

Film News: 'Liberal Arts' is Top Film at 2012 Best of the Midwest Awards

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 5, 2012 - 12:44pm

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CHICAGO – The Underground Night Club in Chicago was the scene on December 4th for the annual “Best of the Midwest” Awards, celebrating a year of cinema at the Midwest Independent Film Festival. The Fest Director Mike McNamara hosted the event and with his co-presenters gave out nine awards, including the Best Feature Film to “Liberal Arts,” directed by Josh Radnor (“How I Met Your Mother”).

The Midwest Independent Film Festival convenes EVERY first Tuesday of the month throughout the year, and showcases films directly associated with the Midwest area. The “Best of the Midwest” Awards honored the films, performances and technical achievements of the festival in 2012. Special guests and presenters included Betsy Steinberg, Director of the Illinois Film Office, plus actors Christian Stolte and David Eigenberg of the NBC-TV series “Chicago Fire.”



Festival Director Mike McNamara and David Eigenberg ('Chicago Fire') at the 'Best of the Midwest' Awards
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

The 2012 Best of the Midwest Award Winners are as followed....

Best Music Video

Winner: “Moonbeams” directed by Sam Macon.

COMMENT: This surreal trip involves skeletons, a graveyard and pure escape, accompanied by the music of the “Family Band.”

Best Short Film

Winner: “The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant,” directed by Julia Reichert and Stephan Bogner

COMMENT: The short film category was one of the strongest, with “Wednesday’s Child” and “L Train” among the contenders, but it is the eloquent “Last Truck” that took the prize, as the film sounds the death knell for America’s industrial past.

Best Editing

Winner: Jill DiBiase, “Close Quarters”

COMMENT: This multi-character, multi-scenario improvisation film was a challenging example of the film editor’s craft.

Best Actress

Winner: Susan Messing, “Close Quarters”

COMMENT: Susan Messing is one of the best talents in the Chicago doing improvisation, and she also was a true highlight in “Close Quarters.” She appears weekly at the Annoyance Theater in her act, “Messing with a Friend.”

Best Cinematography

Winner: Carlo Besasie, “The Wheel”

COMMENT: In the tradition of the “steampunk” genre, this beautifully rendered short film is photographed with amazing dexterity by Besasie.

Best Actor

Winner: T.J. Jagadowski, “Close Quarters”

COMMENT: Part of a legendary improvisation team with Dave Pasquesi, “T.J. and Dave,” Jagadowski showed off some subtle acting and range in “Close Quarters.”

Best Screenplay

Winner: Brian Jun, “Joint Body”

COMMENT: Jun is a filmmaker known for his gritty tales of working class drifters. “Joint Body” was his second feature film shown at the Midwest Independent Film Festival. On the trials of being an independent director, he told HollywoodChicago.com earlier in the year, “I’ve learned how passionate I am about filmmaking. I sleep well at nights because I know I’m following my true path.”

Best Director

Winner: Josh Radnor, “Liberal Arts”

COMMENT: The “How I Met Your Mother” star breaks out as director of his second feature film, an affecting meditation about relationships and the beginnings after the endings.

Best Feature

Winner: “Liberal Arts,” directed by Josh Radnor

COMMENT: Radnor also was the male lead in the film, opposite Elizabeth Olsen. It’s the story of a 30something man (Radnor) faced with the consequences of a relationship with a much younger woman and a college campus that he keeps revisiting. One of the best films of 2012.

The Midwest Independent Film Festival kicks off again on the first Tuesday of the month, February 5th 2013. [Click here](#) [14] for details about the festival and how you can participate in what Chicago Magazine called “the place to be and be seen for veteran pros and up-and-comers.”



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [16]

Senior Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

pat@hollywoodchicago.com [15]

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