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The Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association

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D.C. Film Critics Shine a 'Spotlight' on Award Winners

Washington, D.C. — When the dust settled and the votes were counted, two very different films led the way as the Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association (WAFCA) announced their honorees for 2015 this morning. Dazzling dystopian adventure "Mad Max: Fury Road" was the big winner, taking home three awards, including Best Director (George Miller). The organization's choice for Best Film, however, went to a picture a little more realistic but no less furious, the hard-hitting investigative journalist drama "Spotlight."

"Spotlight," about *The Boston Globe's* discovery of a cover-up involving child molestation within the local Catholic Archdiocese, also won for Best Ensemble. The film's top-notch cast includes Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, Liev Schreiber, John Slattery and Stanley Tucci.

"Mad Max: Fury Road," the long-awaited and much-acclaimed fourth installment in Miller's post-apocalyptic action franchise, saw Tom Hardy taking over the iconic title role previously inhabited by Mel Gibson. In addition to Best Director, the film also earned accolades for Best Production Design and Best Editing.

WAFCA awarded Best Actor to Leonardo DiCaprio for his grueling, transformative work in epic survival western "The Revenant," as an injured 1820s fur trapper left for dead and seeking retribution across the perilous American wilderness. Best Actress went to Saoirse Ronan for "Brooklyn," about a young Irish woman's experiences immigrating to the U.S. in the 1950s. Supporting nods were awarded to Idris Elba, as the tough leader of a West African child army in "Beasts of No Nation," and Alicia Vikander, as a highly advanced android in provocative sci-fi thriller "Ex Machina."

The many facets of human emotions portrayed in Pixar's universally praised "Inside Out" were difficult to resist for voters, who awarded the film Best Animated Feature. Its writing team of Pete Docter, Meg LeFauve and Josh Cooley (from an original story by Docter and Ronnie Del Carmen) also won the Best Original Screenplay prize, an unprecedented win for the writing of an animated film. "Amy," about the whirlwind rise and untimely fall of late musician Amy Winehouse, won for Best Documentary. Hungarian Holocaust drama "Son of Saul" took top honors for Best Foreign Language Film.

Best Adapted Screenplay went to Emma Donoghue, the author and screenwriter of emotionally stirring mother-and-son abduction drama "Room." For his heartbreaking turn in the film, 9-year-old Jacob Tremblay won Best Youth Performance. Emmanuel Lubezki's masterful lensing of "The Revenant" earned the Best Cinematography award. The film was shot under challenging, sometimes brutally cold weather conditions in Canada, Argentina and the U.S. using all natural lighting. Composer Jóhann Jóhannsson was feted with Best Original Score for his starkly haunting work in "Sicario."

This year's awards are dedicated to the memory of late film critic and WAFCA member Joe Barber.

The Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association comprises 52 DC-VA-MD-based film critics from television, radio, print and the Internet. Voting was conducted from December 4-6, 2015.

THE 2015 WAFCA AWARD WINNERS:

Best Film:

Spotlight

Best Director:

George Miller (Mad Max: Fury Road)

Best Actor:

Leonardo DiCaprio (The Revenant)

Best Actress:

Saoirse Ronan (Brooklyn)

Best Supporting Actor:

Idris Elba (Beasts of No Nation)

Best Supporting Actress:

Alicia Vikander (Ex Machina)

Best Acting Ensemble:

Spotlight

Best Youth Performance:

Jacob Tremblay (Room)

Best Adapted Screenplay:

Emma Donoghue (Room)

Best Original Screenplay:

Pete Docter, Meg LeFauve and Josh Cooley (Original Story by Pete Docter and Ronnie Del Carmen)
(Inside Out)

Best Animated Feature:

Inside Out

Best Documentary:

Amy

Best Foreign Language Film:

Son of Saul

Best Production Design:

Production Designer: Colin Gibson, Set Decorator: Lisa Thompson (Mad Max: Fury Road)

Best Cinematography:

Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC (The Revenant)

Best Editing:

Margaret Sixel (Mad Max: Fury Road)

Best Original Score:

Jóhann Jóhannsson (Sicario)

The 2015 WAFCA AWARD NOMINEES WERE:

Best Film:

Brooklyn
Mad Max: Fury Road
The Revenant
Sicario
Spotlight

Best Director:

Alex Garland (Ex Machina)
Todd Haynes (Carol)
Alejandro G. Iñárritu (The Revenant)
George Miller (Mad Max: Fury Road)
Ridley Scott (The Martian)

Best Actor:

Matt Damon (The Martian)
Johnny Depp (Black Mass)
Leonardo DiCaprio (The Revenant)
Michael Fassbender (Steve Jobs)
Eddie Redmayne (The Danish Girl)

Best Actress:

Cate Blanchett (Carol)
Brie Larson (Room)
Saoirse Ronan (Brooklyn)
Sarah Silverman (I Smile Back)
Charlize Theron (Mad Max: Fury Road)

Best Supporting Actor:

Paul Dano (Love & Mercy)
Idris Elba (Beasts of No Nation)
Tom Hardy (The Revenant)
Mark Rylance (Bridge of Spies)
Sylvester Stallone (Creed)

Best Supporting Actress:

Jennifer Jason Leigh (The Hateful Eight)
Rooney Mara (Carol)
Alicia Vikander (The Danish Girl)
Alicia Vikander (Ex Machina)
Kate Winslet (Steve Jobs)

Best Acting Ensemble:

The Big Short
The Hateful Eight
Spotlight
Steve Jobs
Straight Outta Compton

Best Youth Performance:

Abraham Attah (Beasts of No Nation)
Raffey Cassidy (Tomorrowland)
Oona Laurence (Southpaw)
Güneş Şensoy (Mustang)
Jacob Tremblay (Room)

Best Adapted Screenplay:

Nick Hornby (Brooklyn)
Phyllis Nagy (Carol)
Drew Goddard (The Martian)
Emma Donoghue (Room)
Aaron Sorkin (Steve Jobs)

Best Original Screenplay:

Matt Charman and Ethan Coen & Joel Coen (Bridge of Spies)
Alex Garland (Ex Machina)
Pete Docter, Meg LeFauve and Josh Cooley (Original Story by Pete Docter and Ronnie Del Carmen) (Inside Out)
Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer (Spotlight)
Amy Schumer (Trainwreck)

Best Animated Feature:

Anomalisa
The Good Dinosaur
Inside Out
The Peanuts Movie
Shaun the Sheep Movie

Best Documentary:

Amy
Best of Enemies
Cartel Land
Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief
The Look of Silence

Best Foreign Language Film:

The Assassin
Goodnight Mommy
Mustang
The Second Mother
Son of Saul

Best Production Design:

Production Designer: François Séguin, Set Decorators: Jennifer Oman and Louise Tremblay (Brooklyn)
Production Designer: Judy Becker, Set Decorator: Heather Loeffler (Carol)
Production Designer: Dante Ferretti, Set Decorator: Francesca Loschiavo-Ferretti (Cinderella)
Production Designer: Thomas Sanders, Set Decorators: Jeffrey Melvin and Shane Vieau (Crimson Peak)
Production Designer: Colin Gibson, Set Decorator: Lisa Thompson (Mad Max: Fury Road)

Best Cinematography:

Yves Bélanger, CSC (Brooklyn)
Ed Lachman, ASC (Carol)
John Seale, ASC, ACS (Mad Max: Fury Road)
Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC (The Revenant)
Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC (Sicario)

Best Editing:

Margaret Sixel (Mad Max: Fury Road)
Pietro Scalia, ACE (The Martian)
Stephen Mirrione, ACE (The Revenant)
Joe Walker, ACE (Sicario)
Elliott Graham, ACE (Steve Jobs)

Best Original Score:

Michael Brook (Brooklyn)
Carter Burwell (Carol)
Ennio Morricone (The Hateful Eight)
Tom Holkenborg aka Junkie XL (Mad Max: Fury Road)
Jóhann Jóhannsson (Sicario)