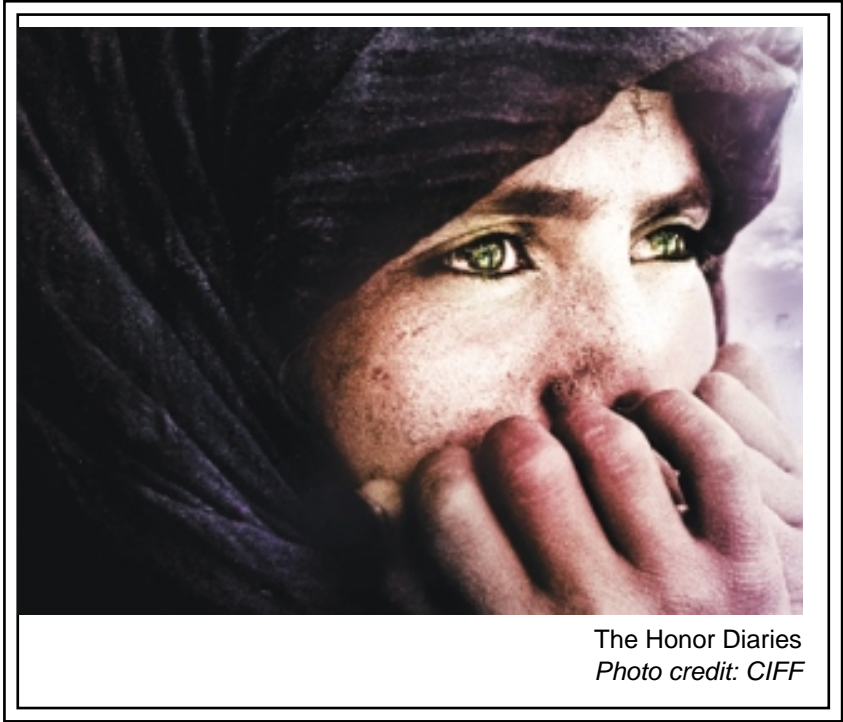


Feature: 2013 Chicago International Film Festival Highlights, Part Two

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 15, 2013 - 10:47am

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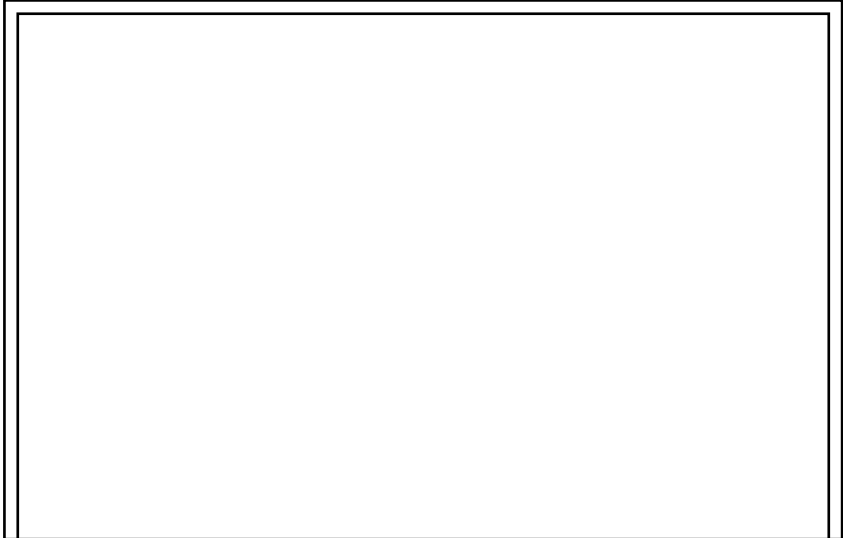
CHICAGO – We’re sure that our loyal readers have been busy at the excellent 49th Chicago International Film Festival but the event is far from over. What should you see in the next three days? What are the highlights of part two of 2013 CIFF? Patrick McDonald and Brian Tallerico guide the way...



“The Honor Diaries”

Tuesday, 10/15, 5:30pm

A stark documentary about women in Muslim majority societies, and the misogyny that darken their existence. Director Paula Kweskin focuses on the activists fighting the circumstance of this misogyny, brave and outspoken women who have battled through their own situations in the Muslim patriarchy. This is short but has impact, as example after example of women who disgrace the “honor” of a family – her indentured servitude is somehow tied into a family reputation – are punished for no reason. This film is part of a movement to change the 1400 years of this exploitation, and hopefully the first ripples in the puddle will eventually make the tides change. (PM)





Cheap Thrills
Photo credit: CIFF

“Cheap Thrills”

Tuesday, 10/15, 3:15pm

Thursday, 10/17, 10:30pm

Sunday, 10/20, 9pm

A SxSW hit that earned applause and raves in Austin makes it Chicago premiere and should be a nice jolt to a fest that’s a bit like on the dark materials. The great Pat Healy (“Compliance”) does his best work to date as Craig, a guy at the end of his financial rope. Facing eviction and just laid off, he’s drowning his sorrows in a bar when he runs into an old acquaintance named Vince (Ethan Embry). The two start a bar party with the intriguing Colin (David Koechner) and Violet (Sara Paxton), a pair of “haves,” who want to have a little fun with the lower class. It starts simple — The first one to take a shot gets \$50. And then the stakes and the reward are raised as the party goes back to Colin & Violet’s house. What would you do if saying no meant your family would be on the street? Is there anything you wouldn’t do? It’s a clever piece, well-performed, that will have legions of fans when it does get a theatrical release next year. Jump on the bandwagon early. (BT)



The Girls on Liberty Street
Photo credit: CIFF

“The Girls on Liberty Street”

Tuesday, 10/15, 6:15pm

Chicagoland writer/director John A. Rangel makes his feature film debut with a nicely original concept, following the days leading up to the army induction of a typical Hispanic girl in a Chicago suburb. Brianna Zepeda portrays the girl – also named Brianna – and turns in a mature and reflective performance of young adult transition. No punches are pulled in the film, including the director’s use of obvious friends and relatives to portray the characters around Brianna – with mixed results. Charming in its originality, frustrating in its flaws, this is what micro-budgeting independent debut features are all about, and a new voice is launched. (PM)



Like Father Like Son
Photo credit: CIFF

“Like Father Like Son”

Wednesday, 10/16, 6pm
Saturday, 10/19, 7pm

The amazing Hirokazu Kore-eda has been a CIFF staple for years with films like “Air Doll” and “Nobody Knows” playing the fest in the past. His latest is a fascinating cultural family drama about two families who watch their lives torn apart when it’s revealed that their sons were mixed up at the hospital. Those with children can imagine this impossible-to-answer question: If your 6-year-old was revealed not to be yours, would you give him up? Kore-eda adds an interesting layer to the potential melodrama by revealing two very different fathers and potential homes, neither presented with judgment. The traditional Japanese father has worked hard to provide for and teach his family, one that he may have to give up to a man who is less financially stable and less old-fashioned. Non-judgmental, non-melodramatic, Kore-eda’s film is a bit less challenging than his best work but lingers in the memory as it addresses real issues of fatherhood and family from a truthful place. (BT)



Nebraska
Photo credit: CIFF

“Nebraska”

Wednesday, 10/16, 7pm

The latest film from director Alexander Payne (“Sideways” “The Descendants”), the subject is again about a dysfunctional family, centering on a father whose creeping dementia is becoming the last straw for the clan. Veteran actor Bruce Dern portrays the Dad, who wishes to travel from Montana to Nebraska to cash in a bogus sweepstakes reward. Aiding him in this journey is his son David (comic actor Will Forte), who turns in a balanced counter intuition to Dern’s obstinacy. The is more lower middle class than “The Decendants,” with different themes and less tragedy. Featuring June Squibb, Bob Odenkirk and Stacy Keach. (PM)





The Priest's Children
Photo credit: CIFF

“The Priest’s Children”

Wednesday, 10/16, 8:15pm

Thursday, 10/17, 5:45pm

What begins as an almost wacky Serbian comedy, evolves into a serious indictment of extreme Catholicism. A priest on a remote island decides to take birth control matters into his direct realm, and alters the birthrate within his parish. The act of the alteration starts out like a farce, with several belly laughs with the inclusion of a local retailer and a fanatical druggist. The shift in direction is jarring, but does make sense – it is called living with reality and consequences, something in which the Catholic Church has not done well recently. Obviously the film is a litmus test for taste levels, religious attitudes and the act of forgiveness – all that makes it worth a look. (PM)



Le Week-end
Photo credit: CIFF

“Le Week-end”

Thursday, 10/17, 8:30pm

Saturday, 10/19, 5:30pm

A tour de force for actors Jim Broadbent and Lindsay Duncan, who portray two long time married middle agers who escape to Paris for a long weekend. During that time, the ups, downs and in-betweens of their complicated relationship are exposed. There is nothing but pure truth about the nature of marriage and a long fidelity with one partner, and those truths are sometimes very uncomfortable. But the performances – including a stellar Jeff Goldblum – are sublime and the conclusions are joyful. Just be prepared to strap in for some harsh realities, delivered unerringly by Broadbent and Duncan. (PM)



Despite the Gods
Photo credit: CIFF

“Despite the Gods”

Thursday, 10/17, 8:30pm

Friday, 10/18, 5:45pm

Much like 2002’s “Lost in La Mancha,” this documentary is about a difficult film shoot and this time the victim is director Jennifer Lynch, the daughter of David Lynch and the long ago youngster (she was 19 years old) who created the controversial “Boxing Hele-na.” After getting acclaim for her second film, “Surveillance” – shot 15 years after her first – Lynch takes on an odd Indian/Bollywood-type film about a snake queen. Cultural differences, filming methods, family circumstances and Lynch’s own insecurities are constantly derailing the film, and all of it is both funny and poignant. Lynch was willing to expose all of the foibles of being herself, and that’s what makes this film special. (PM)

We didn’t get a chance to see these but they look interesting. You may feel similarly...



How I Live Now
Photo credit: CIFF

“How I Live Now”

American teenager Daisy (Hanna’s Saoirse Ronan) is sent to stay with relatives in the English countryside. Initially withdrawn and alienated, she slowly warms to her charming surroundings, falling madly in love with a boy. But an escalating political conflict is about to turn into a third world war. When the UK falls into a violent, chaotic military state Daisy must fight bitterly for survival, trying to escape and reunite with the boy she loves in this gripping dystopian romance.

Tuesday, 10/15, 7pm

“August: Osage County”

Tuesday, 10/15, 7:30pm

August: Osage County tells the dark, hilarious, and deeply touching story of the strong-willed women of the Weston family, whose lives have diverged until a family crisis brings them back to the Midwest house they grew up in, and to the dysfunctional woman who raised them. Tracy Letts’ Pulitzer Prize-winning play was the winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Play. August: Osage County features an all-star cast, including Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Ewan McGregor, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Abigail Breslin.



The Verdict
Photo credit: CIFF

“The Verdict”

Wednesday, 10/16, 8:30pm

Thursday, 10/17, 8:15pm

Tuesday, 10/22, 3pm

A successful businessman with a beautiful wife and daughter, Luc Segers leads an idyllic life. It all falls apart when a botched burglary leads to the murder of his wife and the death of his daughter. Luc quickly identifies the killer but a procedural error lets him off scot-free, devastating Luc even further. A taut, award-winning courtroom thriller, *The Verdict* follows Luc’s obsessive efforts to enact justice.

“Go Goa Gone”

Wednesday, 10/16, 9:15pm

Friday, 10/118, 10:30pm

A rollicking zombie rom-com, *Go Goa Gone* follows two stoner friends, Luv and Hardik, who are both having a rough time. In desperate need of a vacation, they tag along with their roommate Bunny on a trip to the gorgeous beaches of Goa. After following a beautiful woman to a remote island for a rave, they awake to discover the island’s population has turned into zombies. Along with a gun-toting Russian mobster, they must battle the undead hordes.



The Notebook
Photo credit: CIFF

“The Notebook”

Thursday, 10/17, 2:30pm

Friday, 10/18, 5:45pm

Saturday, 10/19, 6:15pm

This atmospheric WWII thriller follows twin boys sent to the Hungarian countryside to wait out the war’s violent barrage with their embittered, cruel grandmother. Only 13 but grimly determined to survive, the brothers decide that the only way to endure the horrors of war is to by extinguishing their own humanity. A chilling portrait of young psyches warped by inconceivable trauma, this critical and audience favorite took the top prize at the prestigious Karlovy Vary film festival.

“Banklady”

Thursday, 10/17, 5:45pm

Sunday, 10/20, 3:45pm

Tuesday, 10/22, 3pm

Banklady tells the true story of Gisela Werler, a law-abiding factory worker from Hamburg, who falls in love with a thief and becomes a media darling as Germany’s first and most notorious female bank robber. Cunning, sexy, and exciting, Gisela and her beloved Hermann pull off one daring heist after another. Banklady follows this outlaw who captured Germany’s imagination, boldly defying gender expectations and living a decades-long Bonnie and Clyde romance.

“Philomena”

Thursday, 10/17, 6:30pm

Philomena focuses on the efforts of Philomena Lee (Judi Dench), mother to a boy conceived out of wedlock and given away for adoption in the United States. In following church doctrine, she was forced to sign a contract that wouldn’t allow for any sort of inquiry into the son’s whereabouts. After starting a family years later in England and, for the most part, moving on with her life, Lee meets Martin Sixsmith (Steve Coogan), a BBC reporter with whom she decides to discover her long-lost son.



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