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The Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association

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Historical/Political Dramas Naturally Capture the Attention of D.C.'s Critics

"Zero Dark Thirty" the big winner; Kathryn Bigelow scores again

Washington, D.C. — This morning, the Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association (WAFCA) announced their winners for 2012, honoring a wide sweep of films, from musicals to science fiction. And while only three films garnered more than one award, it was clear that historical/political dramas resonated most with the critics from the nation's capital.

"Zero Dark Thirty," the account of U.S. intelligence specialists' and Army special forces' pursuit and elimination of terrorist Osama bin Laden, won Best Film. In 2009, Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to ever win the WAFCA prize for Best Director for her Iraq War film, "The Hurt Locker." Just three years later, Bigelow has won the same award again for "Zero Dark Thirty."

"In a year full of strong films," said WAFCA President, Tim Gordon, "director Kathryn Bigelow's bold and audacious vision, represented in our Best Picture winner, is the perfect political story for our members in the District of Columbia. This story, told with steely, cold effectiveness, is a worthy entry into WAFCA's Best Picture canon and a cinematic achievement that we are proud to honor."

"Zero Dark Thirty" also netted Jessica Chastain her first Best Actress award. Daniel Day-Lewis won Best Actor for his riveting portrayal of President Abraham Lincoln in the year's other outstanding historical drama, "Lincoln." Best Supporting Actor went to Philip Seymour Hoffman for "The Master" and Best Supporting Actress went to Anne Hathaway for "Les Misérables," which also scooped the Best Acting Ensemble.

The screenplay awards covered two very different films: Best Adapted Screenplay went to David O. Russell for his story of love and shared neuroses in "Silver Linings Playbook," and Rian Johnson won Best Original Screenplay for his time travel mind-bender, "Looper."

Best Animated Feature was won by "ParaNorman," Best Documentary by "Bully," and Best Foreign Language Film by Michael Haneke's "Amour." Best Art Direction went to "Cloud Atlas," while Claudio Miranda won Best Cinematography for "Life of Pi," and Jonny Greenwood took Best Score for "The Master."

New this year, WAFCA proudly instituted The Joe Barber Award for Best Youth Performance, named in honor of beloved D.C. film critic and WTOP's longtime arts editor, Joe Barber, who passed away just over a year ago. The award, which highlights the best performance from an actor or actress under 20, went to Quvenzhané Wallis for "Beasts of the Southern Wild."

"It's a shame Joe was not able to see Quvenzhané's fierce and compassionate performance in this gem of a film," said Gordon. "It's exactly the sort of role Joe would have loved, and we are so thankful to be able to remember him going forward with this very special award."

The Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association is comprised of nearly 50 DC-VA-MD-based film critics from television, radio, print and the Internet. Voting was conducted from December 7-9, 2012.

The 2012 WAFCA Award Winners:

Best Film:

Zero Dark Thirty

Best Director:

Kathryn Bigelow (Zero Dark Thirty)

Best Actor:

Daniel Day-Lewis (Lincoln)

Best Actress:

Jessica Chastain (Zero Dark Thirty)

Best Supporting Actor:

Philip Seymour Hoffman (The Master)

Best Supporting Actress:

Anne Hathaway (Les Misérables)

Best Acting Ensemble:

Les Misérables

Best Adapted Screenplay:

David O. Russell (Silver Linings Playbook)

Best Original Screenplay:

Rian Johnson (Looper)

Best Animated Feature:

ParaNorman

Best Documentary:

Bully

Best Foreign Language Film:

Amour

Best Art Direction:

Uli Hanisch, Hugh Bateup - Production Designers; Peter Walpole, Rebecca Alleway - Set Decorators (Cloud Atlas)

Best Cinematography:

Claudio Miranda (Life of Pi)

Best Score:

Jonny Greenwood (The Master)

The Joe Barber Award for Best Youth Performance:

Quvenzhané Wallis
(Beasts of the Southern Wild)

The 2012 WAFCA Award Nominees Were:

Best Film:

Argo
Les Misérables
Lincoln
Silver Linings Playbook
Zero Dark Thirty

Best Director:

Ben Affleck (Argo)
Paul Thomas Anderson (The Master)
Kathryn Bigelow (Zero Dark Thirty)
Tom Hooper (Les Misérables)
Steven Spielberg (Lincoln)

Best Actor:

Daniel Day-Lewis (Lincoln)
John Hawkes (The Sessions)
Hugh Jackman (Les Misérables)
Joaquin Phoenix (The Master)
Denzel Washington (Flight)

Best Actress:

Jessica Chastain (Zero Dark Thirty)
Marion Cotillard (Rust and Bone)
Jennifer Lawrence (Silver Linings Playbook)
Helen Mirren (Hitchcock)
Emmanuelle Riva (Amour)

Best Supporting Actor:

Alan Arkin (Argo)
Javier Bardem (Skyfall)
Leonardo DiCaprio (Django Unchained)
Philip Seymour Hoffman (The Master)
Tommy Lee Jones (Lincoln)

Best Supporting Actress:

Amy Adams (The Master)
Samantha Barks (Les Misérables)
Sally Field (Lincoln)
Anne Hathaway (Les Misérables)
Helen Hunt (The Sessions)

Best Acting Ensemble:

Argo
Les Misérables
Lincoln
Moonrise Kingdom
Zero Dark Thirty

Best Adapted Screenplay:

Chris Terrio (Argo)
David Magee (Life of Pi)
Tony Kushner (Lincoln)
Stephen Chbosky (The Perks of Being a Wallflower)
David O. Russell (Silver Linings Playbook)

Best Original Screenplay:

Quentin Tarantino (Django Unchained)
Rian Johnson (Looper)
Paul Thomas Anderson (The Master)
Wes Anderson & Roman Coppola (Moonrise Kingdom)
Mark Boal (Zero Dark Thirty)

Best Animated Feature:

Brave
Frankenweenie
ParaNorman
Rise of the Guardians
Wreck-It Ralph

Best Documentary:

Bully
The Imposter
The Invisible War
The Queen of Versailles
Searching for Sugar Man

Best Foreign Language Film:

Amour
The Intouchables
I Wish
A Royal Affair
Rust and Bone

Best Art Direction:

Sarah Greenwood - Production Designer; Katie Spencer - Set Decorator (Anna Karenina)
Uli Hanisch, Hugh Bateup - Production Designers; Peter Walpole, Rebecca Alleway - Set Decorators (Cloud Atlas)
Eve Stewart - Production Designer; Anna Lynch-Robinson - Set Decorator (Les Misérables)
Rick Carter - Production Designer; Jim Erickson - Set Decorator (Lincoln)
Adam Stockhausen - Production Designer; Kris Moran - Set Decorator (Moonrise Kingdom)

Best Cinematography:

Danny Cohen (Les Misérables)
Claudio Miranda (Life of Pi)
Mihai Malaimare Jr. (The Master)
Roger Deakins (Skyfall)
Greig Fraser (Zero Dark Thirty)

Best Score:

Dan Romer & Benh Zeitlin (Beasts of the Southern Wild)
Howard Shore (The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey)
John Williams (Lincoln)
Jonny Greenwood (The Master)
Alexandre Desplat (Moonrise Kingdom)

Best Youth Performance:

Jared Gilman (Moonrise Kingdom)
Kara Hayward (Moonrise Kingdom)
Tom Holland (The Impossible)
Logan Lerman (The Perks of Being a Wallflower)
Quvenzhané Wallis (Beasts of the Southern Wild)

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