



# NEWSLETTER 10

Find us on  **unionfilms**

## What was all the fuss about? A round-up of this year's gongs.

With the awards season now past, the dust settles on who got what and who didn't!

• The season traditionally starts with the awards given out at the Venice Film Festival (the oldest film festival anywhere) in early Autumn. Guillermo del Toro presided over the Jury, which this year included English actress Naomi Watts. In 2018, Alfonso Cuarón returned home with his black and white masterpiece **Roma** winning the *Leone d'Oro*/Golden Lion. Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos' **The Favourite** won both the Grand Jury Prize and Best Actress (Olivia Colman); Willem Dafoe scored the Best Actor win, and Jacques Audiard took the runner-up *Leone d'Argento*/Silver Lion for **The Sisters Brothers**. Out of competition, the festival includes a Classics category of screenings, which included two Dirk Bogarde titles **The Night Porter** and, appropriately, **Death in Venice**.



• The Golden Globes slip in quietly before any of the other award ceremonies, and the big winner here was the thoroughly entertaining **Bohemian Rhapsody** (even if you aren't a Queen fan), winning best film drama and the best actor award going to Rami Malik. **Green Book** and **If Beale Street Could Talk** scored well, whilst Brit-stars Olivia Colman and Christian Bale won for **The Favourite** and **Vice** respectively. In the Best Foreign Language

category, our soon-to-be-screened **Shoplifters** lost out to **Roma** (as did **Girl**, **Capernaum**, and **Never Look Away**, all possibles for next year's Phoenix programme). Our screening of **The Wife** (May 07) is timely, Glenn Close having won the Best Performance by an Actress award.

• Robert Redford may be hanging up his stetson (bet he never did any rodeo riding!) following his swansong **The Old Man & the Gun**, but his legacy will not simply be his body of filmic works. His Sundance Festival, a young upstart at just 41 years since its founding, is way more left-field in its lookout - there are plenty of documentaries, including, ironically, a U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Moral Urgency - and some of the films screened and gong-awarded are not necessarily guaranteed world-wide success on the commercial cinema circuit. This coming year the big success films to look out for in local cinemas and maybe at the Phoenix include **Clemency** starring Alfre Woodard, Chiwetel Ejiofor's **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**, the debut film by Joe Talbot **The Last Black Man in San Francisco**, and Londoner Joanne Hogg's **The Souvenir**.



• Coinciding with the end of Sundance, Madrid hosts the Goyas. The nominees in most categories were generally Spanish (language) movies, the winner of the Best Film award going to **Campeones (Champions)** directed by Javier Fesser. Rodrigo Sorogoyen's **El Reino (The Realm)** won seven awards including best director, whilst **Roma** won the Best Spanish Language Foreign Film category with **Cold War** taking the European Film gong.

• The 72-year-old BAFTAs of course are our own ceremonial riposte, primarily to the Oscars, and they do seem to have gained in importance and rivalry to them in the past few years. The February awards ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall saw a wide selection of winners, although **The Favourite** and **Roma** were again the key winners in several categories. Clearly, Yorgos Lanthimos and his crew enjoyed the night, especially the ever-delightful Olivia C whose nervous thank you speech included the comment "we are going to get so p\*\*\*\*d after this"! And as Alfonso Cuarón pointed out, how encouraging to see two films specifically shot in b&w in the frame for the Best Film in a Foreign Language award, his **Roma** taking that statuette as well as Best Film award.



• The Berlin(ale) Film Festival is a mid-February affair so closed recently, and the big winners there, the *Goldener Bär* and the *Silberner Bär* (the Golden and Silver Bears) may also be reflected in our 2019-2020 movie choices. With Juliette Binoche heading the jury, the Golden Bear went to Israeli director Nadav Lapid for his latest film **Synonymes**, and Phoenix favourite François Ozon was awarded the Silver Bear for his

title **Grâce à Dieu (By the Grace of God)**. Two Chinese films were the focus of much attention during the festival. Yimou Zhang's **Yi miao zhong (One Second)** was pulled from the Berlin screening, with "technical difficulties" cited as the reason, though many suspect it may be because it has upset Communist Party officials, who act as unofficial censors in that country's film industry (Rami Malek's Oscars speech was also censored on Chinese TV). The film is set amid the violent chaos when Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution was at its height between 1966 and 1976. On the other hand, Xiaoshuai Wang's **Di jiu tian chang (So Long, My Son)**, looking at the vast social and economic changes taking place in China from the 1980s to the present, won both Best Actress (Mei Yong) and Best Actor (Jingchun Wang) awards.



- Hot on the heels of Berlin's Bears come the French **Césars**, only a couple of years older than the Sundance Kid's protégé. That ceremony was in Paris on February 22 and the nominations were selected by the members of twelve categories of filmmaking professionals, the whole thing fully supported by the French Ministry of Culture. As with the Spanish **Goyas** largely featuring films from that country, so the Paris jury had a majority of French films in their sights, with Xavier LaGrand's **Jusqu'à la Garde (Custody)** taking Best Picture, whilst Jacques Audiard's **Les Frères Sisters (The Sisters Brothers)** added to Venice success by scoring in four categories, and **Shéhérazade** won best newcomer awards for its director (Jean-Bernard Marlin), and best new actor/actress (Dylan Robert, Kenza Fortas). They will all be in our sights too at our May/June selection committee meetings. Oh, and the Sundance Kid was awarded an honorary César.



- And then two days after the French shindig we have had the Academy Awards, better known as the **Oscars**, lately mired in all kinds of difficult situations, and perhaps still struggling to emerge from the white male-dominated ageing jury image that has led to all kinds of accusatory criticisms over some of their recent film award choices. Its submission rules are very strict, but once nominated for the ceremony, an Oscar-linked film is guaranteed maximum exposure from this granddaddy (should I have said grandmammy?) of all gong shows. Once again, the Phoenix interest lies mainly with the foreign language titles entered, but as at other award ceremonies, this year films like **Cold War** and **Roma** were also entered in the main categories, including Best Picture. At the end of the compère-less night, this year's key winners included the seriously flawed **Green Book** as Best Film, but also Olivia Colman for Best Speech award even if **The Favourite** was pipped at the post by the afore-mentioned Viggo

Mortensen/Mahershala Ali road movie. **Roma** won three awards, but one wonders if the Academy ignored it for the top award because of its Netflix (i.e. non-Hollywood) provenance? For the Phoenix, we may consider the runner-up German film **Werk ohne Autor (Never Look Away)**, with **Kinder des Kalifats (Of Fathers and Sons)** as a possible documentary title, for our 2019-20 season.

- As for the most revered Film Festival of them all, the junket that is **Cannes**, because it takes place annually in May, we can sometimes take advantage of its successful screenings when we programme the Phoenix film selection in the Summer months preceding our yearly season. You can get a full taste of the hot news from the *croisette* on the official website at <https://www.festival-cannes.com/en/>



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

### Around the world in eighty festivals?

If there was no mention above of the many other Film Festivals around the world, perhaps that is because they are far less influential affairs. We have mentioned before the annual Autumn Thessaloniki jamboree, a possible focus trip for The Greek Project (<http://www.greekproject.co.uk/>), but there are many many more, some focusing on a particular genre or aspect of film. Here are just a few of the roughly 3000 festivals held each year somewhere on the planet: Abu Dhabi - films from the Arab world; Aspen - short films; Austin - screenwriting; Cairo - female film makers; Bhopal - wildlife and environmental films; Brisbane - films from the Pacific Rim; Buenos Aires - fantasy, horror, bizarre and science fiction genres; Bydgoszcz - the art of cinematography; Cape Town & Johannesburg Out in Africa - LGBT films; Cork - short films, features, documentaries, live soundtrack events and experimental filmmaking in venues across the city; Deauville - American films; Edinburgh - the longest continuously running film festival in the world; Dubai - films for children; The Gambia - films made in indigenous languages; Hong Kong - the best of Chinese cinema; Mumbai - films by women directors and technicians; New Zealand - the festival travels to Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch; Ouagadougou - pan-African film makers; Naples - three months long, open air screenings; Singapore - Asian movies; Swansea - independent and experimental films; Sydney - horror movies; Toronto - a huge variety of films of all genres, over 300 films in eleven days); Tribeca (New York) - founded by Jane Rosenthal and Robert De Niro; and Warsaw - Jewish-themed films. And that list only touches the surface, but we must give one final mention for a unique entry into this long list, the Sahara International Film Festival which is the only film festival in the world to be held in a refugee camp (in the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic).



**FiSahara**

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL  
FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE  
المهرجان العالمي للفيلم بالصحراء الغربية

[www.thephoenix.org.uk](http://www.thephoenix.org.uk)

ink inc. 060319