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Winners of the Inaugural Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame Music Documentary Film Festival Announced

Unique three-day event showcased 24 music documentary films and LIVE music performances as part of America's first music documentary film festival



Winning filmmakers at closing awards ceremony for the first Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame Music Documentary Film Festival. Photo credit: Ed Shin.

STONY BROOK, NY — The [Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame](#) (LIMEHOF), exclusive home of the [Billy Joel Exhibit](#), recently ran its first-ever [LIMEHOF Music Documentary Film Festival](#) that took place August 8th - 10th at LIMEHOF's Stony Brook location (97 Main Street, Stony Brook, NY). This film festival, which is the very first of its kind founded in the US to focus exclusively on music documentaries, wrapped up with an awards ceremony held nearby at the Three Village Inn.

"In our very first year, the LIMEHOF Music Documentary Film Festival exceeded all expectations by uniting filmmakers, musicians, and audiences in a shared love of music's power to inspire," said Tom Needham, Executive Director of the LIMEHOF Music Documentary Film Festival. "Our



L-R: Robert Schwartzman accepting the Best Director Award, *To My Rescue, it Was the S1Ws (A Public Enemy Story)* won two awards for the Social Impact Award and Audience Award for Best Feature, and director Sue Carpenter won the First-Time Filmmaker Award. Photo credit: Ed Shin.

winning films celebrated a breathtaking spectrum of music—from groundbreaking hip-hop and timeless folk to genre-defying rock and beyond—each revealing the brilliance of the artists behind them. This diversity is the heartbeat of our festival and the inspiration for what’s to come.”

Needham, along with the film festival’s Artistic Director Wendy Feinberg, presented 10 awards.

Broadway star and director [Will Chase](#) (from Brooklyn) won the Best Short Film Award for his film, **Coming Home: The Guggenheim Grotto Back in Ireland**. This film follows Chase as he joins the band’s return to Ireland for their first set of performances in a decade, playing sold-out shows at Dublin’s Whelan’s and Galway’s Róisín Dubh. Produced by singer-songwriter Ingrid Michaelson, the 45-minute film captures the excitement of the reunion. The film made its world premiere at the festival. In addition to the screening, musician Mick Lynch, who is featured in the film, performed LIVE music as part of the Q&A.

"The reason I know Mick Lynch, who is part of [Guggenheim Grotto](#), is because my girlfriend [Ingrid Michaelson](#), who is a long-time Brooklynite, toured with Mick and Kevin back in the day, so I feel that all great musical roads lead through Brooklyn," Chase said.

Chase was not able to attend the awards ceremony but said in a statement: “...Thanks for curating such a wonderful group of films, for including mine in your lineup, and for this award. My entire team and I are honored to be part of this inaugural season. Thanks again and congratulations to all the artists in this room.”

Director, musician ([Rooney](#)) and actor [Robert Schwartzman](#) (*The Princess Diaries*) from Los Angeles, CA, won the award for Best Director for his film, **Hung Up on a Dream: The Zombies Documentary**. This film captures the legendary band’s six-decade journey from their 1960s chart-toppers ‘She’s Not There’ and ‘Time of the Season’ to the creation of their masterpiece, *Odessey and Oracle*. The film reflects on their struggles, enduring friendship, and path to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“Audiences really like music documentaries, and our industry really needs to make it a thing to keep these movies out there in theaters and festivals,” Schwartzman said. “When a festival embraces anything, sometimes that’s how people are going to learn about these films. A festival is a moment of sharing people’s work, and I think it’s great to highlight music-specific stuff and documentary format.”

Director Janol Ture won two awards for his film, *To My Rescue, it Was the S1Ws (A Public Enemy Story)*. The film won the Social Impact Award and the Audience Award for Best Feature. This film reveals the untold history of the S1WS, the militant wing of Public Enemy, by tracing their personal journeys and collective role in hip-hop’s rise as a global voice of rebellion and protest. The film features commentary from Chuck D, Flavor Flav, the S1WS, and other hip-hop icons.

“This is very humbling,” said director Janol Ture. “I’m honored. I think this film connected with the audience because of the message, the purpose, and the truth behind it. It’s a story that hasn’t really been told. I’m very grateful that the audience recognizes that.”



*DJ Johnny Juice Rosado accepting the Audience Award for **The Bronx Boys – The Evolution of B-Boy Culture**. Photo credit: Ed Shin.*

The Bronx Boys – The Evolution of B-Boy Culture, directed by Robert McCullough Jr., won the Audience Award for Best Short Film. [DJ Johnny Juice Rosado](#) from [Public Enemy](#) was featured in that film and is a strong supporter who accepted the award on behalf of the filmmakers.

“When you’re recognized by a board or by judges, that’s always good, but when you’re recognized by the people—because that’s who you make films for, that’s who you make music for, that’s who you create art for—that’s always a special thing,” Rosado said.

Cat’s in the Cradle 50th Anniversary: The Song That Changed Our Lives, directed by Rick Korn, **won for Best Feature**. This film examines the enduring impact that legendary Long Island musician and LIMEOF inductee [Harry Chapin’s](#) and Sandy Chapin’s iconic 1974 song had on generations of parents and children worldwide. The film features global interviews, music stars that include [Billy Joel](#), [Dee Snider](#), [Pat Benatar](#), and [Darryl “DMC” McDaniels](#), among others, and pop culture moments that reflect the song’s timeless message about being present as a parent. The film’s producer, S.A. Baron, LI Cares’ Paule Pachter and Mike Grayeb, Executive Director of the Harry Chapin Foundation, participated in the Q&A.



L-R: Will Chase won the Best Short Film Award, Alfonso Maiorana won the Best International Film Award, S.A. Baron accepting Award for Best Feature Award, John Rose won the Long Island Filmmaker Award, and Robert Lichter won The Spirit of Independent Filmmaking Award. Photo Credit: Ed Shin.

“[WhyHunger](#), which Harry created, probably wouldn’t exist if it wasn’t for ‘Cat’s in the Cradle,’ and the work that Harry’s done is needed more today than ever,” Baron said. “It’s great to be part of that and continue his legacy.”

Director John Rose from Setauket, NY won the Long Island Filmmaker Award for his film, **Building the Beatles**. This movie explores the vibrant Mersey Beat scene that propelled The Beatles to local stardom before Brian Epstein entered the picture, revealing how local promoters helped spark Beatlemania. Rose traces the movement’s roots and the pivotal figures who shaped the band’s rise in Liverpool. Iconic singer and Beatles contemporary [Billy J. Kramer](#), who was featured in the film, performed LIVE music as part of the Q&A for the film.

“Most film festivals are a hodgepodge of all kinds of different things; everything under the sun,” Rose said. “This is ‘music documentaries in a music setting’ that promotes music with a bunch of really great knowledgeable people that really do a fantastic job, and to be part of this, I couldn’t be happier and I’m so honored to be here.”

Hello! My Name is Blotto: THE MOVIE, director Robert Lichter (AKA Bert Blotto) from East Islip, won the Spirit of Independent Filmmaking Award. The film chronicles the journey of upstate New York rock band, [Blotto](#), from their 1970s beginnings to 1980s MTV fame and beyond. The film traces their rise from club gigs to national touring following their surprise hit, ‘I Wanna Be a Lifeguard,’ and celebrates their enduring legacy. Band members Bowtie Blotto, Broadway Blotto, and F. Lee Harvy Blotto attended and participated in the Q&A.

“It’s a little overwhelming,” Lichter said. “This is my first documentary—my first full-length film—and it’s fantastic to know that people saw it and liked it. So far, the film has received unanimous love, which is great. To be fair, the audience has largely been the fans of the band, but they could be the toughest critics because they know everything about the band. I wanted to make sure I represented them well. By all accounts, it’s being received really well, and I couldn’t be happier.”

Director Sue Carpenter, from Los Angeles, CA, won the First Time Filmmaker Award for her film, **40 Watts from Nowhere**. This film tells the story of Los Angeles pirate radio station KBLT, which operated out of an apartment closet in Silver Lake from 1995 until its shutdown by the FCC in 1998. Featuring rare 1998 footage and 2023 interviews, the film chronicles founder Sue Carpenter’s 40-watt station that drew musicians from Mazzy Starr to the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

“I feel like it’s really necessary to have a festival like this,” Carpenter said. “As someone who has made my first and probably only music documentary, I feel like you sort of get short shrift when you’re throwing your music doc—which isn’t about a band—into a film festival with a lot of other documentaries, because there are so many other topics that you’re competing against. What I like about this music documentary film festival is that it’s very wide-ranging beyond just a band; there’s multiple stories that can be told about things having to do with music.”

Director Alfonso Maiorana from Canada won the Best International Film Award for his movie, **Goddess of Slide: The Forgotten Story of Ellen McIlwaine**. This film chronicles the life of the trailblazing slide guitarist who broke barriers in a male-dominated music world. The film follows McIlwaine’s journey from Japan to Greenwich Village, her performances with blues legends, and the transformative nights she shared the stage with Jimi Hendrix.

“Anytime you win any award, it’s always good for the subject matter,” Maiorana said. “In this case, for Ellen, for her music, and for her legacy. And maybe this will get a new generation of people into her music and into her career. I think if people get to see the film, they will be pleasantly surprised about her career and what she’s done, but also may be inspired and, hopefully, that’s what this film does in the long run.”

The film festival is planned to resume next year. For more information, please visit <https://www.limusichalloffame.org/limehof-music-documentary-film-festival/>

About LIMEHOF

Founded in 2004, the Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the idea that Long Island’s musical and entertainment heritage is an important resource to be celebrated and preserved for future generations. The organization, which encompasses New York State’s Nassau, Suffolk, Queens, and Kings (Brooklyn) Counties, was created as a place of community that inspires and explores Long Island music and entertainment in all its forms. In 2022, LIMEHOF opened its first Hall of Fame building location in Stony Brook, New York. To date, the organization has inducted more than 130 musicians and music industry executives, and offers education programs, scholarships, and awards to Long Island students and educators.

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