

Palm Beach INTERNATIONAL Film Festival

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THAT'S A WRAP!

PALM BEACH CLOSING 13TH ANNUAL FILM FEST

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FILM AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

PALM BEACH, FL (April 17, 2008) – It was a true celebration of film as the Palm Beach International Film Festival celebrated its 13th installment. After a week of screenings, the jury votes were tallied to determine the winners for Best Feature Film, Best Documentary, Best Short Film, Best Director and Performances, while audiences voted for *their* favorite in categories of features, documentaries and shorts. Jury winners and Audience Choice Awards were announced at the Closing Night Awards Ceremony.

The jury for the 13th PBIFF consisted of: Director Dan Wolman (winner of PBIFF's 2007 Best Feature, *Tied Hands*) and Joan Robbins, Sr. VP, Talent Relations, Entertainment Studios, who judged Feature Films; Emmanuel Itier, film producer, and Debbie Frank, COO of the Frank Theatres, who voted on Documentaries; Conrad Bachmann, former governor of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences judged the Short Films. The jury was particularly appreciative of the effort each filmmaker put into their projects and felt they should be commended for the creative energy that went into each film! The winning films were:

The Award for **Best Feature Film** went to the heartwarming and inspirational Italian film *Rosso Come Il Cielo (Red like the Sky)* directed by Cristiano Bortone. "*Red Like The Sky*" recounts the incredible true story of early life of blind sound editor Micro Mencacci, the victim of a childhood accident which robbed him of his sight. The film shows how the imaginative and creative boy not only changes the lives of everyone around him, but contributes to change the country's misguided treatment of children with disabilities.

The Award for **Best Director of a Feature Film** subsequently went to *Cristiano Bortone* for his film *Rosso Come Il Cielo (Red like the Sky)*. Said jurors Wolman and Robbins, "It was very difficult for us to decide who will be Best Director among the almost equally deserving men and women in this category, but we chose Cristiano Bartone for his emotional and cinematically powerful direction.

The Features Jury awarded a **Special Jury Prize** to Lachen Zinoun, the world-famous dancer-choreographer for his directorial debut, "*Oud Al Ward (The Lost Beauty)*," which made its US Premiere at the festival. "Zinoun, who succeeds in giving his film a fairy tale, almost classical feel, shows great imagination and talent," commented Wolman and Robbins.

After viewing nine worthy competitors, the jury decided not to give the prize for "**Best Performance**" to an individual, but rather to the entire ensemble cast of the engrossing Irish film, "*Kings*," for their touching portrayal of Irish emigrants in England – a performance rich in humanity and emotion. The cast was led by Colm Meaney, Donal O'Kelly, Brendan Conroy, Donncha Crowley, Barry Barnes, Seán O'Tarpaigh and Peadar O'Treasaigh.

The Award for **Best Documentary Feature** went to *D'une Seule Voix (With One Voice)*, directed by de Lauzanne Xavier, which made its World Premiere. Long-time music vagabond Jean-Yves Labat de Rossi invited musicians from Israel and Palestine to join together on an extraordinary tour that would unite them in France for three weeks. On stage it was a triumph, but tempers flared backstage. But this inescapable proximity forced them to communicate. The stresses from the exhausting tour and political rivalries slowly developed into close ties, sustained and driven by the music.

Documentary juror Emmanuel Itier commented, "This year, again, was such a rich and diverse year with inspirational movies that truly touched the heart and made a political statement."

A **Special Jury Prize** was awarded to Suzanne Chisholm and Michael Parfit's "*Saving Luna*," about a lost baby orca whale. Seeking friendship from humans, he is both beloved and feared. Tragedy makes him a symbol of wild beauty...wonderful to know, hard to save. Commented juror Debbie Frank, "It was a phenomenal and touching story that showed just how similar humans are to wild beings...it broke down the fundamental barrier of mutual fear and ignorance that normally exists."

The Award for **Best Short Film** went to Shalini Kantayya's "*A Drop of Life*," also making its World Premiere. Shorts juror Conrad Bachmann commented, "Never before has the saying 'A drop in the bucket' become more monumental than the impact of this film. Crafted with precision, it has all the impact of our future. Shalini Kantayya takes us on a journey of society's class system and the world of profit. In 17 minutes this film will change your life."

The Audience Choice Award for Best Feature Film went to "*The Little Traitor*," written and directed by Lynn Roth. Based on the novel *Panther in the Basement* by world-renowned author

Amos Oz, the movie takes place in Palestine in 1947, a few months before Israel becomes a state. Proffy, a militant yet sensitive 11-year old, wants the occupying British to get the hell out of his land. One evening, out after curfew, Proffy is seized by Sergeant Dunlop, a British officer. Instead of arresting him, he deposits him back home, but in the weeks to come, a friendship ensues between these two foes. Once Proffy's friends discover this, they report him as a traitor and he is brought to trial. These experiences shape him for life, especially the shock that he could have such genuine affection for the enemy.

The Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Feature went to “Of All Things” directed by Jody Lambert. Dennis Lambert, one of the most successful songwriters/producers of the '70s & '80s, embarks on a whirlwind 'comeback' tour of The Phillipines, where his obscure, 1972 solo album is still hugely successful.

The Audience Choice Award for Best Short Film went to “*Slingers*” directed by Rory Kindersley. Tommy, Joey and Rascal feel that this could finally be their year to take home the prize in an annual game of cowboys against the local bullies. And what of the prize? To make out with the local beauty!

At the center of the Film Festival were the filmmakers. Randi Emerman, PBIFF Director, commented, “This year, for me, it was refreshing and inspiring to have had the honor to discover so many wonderful filmmakers from the corners of the earth. The films unveiled a wide swath of experiences...they entertained and dazzled us, they made us laugh and cry, but more importantly, they made us think!”

Following the awards ceremony, PBIFF closed its 13th edition with the endearing “*Young@Heart*.”

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