

Follow-Up to the 2012 Imago Film Festival



For our 8th annual film festival, we had initially planned an abbreviated festival due to limited funds. However, a number of too-good-to-pass opportunities presented themselves and we extended the fest back to five days and for the first time, into the weekend. We had faith that the money would be donated and it was, affirming our hopes for enthusiasm for Imago as a different kind of faith-based film festival. And

so I begin with special thanks to JSO, the Hargis family, and our other sponsors. We kicked off events on Tuesday, our opening night, with a full night of short films in our prize competition.

We were proud of the competition films we presented at this year's festival on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. Again, international submissions were a strong component of the festival, making us a truly international film festival. While also being an especially strong year for documentaries, all the films had exemplary production values and represented unique and exciting perspectives on faith. We were especially proud to show three films from Judson students, making the final cut to be included in this year's competition.



On Thursday night, we featured Darren Wilson and Matt Bilen of Wanderlust Productions to discuss their trilogy of documentary films. (Darren Wilson, Judson University's filmmaker-in-residence, has made the films *Finger of God*, *Furious Love*, and the forthcoming *Father of Lights*.) Clarifying that they were making "video essays" about the nature of God



based on footage of real life experience, Darren and Matt discussed their process of filmmaking and God as the ultimate guide of their amazing adventures as filmmakers.

On Friday night, we began the day with Judson's chapel service featuring Brooks Douglass, former state senator, screenwriter, and actor. He explained how the basis for his first film, the murder of his parents, transformed from a story of self-protection and anger to one of forgiveness. That evening, we screened the film, *Heaven's Rain*, that Brooks wrote and in which he starred as his father. In the introduction and in the Q&A that followed, Brooks discussed the means by which he strove to authentically represent his father and his own faith struggles.

On Saturday afternoon, we featured a special pre-release showing of *Blue Like Jazz*, the forthcoming film based on the bestseller by Donald Miller. Steve Taylor, the director, was in attendance and in the Q&A that followed, discussed the difficulties in making the film and how the film seeks to challenge stereotypical notions of the Christian film in particular and Christian faith in general. Later that night, the ceremonies for the closing night began with a elegant red carpet gala and pre-event musical entertainment was provided by Tecumseh.



The evening event featured a career retrospective interview with Steve Taylor, examining his transition from recording artist to filmmaker (and how his faith played a role in his work as a whole). And the evening ended with the presentation and viewing of our award-winning films. The honor of best-of-show was given to "When Cotton Blossoms," runner-up (1-15 min) to "The Cortège," runner-up (16-30 min) to "Mato Oput," and audience choice to "The Dance."

Thanks to our staff, judges, and speakers; thanks to those who submitted films; thanks to our financial supporters; thanks to those who attended the festival; thanks especially to those who helped with the simple belief that they were contributing to something special; and of course, thanks to God, the creator of all good things without whom none of this would be possible. We look forward to seeing you next year.

www.imagofilmfestival.com