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SXSW Film Festival: 'Cesar Chavez' Among Audience Award Winners

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By Francisco Salazar | First Posted: Mar 17, 2014 12:25 AM EDT

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(Photo : Lionsgate)

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The SXSW Film festival has announced the audience awards .

Three films won the awards. One of them was Diego Luna's biopic "Cesar Chavez." The film, starring starring Rosario Dawson, Michael Pena, America Ferrera, and John Malkovich, tells the story of a civil-rights activist and labor organizer Cesar Chavez. The motion picture is slated to be released by Lionsgate and will be released on March 28.

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The other film was Shawn Christensen's drama "Before I Disappear." The film

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competed in narrative competition and tells the story of Richie who gets a call from his estranged sister, asking him to look after his eleven-year old niece, Sophia, for a few hours. The film stars the director, Fatima Ptacek and Emmy Rossum. Christensen was nominated for an Oscar for his short film "Curfew."

The other film to win was the abortion documentary "Vessel." The film by Diana Whitten received a special jury recognition for political courage in the documentary competition earlier this week in addition to today's documentary feature prize.

The audience award is important because audiences vote for the prize and it sometimes gives the film more buzz and word of mouth. Last year "Short Term 12" took home the audience award and the grand jury prize, becoming one of the most acclaimed movies



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of the year.

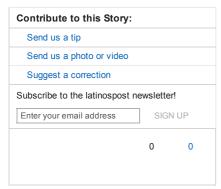
The festival also gave prizes in the documentary spotlight ("DamNation"), visions, midnighters, episodic, SXGlobal, festival favorites and design categories. The 24 Beats Per Second category will be announced on Monday following Saturday screenings.

The festival jury handed out its jury prizes on Tuesday. The winner of the Grand Jury Prize was awarded to "Fort Tilden." The movie tells the story of Allie and Harper and their needlessly difficult journey to the beach. The

movie stars Bridey Elliot and Clare McNulty and was directed by Sarah-Violet Bliss and Charles Roger. The film has yet to scored a distribution deal but news of one should come soon. Meanwhile the BP oil spill documentary, "The Great Invisible," won best documentary feature. The film was directed by Margaret Brown and is likely to get a lot of buzz out of the festival.

Other winners included Richard Linklater's "Boyhood" which took home the Louis Black Lone Star Award for a Texas film. That movie is slated to be released by IFC Films and has received a lot of buzz because the movie was shot over a 12-year period. Kat Candler's "Hellion" received a special mention in the SXSW Gamechanger Emergent Woman Director category. That movie stars Aaron Paul, Juliette Lewis, Josh Wiggins, and David Maldonado. The film has no distribution deal but given should not have trouble finding a buyer given its cast.

The SXSW Film Festival is one of the most important events in film and it has seen a number of filmmakers break into the industry. This year a number of celebrity guests attended the event. Among them included Jason Bateman, Lena Dunham, Kevin Bacon, Dana Brunetti and Edward Snowden.



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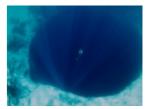


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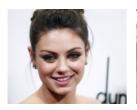
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