

Slideshow: Red-Carpet Portraits from the 52nd Chicago International Film Festival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 27, 2016 - 6:32pm

- [2016](#) [2]
- [52nd Chicago International Film Festival](#) [3]
- [Chaz Ebert](#) [4]
- [Claude Lelouch](#) [5]
- [Damian Chazelle](#) [6]
- [Danny Glover](#) [7]
- [Geraldine Chaplin](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Joe Arce](#) [10]
- [John McNaughton](#) [11]
- [LA LA Land](#) [12]
- [Michael Kutza](#) [13]
- [Michael Rooker](#) [14]
- [Pablo Lorrain](#) [15]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [16]
- [Peter Bogdanovich](#) [17]
- [Rosemarie Dewitt](#) [18]
- [Slideshow](#) [19]
- [Steve McQueen](#) [20]
- [Taraji P. Henson](#) [21]

[Previous](#) [22] | Image 1 of 18 | [Next](#) [23]



OPENING NIGHT: Rosemarie DeWitt of 'La La Land.'

CHICAGO – The glamor and the action always takes place on the Red Carpet, and the 52nd Chicago International Film Festival had one virtually every night of their two week 2016 run. New and veteran celebrities walked the carpet, representing their films or being honored at the fest, and HollywoodChicago.com was there.

The following are the Red Carpet questions asked and answered by the participants.

Click “Next” and “Previous” to scan through the slideshow or jump directly to individual photos with the captioned links below. All photos © Joe Arce for HollywoodChicago.com.



OPENING NIGHT: Premiere of “La La Land”

Featured actor Rosemarie DeWitt and Director Damian Chazelle was in attendance on October 13th, 2016.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think is key to not acting self conscious in acting when you're about to burst into song?

Rosemarie DeWitt: Well, I actually have a non-singing role in 'La La Land.' The rest of the cast, it was really amazing what they were able to pull it off – it wasn't corny at all. It was really organic, and it was very cool.

HollywoodChicago.com: What are the origins of 'La La Land,' was it something you had been fantasizing for awhile, or did it just come up as your next project?

Damian Chazelle: It was pretty much exactly my fantasy, I wrote this film six years ago, and all the while I was dreaming about doing a big song-and-dance musical in a modern setting. Even though Hollywood wasn't exactly amiable at first, we got the chance to make it. Just making it became the dream.

French director Claude Lelouch was celebrated for the 50th Anniversary of 'A Man and a Woman' (1966).

HollywoodChicago.com: You are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of your most famous film this year, but what film of your long career do you think best defines you as a filmmaker and why?

Claude Lelouch: [Through translator] The last film is always the most important.

Director John McNaughton and lead actor (Chicago native) Michael Rooker attended for the 30th anniversary of 'Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer.'

HollywoodChicago.com: Michael, what neighborhood did our Mother move the family to when you first came to Chicago, and how did you get from there to your work in the Goodman Theatre?

Michael Rooker: First, it was Cicero [suburb] for three years, and then we moved to the Near North Side, around Division Street and Ashland, and I went to Wells High School. Eventually, I went to Wright Junior College, and met some actors – liked what they were doing – and started acting myself. From there I auditioned for the Goodman School of Drama.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you made the independent film 'Henry' long before it was cool, what advice would you give to directors today who are working with smaller and smaller budgets?

John McNaughton: I would give them the advice my father gave me – which I didn't follow – become a dentist.

Chaz Ebert is the CEO of RogerEbert.com, and is in the midst of producing a film on civil rights icon Emmett Till.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the status of your film about Emmett Till?

Chaz Ebert: We are in the screenwriting stage of the film at this point, and with everything going on today, unfortunately the Emmett Till film could be topical and timely. What I hope we do differently, away from what people expect, is to filter the story through Emmett's mother, and the healing she helped to bring about through the love of her son.

David Verbeek served on the International Competition Jury, and is a Scandinavian filmmaker.

HollywoodChicago.com: What was the best advice someone gave you about being a filmmaker?

David Verbeek: I went to film school in New York City, and an instructor there told me to use the moments when you are shooting. It's not just about preparation, but letting yourself partake of the world as it happens. Weather, mood and other factors – just let yourself be open to those things. You want to control the process, but letting things happen in the here and now is much more organic, and of course doesn't come naturally.

Michael Kutza is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Chicago International Film Festival.

HollywoodChicago.com: What did you learn about the film festival the first year you did it, that you changed the second year, and still remains in the 52nd edition?

Michael Kutza: Nobody came to Year One, it was cold that November, and even though we had stars like Bette Davis and King Vidor. So the second year I was thinking would we be able to come back? It was a huge investment. I met Victor Skrebneski, and asked him to photograph something to make the festival sexy. He did, and that's when it all started to change.



Alfonso Arau of "Like Water for Chocolate" and Pablo Larraín of "Jackie" and "Neruda"

Alfonso Arau was being tributed for the anniversary of his work "Like Water for Chocolate" and Pablo Larraín had two films in the festival, "Jackie" (about Jackie Kennedy) and "Neruda" (about Chilean poet Pablo Neruda). They walked the Red Carpet together on October 17th.

HollywoodChicago.com: How many people have come up to you and said that as a result of seeing 'Like Water for Chocolate,' they had sex?

Alfonso Arau: [Laughs] Many, many people. But more than that, many people have come up to me or have written me to say that the film changed their lives. I am very proud of it.

HollywoodChicago.com: The assassination of John F. Kennedy has been recreated many times on film. What did you do with it, that you think other people haven't done?

Pablo Larraín: If you look at the famous [Abraham] Zapruder film, it was shot from a specific distance. As far as what I've seen, most of re-creations are from afar, maybe because of the Zapruder film. I couldn't do that, I wanted it close up, because we were doing it from the perspective of Jackie Kennedy in the car. If we were doing that perspective in the rest of the film, it follows that we'd keep doing it that way. I

thought it was necessary to be there, and share her emotion with the audience, if we are to fully understand what happened to her. It was difficult, but that was her experience.

1. [CIEFF1](#) [24]: OPENING NIGHT: Rosemarie DeWitt of 'La La Land.'
2. [CIEFF2](#) [23]: OPENING NIGHT: Rosemarie and Director Damian Chazelle of 'La La Land.'
3. [CIEFF3](#) [25]: OPENING NIGHT: Actress and Film Icon Geraldine Chaplin.
4. [CIEFF4](#) [26]: Actor Danny Glover of '93 Days' on October 20th, 2016.
5. [CIEFF5](#) [27]: Danny Glover and director Steve Gukas of '93 Days.'
6. [CIEFF6](#) [28]: OPENING NIGHT: Director Claude Lelouch of 'A Man and a Woman.'
7. [CIEFF7](#) [29]: Director Peter Bogdanovich on October 16th, 2016.
8. [CIEFF8](#) [30]: Actress Taraji P. Henson of 'Hidden Figures' on October 23rd, 2016.
9. [CIEFF9](#) [31]: OPENING NIGHT: Actor Michael Rooker of 'Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer.'
10. [CIEFF10](#) [32]: OPENING NIGHT: Director John McNaughton of 'Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer.'
11. [CIEFF11](#) [33]: OPENING NIGHT: Michael Rooker and John McNaughton.
12. [CIEFF12](#) [34]: OPENING NIGHT: Chaz Ebert, CEO of RogerEbert.com.
13. [CIEFF13](#) [35]: Director Steve McQueen on Black Perspectives Night, October 22nd, 2016.
14. [CIEFF14](#) [36]: Director Alfonso Arau of 'Like Water for Chocolate, October 18th, 2016.
15. [CIEFF15](#) [37]: Director Pablo Larraín of 'Jackie' and 'Neruda' on October 18th.
16. [CIEFF16](#) [38]: OPENING NIGHT: Film juror David Verbeek.
17. [CIEFF17](#) [39]: OPENING NIGHT: Film juror Chin Han.
18. [CIEFF18](#) [22]: OPENING NIGHT: Founder and Artistic Director Michael Kutza.

For a complete interview of Geraldine Chaplin, by Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, [CLICK HERE](#). [40]

For a complete interview of Peter Bogdanovich by Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, [CLICK HERE](#). [41]

For a Red Carpet interview of director Steve McQueen, by Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, [CLICK HERE](#). [42]

The "Best of the Fest" continues through Thursday, October 27th, 2016. [Click here](#) [43] for details. The 52nd Chicago International Film Festival has its final night on October 27th, 2016. [Click here](#) [44] for film schedules, information and to purchase tickets.



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Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/2016>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/52nd-chicago-international-film-festival>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chaz-ebert>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/claude-lelouch>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/damian-chazelle>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/danny-glover>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/geraldine-chaplin>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/joe-arce>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/john-mcnaughton>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/la-la-land>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michael-kutza>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michael-rooker>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/pablo-lorain>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/peter-bogdanovich>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rosemarie-dewitt>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/slideshow>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/steve-mcqueen>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/taraji-p-henson>
- [22] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=18>
- [23] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=2>
- [24] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival>

- [25] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=3>
- [26] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=4>
- [27] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=5>
- [28] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=6>
- [29] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=7>
- [30] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=8>
- [31] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=9>
- [32] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=10>
- [33] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=11>
- [34] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=12>
- [35] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=13>
- [36] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=14>
- [37] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=15>
- [38] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=16>
- [39] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26933/slideshow-red-carpet-portraits-from-the-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival?slide=17>
- [40] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26931/interview-geraldine-chaplin-honored-at-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival>
- [41] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26906/interview-director-icon-peter-bogdanovich-honored-at-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival>
- [42] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26929/exclusive-red-carpet-portrait-director-steve-mcqueen-at-52nd-chicago-international-film-festival>
- [43] <http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/best-of-the-fest-2/>
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- [46] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>