collaborative." Franco completed his BA in English at UCLA and continued his studies in the MFA program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, NYU's graduate film program, and fiction writing at Columbia. He is currently pursuing a PhD in English at Yale and continues to turn up in places we least expect, like *Date Night* and *General Hospital*, or star in Oscar-worthy performances like *127 Hours*.

Seth Rogen was on hand to present the Outstanding Award to his good friend. After poking fun at the evening's sponsor UGG® Australia (they "make his feet sweat") and remarking that the Arlington resembled the inside of a Mexican restaurant, he lit into Franco himself.

"I'm really glad to be here tonight, mostly



Seth Rogen presented James Franco with the Outstanding Performance of the Year Award

because of how embarrassed James seems," said Rogen. "For the 95 percent of the film I had my eyes open it was unbelievable. My girlfriend tells me the other part was fantastic and he didn't blow it," he said. "And now he's nominated for an Oscar, which is hilarious and awesome. He's hosting and he's nominated and I'm not in any way jealous. He's accomplished everything he could ever hope to accomplish as an actor and a comedian."

Look out for James Franco to co-host the Academy Awards along with Anne Hathaway on February 27th. For more information, visit [www.sbiff.org](http://www.sbiff.org).

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# Virtuosos Awards

February 4, 2011

By Robert F. Adams / Special to CASA

**M**ANY ENTHUSIASTICALLY JOINED THE AUDIENCE on Friday, February 4th, to witness the Virtuosos Awards, held at the historic Lobero Theatre. These awards are bestowed on a select group of actors for their noteworthy performances in films from 2010. This was a wonderful night for the Film Festival community, who got to see and listen to the following honorees:

John Hawkes, an extraordinary character actor, played the menacing "Uncle Teardrop" in *Winter's Bone*. He has been nominated for an Oscar for his work in this well-received independent film. "My character in the film represents a lot of people in this country, people that did not get a good break in life, and the frustration that many folks have," he explained. Interviewed by Dave Karger from Entertainment Weekly onstage, we found out Hawkes is a musician "but if I tried to make my living doing that, I'd be sleeping under a bridge." This multi-talented performer has been working in interesting character roles for years, appearing in *The Perfect Storm*, the television series *Deadwood*, and other offbeat films.

Veteran actress from British stage, television, and film, Lesley Manville was honored for her heartbreaking portrayal of a lonely single woman in director Mike Leigh's *Another Year*. "I like working in plays and films, and the acting process for each, is quite different, really," she shared. "The acting profession is completely overcrowded, but I am one of the lucky ones, having established a collaborative

situation with director Mike Leigh." Leslie has appeared in seven of his films including *Topsy-Turvy*. This year she won the National Board of Review Award for Best Actress for her role in *Another Year*.

Relatively new to the film business, Hailee Steinfeld, at fourteen years old, was delighted to receive the award for her spectacular performance in *True Grit*. "My character in the story, Mattie Ross, determined and focused, was really the only adult on the premises," she explained in regard to the other characters Rooster Cogburn and Texas Ranger LaBoeuf (played by Jeff Bridges and Matt Damon, respectively). On the set, she recalled, "Jeff taught me to have fun, and I'll never forget how protective and helpful he was... I did my own stunts," she noted and "I rode the horse in the river crossing scene, which was difficult,

as we used both a real horse and a mechanical one." Hailee was determined to get the plum part in the film and had five weeks to prepare for the final callback audition with the directors Joel and Ethan Cohen. "I dressed for the part, including an old-fashioned blouse and hairdo" and

of the swings of the moral compass set within the competitive world of soccer. This film is enriched by the film's engaging lead actors who play the comen Salvador and Dario (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo and Rodrigo Cachero, respectively).

**Red Light Revolution-** Directed by Sam Voutas, an Australian filmmaker based in China, is a broad farcical romp that centers on a desperate-to-succeed and immature man/boy who opens a sex toyshop in a small Chinese village, and while doing so, meets the woman of his dreams. This film had light-heartedness and provided a sense of fun for the film festival audiences.

**A Deeper Shade of Blue-** Brought to the film fest as part of the "To the Maxxx" series, the renowned surf-filmmaker Jack McCoy has made a film about the history of surfing, from the Polynesian days to current surfing practices. This event packed in over 2,000 surf-movie fans and appearances by surfer Kelly Slater, the respected moviemakers Bruce and Dana Brown (*The Endless Summer* and *Step into Liquid*), as well as the "real" Gidget, Kathy Kohner

although I did not have the whole script, I had the sides (excerpts) to work with," she shared of the process that won her the key opportunity to be cast in the film. Now she is an Oscar nominee for Best Supporting Actress and is very poised and gracious.

The extraordinary Australian actress Jacki Weaver was honored for her Oscar nominated role as the treacherous Grandma Smurf in *Animal Kingdom*. She has been working in films since the legendary "New Wave" of Australian filmmaking, and, in the 1970s, was featured in Peter Weir's groundbreaking *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. "In my career, it has been full of amazing times such as working with Peter Weir, who I don't think ever made a bad movie" she stated. She is currently working onstage with Cate Blanchett in Checkov's *Uncle Vanya*, mentioning "working with Cate, she is this amazing, extraordinary person," and "we hope to bring the play to New York." Onstage at the Lobero she said "it was a surreal opportunity to be part of *Animal Kingdom*...When I first read the script, the character jumped off the page, and I had to have this part...Smurf embodies the nature of a socio-path, adept at hiding and at the same time charming."

Lee Unkrich, the director of the uber-successful *Toy Story 3* presented the Virtuoso Awards to the actors (Andrew Garfield from the much-honored *Social Network* also received an award, but was not present, as he was stuck on the set of *Spider-Man*). A splendid moment at the film festival, complete with well-chosen representative film clips, these performances shared a common trait of total commitment to the material, and, as a result, have truly excelled, exciting critics and audiences.



Hailee Steinfeld



Jacki Weaver



John Hawkes



Leslie Manville



Lee Unkrich



*Red Light Revolution-* Sam Voutas, Director and Melanie Ansley, Producer

## Spotlight: Some SBIFF Film Highlights

Reviews by Robert F. Adams / Special to CASA

There were many wonderful films over the week from a multitude of international and local sources. Here are some highlights I was able to catch:

**Dance Marathon-** From the award-winning Polish filmmaker Magdalena Holland-Lazarkiewicz, this story delves into the public square of a small village during a dance marathon, organized by the various

questionable Polish politicians. The director creates a vivid portrait of desperate economic circumstances. The characterizations, from the thoughtful script, are brought to life by a wonderful cast, combined with intriguing cinematography (landscapes, light reflections), which helped to make this film a last-weekend sell-out. Influences from the best of Eastern and Northern European art cinema, and *Wings of Desire* were felt, making this movie a noteworthy part of the cinematic fabric.

**180 Degrees-** Directed by Fernando Kalife, from Monterrey, Mexico, his film explores themes surrounding dishonesty and redemption. The journey is entertaining along the way as the film provides a touching portrait



Chad Marshall, surfer; Jack McCoy, *A Deeper Shade of Blue* filmmaker; Trace Marshall, surfer; and Kathy Kohner Zuckerman, the real "Gidget" having fun at the after party

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## 3RD WEEKEND Free Screenings Of The Best Of The Festival

A tradition of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, giving back to the community, finds its form in the festival's 3rd Weekend. The Best of Fest screenings, offered for free, is a mini fest of its own comprised of some of the more popular films from the festival, many of which won awards.

This year's program begins on Friday, February 11th at the Riviera Theatre on a first come, first serve basis.

The schedule is as follows:

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

#### 7pm Face To Face

Best Independent Feature  
Dir: Michael Rymer

#### 9:30pm Angels & Airwaves Presents "Love"

Dir: William Eubank

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

#### 11am When I Rise

Fund for Santa Barbara Social Justice Award Winner. Dir: Mat Hames

#### 1pm Patisserie Coin de rue

Best East Meets West Cinema Award Winner. Dir: Yoshihiro Fukagawa

#### 4pm Darwin

Dir: Nick Brandestini

#### 7pm Troubadours

SB Independent Audience Choice Award Winner. Dir: Morgan Neville

#### 9:30pm Piche: Sky and Ground

Dir: Sylvain Archambault

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

#### 11am Crazy Wisdom: The Life & Times of Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche

Dir: Johanna Demetrakas

#### 1pm The Boy Mir: Ten Years in Afghanistan

Best Documentary Film Award Winner  
Dir: Phil Grabsky

#### 4pm Togetherness Supreme

Best International Film Award Winner  
Dir: Nathan Collett

#### 7pm That's What I Am

Dir: Mike Pavone

Schedule subject to change  
Check for updates at [www.sbiff.org](http://www.sbiff.org)

Zuckerman. The story is well told, the surfing footage is phenomenal, and the audience was extremely over-the-top-enthralled with this world premiere.

Robert F. Adams, a Santa Barbara landscape architect, is a graduate of UCLA's School of Theatre and Film, as well as Cal Poly. He has served on the film selection committees for the Aspen Film Fest and the SB International Film Festival. Email him at [robert@earthknower.com](mailto:robert@earthknower.com).



Robert F. Adams



## Nicole Kidman: Cinema Vanguard Award *Down the Rabbit Hole*

By Erin J. Smith / CASA

**L**IKE AN ANGEL FLOATING UP THE RED CARPET, the graceful and willowy Nicole Kidman arrived at the historic Arlington Theatre aglow in the flashing of lights. Never one to take the easy, obvious route, Kidman's adventurous spirit has earned her the honor as Santa Barbara International Film Festival's *Cinema Vanguard*. The Academy Award winning actress and recent nominee joined SBIFF Executive Director Roger Durling to look back at the brave, creative choices she has made throughout her career.

"It's important to keep it dangerous," said Kidman, in thinking about her most recent Academy Award nominated performance. "I need to be able to delve into the psychology of a character, and it can be a labyrinth."

News of her nomination for *Rabbit Hole*, which she also produced, came by way of the *Today Show* over breakfast with her family in Nashville. Kidman described how she burst into tears at the news, much to the bewilderment of her young daughter. "I think I've celebrated it more this time," she said. "It's a beautiful tribute

to the longevity of my career, and I'll always remember my husband jumping around the kitchen and my daughter's reaction."

As a child growing up in Australia, Kidman was often found indoors with her nose in a book. Blessed with the milky white skin and fair hair she is now known for, Kidman's mother had the good sense to keep her away from the beach where she was liable to burn. Instead, Kidman delved into the likes of Chekov and Dostoevsky or immersed herself in philosophical ideas and the avant garde. "When you're young, you enter into the world of the story. Imagination is built that way," she said. "How you become an actor is by reading great literature." Kidman wanted to be an actor since "she was this high" and attended drama school in Australia. She landed her first film role in *Bush Christmas* at age sixteen and made her way to the U.S. less than ten years later for a role in *Dead Calm*. Not long after, she captured the heart of America and her three-time leading man, Tom Cruise, in *Days of Thunder*.

"Obsessive compulsive behavior is attractive in a director, but not a husband," laughed

Kidman, who has worked with the likes of Gus Van Sant, Lars von Trier, and Alejandro Amenábar, not to mention Sydney Pollack and Stanley Kubrick. "I'm drawn to bold directors. I love when a performance is coaxed out of me and I feel very, very safe. If it becomes too frightening, we lose a great performance," she added. "What happens on set is sacred. Who knows what it takes to create a great performance? Maybe we shouldn't know."

In order to attract her attention for the starring role in *Moulin Rouge!*, Baz Luhrmann sent Kidman a box of long-stemmed roses to her dressing room while she was performing in *The Blue Room* on Broadway, complete with a note that read 'Please be my Satine.' "That's when the courtship began," she said. "Baz Luhrmann was a great salesman. He didn't even have a script. He sold me on the idea and some pictures. I'm so glad I made that leap of faith."

Kidman's Academy Award winning portrayal of Virginia Woolf in *The Hours* came at a time when she was going through a period of depression in her own life, prompting her to try and get out of the role. "But sometimes a character and life meet each other, like it's meant to be," she described. "I suppose I don't want to take anything for granted. Life is about contrasts. I've existed in places of not having something and understand the flipside of that. But loss relates to love," she said. "The deeper the grief,



Nicole Kidman was presented with the Cinema Vanguard Award on Saturday, February 5th

Photo by Caroline David

the deeper the love."

Look for Kidman to grace the red carpet at the Oscars. Next stop? Kidman returns to Broadway to star opposite James Franco in Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth*. For more information, visit [www.sbiiff.org](http://www.sbiiff.org).

## SBIFF Film Highlights: Part Two

Reviews by Alex Henteloff / Special to CASA

Here's my round up of memorable films from the second week of the Festival.

First, several outstanding documentaries:

**Confessions of an Eco-terrorist-** is a witty and complex look at civil disobedience at sea. Charismatic, daring, and unflappable Captain Paul Watson and his crew aboard the 'Sea Shepherd' do whatever it takes to stop illegal fishing all over the world's oceans confronting ships, hostile locals, even governments. Watson's canny ability to bring the press into the picture is key to his success. That and his uncanny ability to uncover illegal activity on the high seas with the accuracy of a hound dog! The film is well crafted with rich, unexpected humor, drama, and, be forewarned, two disturbingly bloody scenes.

**Killing Memories-** shows a very different view of Vietnam. Five men who served together in 1967 are reunited and return to the scenes of their fighting as they attempt to heal wounds they still carry from that traumatic time. They meet some of 'the enemy' and learn mutual forgiveness. The most poignant story thread is of one GI who returns the picture taken from a soldier he killed to the man's daughter. Insightful and sometimes unsettling, their journey is a provocative and beautiful look at the bonding and camaraderie that kept this group a real 'family'. It is an unusual, moving story.

**Darwin-** presents an odd community at the end of a road in Death Valley, CA. Here 35 very idiosyncratic people live their unorthodox life style. They are remote and distant from the rest of society and almost as distant from each other. When they venture into a common activity (the water district) civility barely hangs on. One person works, she's the postmistress,

and the rest are either on disability or retired. It is a compelling look at a part of humanity we seldom see.

**Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean-** (USA/Uganda) is a short (40 minute) that proves that there is strength in unity. A Ugandan coffee grower, a Jew, takes the chance that he will be better off taking his crop to market himself rather than continue accepting the non competitive offer from the city buyers. He finds success with a U.S. buyer and that leads him to

approach his neighbors, growers who are Christian and Muslim (communities that had never dealt with each other before) to form a cooperative. Their accomplishments, in business and in interfaith understanding, are inspiring.

**Dancing Chaplin-** (Japan) follows first the rehearsal and then the taped performance of "Chaplin Dances" a 1991 ballet by French choreographer Roland Petit inspired by the works of Charlie Chaplin. Working with Mr.

Petit and ballet stars Luigi Bonino and Lienz Chang, director Masayuki Suo chronicles the creative process in two media, ballet and film. First comes the intense input from the different crafts-primarily the dancers and directors, then the lighting, costume, and scenic designers-and the compromises involved to achieve the final result; then, the superb ballet. It is a triumph!

Then, outstanding Comedies and Dramas:

**To Hell with The Ugly-** (Spain): Javier Cámara is a forlorn, unattractive (ugly) single man looking for love (even his family and friends ridicule him) and Carmen Machi is his equally 'plain' sister-in-law. A clumsy re-connection is established (his brother ran off with another woman) growing and flourishing through the



*That's What I Am* crew: Amy Madigan; Mike Pavone, Writer/Director; Daniel Roebuck as Jim Nichol; Daniel Yelsky as Norman; Randy Orton as Ed Free; Mia Frampton as Mary Clear; Chase Ellison as Andy Nichol; Alexander Walters as Big G; and Ed Harris as Mr. Simon.

boy meets girl/gets girl/looses girl/gets girl story with endearing warmth and whimsy. Led by the wonderful, oddly star-crossed leading couple, *To Hell with The Ugly* is an enchanting romantic comedy.

**Fire of Conscience-** (Hong Kong) is a tightly paced crime drama directed by Dante Lam, that pits a tenacious, over zealous cop fighting crime and corruption against the smarts of a smooth, corrupt, highly placed police officer. Camera and lighting are used to great effect along with tension building editing to keep the anxiety level high, building to a riveting finale.

**A Barefoot Dream-** (S. Korea): A former Korean soccer star finds himself in East Timor where he sets up shop selling soccer shoes to the poor. Not a good idea but, aided by the S. Korean ambassador and a savvy merchant who 'catch the dream', he brings 'pay for your shoes by installment' to the local kids, survives several ominous setbacks, and ends up creating a soccer team from the neighborhood's poorest kids who come together and electrify the world. Dream on!

Two fine films dealing with family loss caught my attention. Both are endearing examples of human strength and courage.

**A Life Begins-** (Canada) follows 12 year old 'Etienne' as he tries to make sense of his addicted doctor father's heart attack and death. He finds

some pills that his father had concealed and, playing at being 'doctor', he tries them and takes notes. Continuing in the role, he gives them to a friend, causing a bad reaction. He obsesses about his father, seeing him almost everywhere, as he struggles, with his mother's help, to come to terms with his painful loss.

**Anything You Want-** (Spain): The ideal family life ends abruptly when, while playing in the park, beautiful four year old 'Daphne' is suddenly left frighteningly alone as her mother lies on a bench, dying from a seizure. She and her high powered father are in shock. 'Daphne' copes by demanding that her father pretend to be her mother. Dad decides this is the gentlest and best way to help his child through this horrible ordeal and, with help from a female impersonator he had insulted and against the wishes of doctors and school advisers, he learns to become 'mom' and they work through their pain together.



Karen Earp and Sylvain Archambault, Director of *Piché: The Landing of a Man*

Alex Henteloff, a member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with over 40 years experience in the theatre, has spent most of his professional career as an actor. Email him at [papaalex@verizon.net](mailto:papaalex@verizon.net).



Alex Henteloff

# SBIFF: Winning Films & Happy Faces

**T**HE WINNING FILMS of The 26th Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival were feted on Sunday when the 26th Festival did its wrap. To the joy and surprise of both patrons and industry professionals, the festival's season managed to surpass even the great success of last year's silver anniversary.

"This year in particular, I have been incredibly impressed by our film lineup," shared Roger Durling, SBIFF Executive Director. "Each of the films possessed their own unique quality, creating one of the most diverse and interesting programs yet."

The esteemed Jury for the 2010 SBIFF included: actor Christopher Lloyd (*Back to the Future*); SBIFF originator Phyllis de Picciotto; actor Billy Baldwin (*Gossip Girl*); writer/director Paul Brickman (*Risky Business*) and his wife Jennifer Brickman; writer/producer Rusty Lemorande (*Electric Dreams, Captain EO*), Frank Donner (producer, *Deliver Us From Evil*); actor Anthony Zerbe (*The Matrix*) and his wife Arnette Zerbe and director Andy Davis (*The Fugitive*).

The winning films are as follows: **The Panavision Spirit Award for Independent Cinema**, given to a unique independent feature that has been made outside mainstream Hollywood, went to the Australian film *Face To Face* (World Premiere), directed by Michael Rymer. Written by Australian playwright David Williamson and adapted for the screen by Rymer, the film is based on transcripts from actual conflict resolution sessions. The winner received a camera package worth \$60,000.

**The Best International Film Award** went to *Togetherness Supreme* from Kenya, directed by Nathan Collett, and based on true events that show a street level vantage point of the Kenyan political riots of 2007.

A special jury mention was awarded to actress **Alicia Vikander** from the Swedish film *Pure*, directed by Lisa Langseth. Vikander portrays 20-year-old Katarina whose dreary life is instantly transformed when she discovers Mozart for the first time on YouTube, immediately fascinated by the emotional power of his music.

**The Nueva Vision Award for the best Spanish/Latin American film** was awarded to *Nostalgia For The Light (Nostalgia De La Luc)*, a US Premiere film directed by Patricio Guzmán. The past can either haunt or enlighten us, propelling us forward to head confidently back to the rest of our lives, or keeping us in a vicious cycle.

**Best East Meets West Cinema Award** went to *Patisserie (Coin De Rue)*, the World Premiere film from Japan directed by Yoshihiro Fukagawa. *Patisserie* is a story of introspection and soul-searching, both on the parts of the viewer and characters.

**Best Documentary Film Award** went to *The Boy Mir: Ten Years in Afghanistan*, (US Premiere) directed by Phil Grabsky. Ten years in the making, this appealing documentary follows a young boy, Mir, from age 8 to 18, as he grows to adulthood with his family in rural Afghanistan.

**Bruce Corwin Award for Best Live Action Short Film Under 30 Minutes** went to *West of the Moon*, directed by Brent Bonacorso. A narrative story based on a series of interviews with children about their dreams.

**Bruce Corwin Award for Best Animation Short Film** went to the Academy Award nominated *The Lost Thing*, directed by Andrew Ruhemann and Shaun Tan.

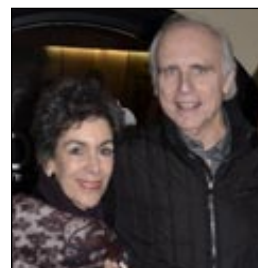
**The Fund for Santa Barbara Social Justice Award** Sponsored by The Fund for Santa Barbara for a documentary film that addresses social justice issues went to two films:

*When I Rise*, directed by Mat Hames, is about agifted black music student at the University of Texas who is thrust into a civil rights storm that changes her life forever.

*Nostalgia For The Light (Nostalgia De La Luc)*, a US Premiere film directed by Patricio Guzmán. The winners each received \$2,500.

**The SB Audience Choice Award** went to *Troubadors*, directed by Morgan Neville. This engaging documentary focuses on the Los Angeles music scene from the late 1960s to the early '70s, centered at the legendary Troubadour in West Hollywood. James Taylor and Carole King are featured

The winners of the **10-10-10 Student Screenwriting Competition and Filmmaking Competition** were announced at the closing night festivities. For screenwriting, the winners were **Aija Mayrock** from San Marcos High School and **Mary Jane Johnson** from Santa Barbara City College. For filmmaking, the winners were **Tate Larrick** from Santa Barbara High School and **Brent Rumble** from the Brooks Institute.



Margo Barbakow and Jeff Barbakow



Christopher Nolan, 2011 SBIFF Modern Master and Leonardo DiCaprio

On Sunday, January 30th, Director Christopher Nolan received the highest honor presented by the Santa Barbara International Film Festival – The Modern Master Award. Pete Hammond, a Deadline-Hollywood Columnist, moderated the interview and "Inception" star, Leonardo DiCaprio presented the award.



Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree



David Edelman



Billy Baldwin



Mindy Denson and Donna B. Fisher Yates



Jonnie Reinhold and Das Williams, CA's 35th District Assembly Member



Bibi Moezzi, Business First National Bank; and Bill Pessa, K-Lite



Leonard Maltin and daughter Jessie Maltin



*The Blind Spot* crew: **Julien Knafo**, Composer; **Marie Hélène Panisset**, Producer; **Nicolas Bolduc**, Cinematographer; **Fabrice Barrilliet**, Producer; **Judith Baribeau**, Actress



Jelinda DeVorzon and Barry DeVorzon



Helene Schneider, City of SB Mayor



Chris Lancashire and Violaine Estérez



Stan Roden and Phyllis de Picciotto

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