

Film Feature: 48th Annual Chicago International Film Festival Highlights, Part Two

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on October 15, 2012 - 8:44am

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CHICAGO – As the 48th Annual Chicago International Film Festival reaches its halfway point with its enormously anticipated centerpiece screening of Tom Tykwer, Andy and Lana Wachowski's star-studded epic, "Cloud Atlas," Hollywood Chicago will continue to single out an array of titles that are not to be missed. Here are the highlights covering October 15th to October 17th, 2012 (stay tuned on the 18th for more highlights).

The second installment of our CIFF 2012 preview includes an astonishing stop-motion epic from a Chicago animator, a brain-twisting and unapologetically sensual teen drama from Switzerland and the latest work from David Chase, best known as the creator of HBO's hit crime series, "The Sopranos." Chase is among the many filmmakers scheduled to attend the screenings of their own films, and it must be said that the post-film Q&As are often the brightest highlights for cinephiles.

Among the top tier of films screening over the next three days are "Boys Are Us," "Cloud Atlas," "Consuming Spirits," "Gimmie the Loot," "Not Fade Away" and "Rhino Season." Here they are, in order of appearance...



Consuming Spirits

Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

"Consuming Spirits"

October 16th, 7pm

October 19th, 9:30pm

October 22nd, 3pm

"And now for something a little different," teases an announcer at about the halfway point of Chicago filmmaker Chris Sullivan's handcrafted epic. That single line could easily serve as the understatement of the decade. This vibrantly animated melancholic wonderland is inhabited by the most neurotic stop-motion eccentrics this side of "Mary & Max." Yet all comparisons aside, there has never been a film that looks and feels quite like this one. A fractured backwoods melodrama covering everything from childhood loss to the pain of aging, Sullivan's film shifts between arrestingly oddball stop-motion and equally eerie pencil drawings—often used as flashbacks. At two hours and fifteen minutes, the picture has the depth of a novel and far too much detail to fully absorb upon an initial viewing. Audiences may want to freeze each frame to savor the superlative level of visual delights on display. Not all of the film works, and the final third does gradually run out of steam, but every time the film threatens to become tiresome, Sullivan always manages to jolt the senses with his unexpected wit and colorful dialogue. Vocal actor Robert Levy is a standout as he channels Christopher Plummer during a climactic monologue that ties many of the story threads together. Some impatient viewers may feel compelled to check their watches, but animation buffs are guaranteed to be staring at the screen in a consistent state of gobsmacked awe. It's a one-of-a-kind marvel 15 years in the making. (MF)

Director Chris Sullivan is scheduled to attend the October 16th screening.



Not Fade Away
Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

“Not Fade Away”

October 16th, 7:30pm

It’s 1964, and Douglas (John Magaro) has dreams of rock-and-roll glory, forming a band after The Beatles break through in America, and The Rolling Stones inspire a new approach and attitude toward the music he loves. But his dreams are challenged by reality, as he clashes with his more traditional father Pat (James Gandolfini). With its searing soundtrack and authentic feel, “Not Fade Away” is a glorious tribute to the joy and heartache of the rapid transitions of the 1960s through music, film and fashions. David Chase of “The Sopranos” directs this virtuous tribute to that expressive era. (PM)

Director David Chase is scheduled to attend the screening.



Rhino Season
Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

“Rhino Season”

October 17th, 3:30pm
October 20th, 2:15pm
October 21st, 7:45pm

Martin Scorsese presents this despairing drama from Bahman Ghobadi (“A Time for Drunken Horses,” “No One Knows About Persian Cats”) about a political prisoner in Iran who is incarcerated for three long decades. Not only has the government stolen the life of poet Sahel (Caner Cindoruk), it has erased him from the lives of others. As Sahel rots in prison, a false grave is planted to convince his loved ones that he’s been executed. This devastates his lover, Mina (Monica Bellucci), who subsequently agrees to marry a lecherous schlub (Yilmaz Erdogan), whose lustful obsession with her ultimately led to her husband’s imprisonment. The plot and themes are more or less straightforward, but Ghobadi adds a great deal of intrigue by juxtaposing the freed Sahel’s lonely pursuit of his wife with his memories of torture. The legendary Iranian actor Behrouz Vossoughi is terrific as the elderly Sahel, as his glassy eyes convey an ocean of sadness. There are also some strikingly abstract sequences involving horses, rhinos and a freak rainstorm of turtles. Eat your heart out, Paul Thomas Anderson. (MF)



Boys Are Us

*Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival***“Boys Are Us”**

October 17th, 6:15pm

October 18th, 8:30pm

October 19th, 3:45pm

16-year-old Mia (Joelle Witschi) is tired of all the lies and deceit. It's shattering to give yourself entirely to a person who doesn't love you back. Mia decides that's it's only in a “decisive moment” that people shed their masks and reveal who they truly are. That set-up pays off quite powerfully at the end of writer/director Peter Luisi's unexpectedly audacious teen drama that plays like the cinematic equivalent of a melodic round. Mia's older sister, Laura (Deleila Piasko), is so jaded with relationships that she convinces her heartbroken sibling to take revenge on men by toying with a random guy's feelings before cruelly dumping him. It's only apparent as the film unfolds (and folds back in on itself) that Mia's victim, “Tim,” is played by three different actors (Nicola Perot, Peter Girsberger and Rafael Moergeli). It's a very interesting plot gimmick, though Luisi perhaps could've made each version of Tim more distinctive and less repetitive. The film's last few minutes are wildly heavy-handed, but the excellent ensemble of uncannily convincing young performers ultimately save the show. Witschi and Girsberger are particularly effective, while Moergeli (who I assume was not dubbed) proves to have an amazingly soulful singing voice. (MF)

Director Peter Luisi and actor Nicola Perot are scheduled to attend the October 17th screening, and will be joined by actors Joelle Witschi and Rafael Moergeli at the October 18th screening. Luisi, Witschi and Moergeli will also attend the October 19th screening.



Cloud Atlas

*Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival***“Cloud Atlas”**

October 17th, 7pm

The Wachowskis and Tom Tykwer bring the star power to CIFF with their nearly overwhelming adaptation of David Mitchell's brilliant “Cloud Atlas.” The film that divided audiences at Toronto is likely to do the same here although there's no denying its stunning ambition and deft handling of Mitchell's themes. At nearly three hours and with dozens of speaking roles (most of the cast, including Tom Hanks and Halle Berry play multiple roles), this is not a film for everyone but the right audience will welcome the challenge. Come back next Thursday for our full review. (BT)

Directors Tom Tykwer and Andy and Lana Wachowski are scheduled to attend the October 17th screening.



Gimmie the Loot

*Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival***“Gimmie the Loot”**

October 17th, 8:10pm

October 18th, 6:30pm

It's hard to be a saint in New York City, especially when the goal is to become notorious graffiti artists like Malcolm (Ty Hickson) and Sofia (Tashiana Washington). When their latest creation is destroyed by a rival gang, they will tag one of the city's most recognizable landmarks, but first they must come up with the money to finance it. Writer/director Adam Leon makes a memorable feature debut by contrasting the privileged and the hustlers in NYC, combining a subtle brush of humor, street language and socio-economic Darwinism with the circumstances and relationships of another tricky day. (PM)

Director Adam Leon is scheduled to attend the October 17th and October 18th screenings.

Check out page two for more highlights.

Here are another four titles that may deserve your attention with official synopses from the Chicago Film Festival. If we had the time and money, we'd check these out.



Any Day Now

*Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival***“Any Day Now”**

October 15th, 6:15pm

October 17th, 9:15pm

October 18th, 3:15pm

In the late 1970s, when a mentally handicapped teenager is abandoned, a gay couple - a drag performer (Alan Cumming) and a closeted attorney (Garret Dillahunt) - takes him in and becomes the family he's never had. But, once the unconventional living arrangement is discovered by authorities, the men must fight a biased legal system to adopt the child they have come to care for as their own in this gripping testament to love and family.

Director Travis Fine and producer Kristine Fine are scheduled to attend all three screenings.



Student

Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

“Student”

October 15th, 8:30pm

October 16th, 6pm

October 22nd, 3pm

Following up his adaptation of Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, Darezhan Omirbaev returns to Russian literature, this time adapting Crime and Punishment to modern-day Kazhakstan. Goaded on by a lecture on modern capitalism, a philosophy student murders a local shopkeeper and must ponder the moral and philosophical implications of his actions. This much-adapted story is brought to new light in Post-Communist Kazhakstan, where crime and corruption have lingered following the transition to capitalism.

“Student” is co-presented by the Global Film Initiative and is part of the Global Lens 2013 film series.



King Curling

Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

“King Curling”

October 16th, 2pm

October 18th, 1pm

October 23rd, 9pm

“King Curling” is a rollicking, boisterous comedy about the high-stakes world of curling, that most glorious of broom-based ice sports. After breaking under the intense pressure of championship competition, former star Truls Paulsen has fallen far from his former exalted station, battling OCD and a reliance on pills. When he learns that his former coach is in the hospital and in desperate need of an expensive operation, Truls gets himself together for one more, potentially lucrative competition.



The Scapegoat

Photo credit: The Chicago International Film Festival

“The Scapegoat”

October 17th, 5:45pm

October 18th, 8:15pm

October 21st, 1:15pm

Set in 1952 as England prepares for a coronation, The Scapegoat tells the story of two very different men with the exact same face. Almost identical replicas of each other, they meet by chance in a station bar. Each is at a crossroads in his life: one setting out on a walking tour after losing his job as a teacher; the other avoiding home after a disastrous business venture.

Director Charles Sturridge and actor Matthew Rhys are scheduled to attend the October 17th and October 18th screenings.

Come back on October 18th, 2012 for a look at more upcoming festival highlights and stay tuned to HollywoodChicago.com for consistent CIFF coverage.



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