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Press Release



For Immediate Release

Winners Wow Audience At Chicago International Children's Film Festival Closing Night

Chicago, IL - November 2, 2009 - The **26th Annual Chicago International Children's Film Festival** congratulates the winners of more than 30 awards presented at the CICFF's American Airlines Closing Night Awards Presentation on Sunday, November 1, 2009 at Columbia College's Film Row Cinema. **Charles Malik Whitfield** (*Notorious*, *The Temptations*, *Behind Enemy Lines*) hosted the event. More than 80 filmmakers from around the world came to watch the most acclaimed films of the CICFF and celebrate ten days of master classes, discussions, and life-changing movies. Films from the UK, Sweden, Finland, Japan, China, Brazil, Poland, Taiwan, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, India, Bangladesh, Canada, Scotland, Norway, and the USA swept the top awards.

2009 CICFF Winners List ([Click Here](#))

Over the last ten days, Chicago audiences watched 265 exceptional films and over 18,000 children cast their votes for the top flicks this year. The **Best of the Fest** prize was awarded to Julian Fellowes for ***From Time to Time*** (UK, 2009), a supernatural story set just after WWII about a boy who interacts with the spirits that have haunted his family for centuries. Mr. Fellowes also took home the **Children's Jury Second Prize** for Live-action, English Language Feature Film or Video and the **Adult Jury Certificate of Excellence** for Best Live-action, Feature Film or Video.

Said Mr. Fellowes, "Those of us who work in the film industry spend a lot of time talking about what we think children will like, but in the end, it's the children themselves who know what they really enjoy. One of the really special things about this festival is the fact that children's own votes and opinions are so influential."



Best of the Fest - *From Time to Time*

The Children's Jury honored director Vic Sarin with the top prize for **Live-action, English Language Feature Film or Video** for ***A Shine of Rainbows*** (Canada/Ireland, 2009) starring Aidan Quinn and Connie Nielsen, about an orphan whose life is transformed when he is adopted by a couple living on magnificent Corrie Island.



Asked about the popularity of ***A Shine of Rainbows***, juror Willis Weinstein, age 11, responded, "The film was beautiful in every single way. Of course, it made a lot of kids want to visit Ireland and see the seals. But I think the real reason kids love this film is because it's a movie about changing hearts."

Live-

action Feature - *A Shine of Rainbows*

The Children's Jury awarded the **First Prize for Documentary Film or Video** to Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed for ***Bronx Princess*** (USA, 2008).

As the only children's film festival in the world whose winners can go on to compete for the Academy Awards, excitement and anticipation surrounded the CICFF's qualifying categories.

Adult Jury Live-action Short Film or Video went to Katrin Geebe for ***Sores & Sîrîn*** (Germany, 2008) about Kurdish siblings living with a foster mother in Germany after losing their parents in the Iraq War. Winner of the **Adult Jury Animated Short Film** went to Anita Killi for ***Angry Man*** (Norway, 2009), a powerful and poetic film about a child coping with his father's anger. *Angry Man* is Ms. Killi's third film to compete in the CICFF.

Jesper W. Nielsen, who directed ***Through a Glass, Darkly*** (Norway, 2008) took home the **First Prize for Adult Jury Live-Action Feature Film or Video** as well as the **Certificate of Excellence in a Live-action, Foreign Language Feature Film or Video** awarded by the Children's Jury. "This was my favorite film," said Children's Jury Member Alexis Hoard, "And I think it changed the way I think about death. Before, the idea of dying made me nervous and scared. Now, I think, there's a part of us, a happy part, that goes on."

P O E T R Y



FOUNDATION

Anne Halsey, Director of the Poetry Foundation's Media Program, announced the CICFF's **Poetry Foundation Poetry Prize** winner, for which the recipient receives a \$10,000 cash prize given to the film that truly reflects the spirit of poetry in film for young audiences. This year winner was filmmaker Andreas Mendritzki for his film based on Canadian poet, Loma Crozier's poem ***Fear of Snakes***. "A prize of this importance is extraordinary for me, as it would be for any young filmmaker" said Mendritzki. "But the most amazing thing is that the Reel Poetry program, in which my film played, got more than 600 children excited about poetry in ways I couldn't imagine before."

Other prominent festival winners and awards include: **The Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Prize** of \$2,500 for **Best Film or Video by an Emerging Director**, awarded to Mary Ann Kellogg for her short live-action film, ***Abuelo*** (USA, 2009). **The Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Prize** of \$2,500 for **Best Child-Produced Film or Video** was given to Shiropa Purna for ***Our Boat is Our Address*** (Bangladesh, 2009). Said Shiropa in accepting her award, "When I saw the quality of the films made by other children, I really thought I didn't have a chance. It is such an amazing moment for me and for the children in Bangladesh who are in my film."

The Liv Ullmann Peace Prize, awarded to the film that addresses the issue of global connectedness and envisions a world living in harmony, went to ***Harun-Arun***, by Vinod Ganatra (India, 2009). Mr. Ganatra mentioned his touching interaction with a child who asked him if he had made *Harun-Arun* for a particular audience. Answering his own question, the child responded, "I believe you made this film for the children of the world..."

The prestigious **Rights of the Child Award**, given to the film that best represents the values of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, went to Andrzej Maleszka for ***The Magic Tree*** (Poland, 2009.) Said Mr. Maleszka, "When I received the first prize at this festival for my short film *The Wooden Dog*, it opened the doors that led to this feature film. This is a very important festival, not just for the large audiences but because it makes new films possible!"

For additional information about the festival, or to interview one of the prizewinners, please contact Patrick Ogle at (773) 281-9075 ext. 3018 or email patrick@facets.org.

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