

Interviews: Backstage with 'Chicago Fire' at 2012 Best of the Midwest Awards

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 27, 2013 - 10:38pm

- [2012](#) [2]
- [Best Actress](#) [3]
- [Best of the Midwest Awards](#) [4]
- [Chicago Fire](#) [5]
- [Christian Stolte](#) [6]
- [David Eigenberg](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [improv](#) [9]
- [Interview](#) [10]
- [Midwest Independent Film Festival](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Susan Messing](#) [13]
- [The Annoyance Theatre](#) [14]
- [The Second City](#) [15]

CHICAGO – When putting on an awards show in Chicago, getting local talent to hand out awards was as easy as calling the production of “Chicago Fire,” currently filming here. The 2012 Best of the Midwest Awards in December had “CF” cast members David Eigenberg and Christian Stolte to present accolades, and comedy improviser Susan Messing won Best Actress at the event.

The Best of the Midwest Awards (BMAs) are the annual celebration that honored the films and performances at The Midwest Independent Film Festival during 2012. The festival is an ongoing film event that meets every first Tuesday throughout the year, and will resume February 5th with the film “Be Good.” All three actors spoke to HollywoodChicago.com at the BMAs, offering humor, insight and perspective on performing in Chicago.



David Eigenberg, Portrays Christopher in “Chicago Fire”

David Eigenberg is currently not portraying Steve Brady from “Sex and the City,” he wants you to know that, even though fans of the series will always think of him that way. He is onto a new television challenge, that of troubled firefighter Christopher Herrmann on the series “Chicago Fire,” currently being filmed in the Windy City. He began his career in the early 1990s, and before “Sex and the City” had roles in “Homicide” and “The Practice.” He first portrayed Steve Brady in 1999 on the original HBO run of “Sex” and was in both film adaptations of the series.

HollywoodChicago.com: You had the challenge of creating another distinct TV character, after so many knew you so long as another TV character. How did you approach this challenge?



David Eigenberg of 'Chicago Fire'
Photo credit: NBC

David Eigenberg: Initially it's being exposed to a script that appeals to you, and getting the language of what the character is going to be doing, and where he's coming from. It was something I was immediately interested in because it cut across the grain from what I had been doing, which was the sincere, loving guy. This guy is sincere and loving, but he will also cut to the quick in a heartbeat.

HollywoodChicago.com: Post Steve Brady, what were you finding in the marketplace?

Eigenberg: Anything I could get my hands on. 'Sex and the City' on HBO shut down over nine years, most people forget that. I had the movies, but there were some tough years during that time. There was the Steve thing, but that could only go so far.

HollywoodChicago.com: You have a nuance as an actor, you tend to find the angles that others don't explore. How do you evolve to that

nuance once you get a new script in front of you?

Eigenberg: I try to, but I also want to think that when something is in front of me, that it's written a certain way and I could play it that way, but what if I do something different? It may be that the guy is a Dad, doesn't mean he has to be loving his kids every minute, because I know that doesn't happen with mine. [laughs] I like to take some risks, sometimes it doesn't fly with the director, but I want to try things because it's refreshing to do something different.



Christian Stolte, Portrays Mouch in "Chicago Fire"

If there is any actor in Chicago that can be identified through the city, it is Christian Stolte. A familiar face in all the most recent Chicago-based TV series, including "Boss," "The Playboy Club" and "The Chicago Code," Stolte has also done feature films such as "Road to Perdition" (2002), "Leatherheads" (2008) and "Law Abiding Citizen" (2009). He is currently in the role of Mouch in "Chicago Fire," giving the character his unique, laconic spin.

HollywoodChicago.com: How does it feel to more popular now in Chicago than the first Mayor Daley?

Christian Stolte: I have no idea, how big was he? Am I bigger than him? He seemed more of a squat guy, he strikes me as sort of a boxy character. I'll tell you what, now that you've told me, it feels very f**king good. I'm going to walk out of here bursting with self-esteem, now that you've told me.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think is the most 'Chicago thing' that 'Chicago Fire' has done so far?



Christian Stolte of 'Chicago Fire'
Photo credit: NBC

Stolte: So far, we're just kind of trying on our Chicago image. The most 'Chicago thing' is coming up. [Local network] WGN News took a shot at us, because they were embarrassed because they thought a plane crash we staged was real, and then they said it was just a TV show that nobody watches. We're coming back to them. The episode we're shooting now, we have a shot across their bow, that's all that I can tell you. It's all friendly, but retaliation is the most 'Chicago thing.' [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: What characteristic in the audition, in association with your character, do you think got you the part?

Stolte: I looked like a guy who has logged a lot of couch hours. That's it, man, and it happens to be true.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, if you could say something to the first Mayor Daley, what would it be?

Stolte: Wake up!



Susan Messing, Best Actress Winner at the 2012 BMAs

The art of comedy improvisation, or "improv," was born as an art form in Chicago through "The Second City" theater and the evolution that has expanded the unique craft from there. One of the most prominent and notable practitioners of improv in Chicago is Susan Messing, who not only has a standing weekly show ("Messing with a Friend" at The Annoyance Theatre) but is one of the most sought after teachers of the improv skill in the city. She also won the Best Actress Award at the Best of the Midwest, for her role as the wacky and blunt therapist Veronica in "Close Quarters." This is her second interview with HollywoodChicago.com.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since this is the second time I've interviewed you, what do you remember from the first time?

Susan Messing: The TBS 'Just for Laughs' festival, when you wondered who the f**k I was and why you were interviewing me.

HollywoodChicago.com: But when I did finally figure out who you were, and took in your show, I have to say you're one of the finest Chicago talents I have ever met. How did you develop the role in 'Close Quarters,' and how did it get to its final form, given that much of the script was improvised?



Best Actress Susan Messing
Photo credit: The Annoyance Theatre

Messing: Director Jack Newell invited me to join the film with the cast of other improvisors, and I came in with my great friend Jim Carlson, and we improvised for about an hour and then forgot about it, but then it turned into a movie. And then they gave me a nice award tonight, which was very kind.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since your talent and prowess is rewarded through your work on a daily basis, what does an award mean to you?

Messing: I think in our world it's a little awkward, because we're always trying to make each other look better, so when you get individual recognition for your own stuff, you almost feel like you didn't make your friends look as good as they are. It's very sweet and kind, but in the world of improv it's always about working together, and my success depends on the success of my friends.

So it's really nice to accept this award on behalf of my friends, and the editor of the film [Jill DiBiase] who was brilliant, and took 500 hours of improv and distilled it down to a movie. Our director Jack Newell was great, the screenplay writer Ron Falzone had to write all of it down, so we just had to perform and leave, and it was left with that talented crew to clean up the mess.

The Midwest Independent Film Festival resumes its monthly film showcase on February 5th, 2013, with the locally produced film "Be Good" by director Todd Looby. [Click here](#) [16] for information and to purchase tickets. [Click here](#) [17] regarding show and ticket information for "Messing With a Friend." Christian Stolte will appear with Susan Messing on February 28th.



[18]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [19]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

© 2013 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Aug 16 2022 - 8:37am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/21176/interviews-backstage-with-chicago-fire-at-2012-best-of-the-midwest-awards>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/2012>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/best-actress>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/best-of-the-midwest-awards>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chicago-fire>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/christian-stolte>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/david-eigenberg>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/improv>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/midwest-independent-film-festival>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/susan-messing>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-annoyance-theatre>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-second-city>
- [16] http://www.midwestfilm.com/pages/now_showing_/403.php

[17] <http://www.annoyanceproductions.com/messingwithafriend/index.shtml>

[18] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>