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Platino Awards: 'The Distinguished Citizen' Takes Best Picture

Pedro Almodovar takes best director for 'Julieta'

By [John Hopewell](#) and [Anna Marie De La Fuente](#)



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MADRID — Gaston Duprat and Mariano Cohn's "[The Distinguished Citizen](#)," a lament for small-town small-mindedness, won big at the 4th Platino Ibero-American Film Awards taking its top best picture prize, and multiple further plaudits.

Further top honors went to Pedro Almodovar, best director for "Julieta," and Sonia Braga, who took the actress plaudit for "Aquarius" at a ceremony attended by Edward James Olmos, Rob Schneider, John Leguizamo, Sonia Braga, Kate del Castillo, Geraldine Chaplin, "Narcos" actor Manolo Cardona, Oscar Martinez, Rosy de Palma and Martina Gusman. Also present, among directors: Almodovar, Pablo Trapero, J.A. Bayona and Andi Baiz.

In all, Spanish productions swept 12 of the 14 jury prizes, voted by a jury of professionals who had participated in previous editions. That may be put down in part to "A Monster Calls" featuring among contenders, and winning big time in the technical department, and "[The Distinguished Citizen](#)" being co-produced out of Spain.

“The Distinguished Citizen” also took screenplay (Andrés Duprat) and best actor for Oscar Martínez, who plays a Nobel Prize laureate returning to his birthplace in the Argentine sticks, only to clash with the very same Argentine provincialism whose critique has inspired his writings.

The film’s jury prizes join Platino Audience Awards for best picture and actor for Oscar Martínez. His performance already won the Volpi Cup best actor award at last September’s Venice Film Festival.

Pedro Almodovar took best director for “Julieta,” a typically genre-blending mix of mystery thriller and woman’s melodrama, tracing Julieta’s 30-year life story of repeated grief at loss – her husband, her daughter . and unwarranted guilt, which dampens the élan of a once vibrant young girl.

“The pain of any disappearance must be the worse in life. I would like to dedicate this to the hundreds of thousands of Spaniards who are still looking for their loved ones, who disappeared in the Spanish Civil War,” Almodovar said.

A first Platino Honorary Award winner, Brazil’s Sonia Braga won best actress for her performance in Kleber Mendonça’s “Aquarius,” as a widow and retired music critic who refuses to budge from her tiny apartment in a beachside building in Recife – despite a sumptuous offer and veiled threats from a property company. Composing the contradictions of Clara’s character – a member of one ruling elite, imperious, a snob, proud to not move with the times, individualistic, still sexy and sexed – Braga, best-known for “Kiss of the Spider Woman,” has delivered the finest performance of her career, in many critics’ eyes. “This film represents Brazil, and marks a kind of resistance,” Braga said, accepting the award.

Winner of best TV series was Cuban crime thriller “Four Seasons in Havana,” a four-part mini-series and slice of Caribbean Noir, directed by Felix Viscarret adapting novels by Leonardo Padura and the first TV series from Spain’s Tornasol Films (“The Secret in Their Eyes”).

Spain’s “Born in Syria,” by Hernan Zin, won best doc. It is comprised of seven stories from the perspective of the estimated four million Syrian children who have been forced to flee their homes.

The [Platino Awards](#) took place as, in industry statistics, the Latin American film industry faces a paradox. Surging 16% in 2015 and 6.6% last year in Latin America, total attendance in Ibero-America – Spain, Portugal and Latin America – came in at 894.1 million, not far off Europe’s 991.1 million, according to a 416-page study, the 5th Ibero-American Audiovisual Panorama, published Friday by the Spain-based Audiovisual Producers Rights Collection Society (EGEDA), the major organizer of the [Platino Awards](#). But at 84.8%, driven by Hollywood blockbusters, especially its big family-skewed animation fare, the U.S. market share is the highest of any region outside the U.S. in the world. National films command an 11% market share in Ibero-America, 26.7% in Europe, and 95.5% in the U.S., the report estimates. In such a context, any mass gathering of the Ibero-American movie industries is a boon.

“These types of events create unity, aiding competitiveness and distribution, offering a window to the world, positioning the Ibero-American industry,” said actress-producer Martina Gusman, star of “El Marginal.”

“We have eight Nobel Prizes of Literature [], great sportsmen,” said ceremony co-M.C. Carlos Latre.

Film still has to reach that level of popularity or recognition both in the region and beyond. But most attendees thought the Platinos a step in the right direction.

J.A. Bayona’s “A Monster Calls,” starring Sigourney Weaver, Felicity Jones and Liam Neeson, swept all four craft awards – cinematography, sound, editing, art direction.

Lorenzo Vigas capped a triumphant run for “From Afar,” which began with a 2015 Venice Golden Lion, winning best first feature for a gay romantic drama set on Caracas’ mean streets, “a pristinely poised but deeply felt debut feature,” ran a *Variety* review.

Another debut, and much less known, “Esteban,” directed by Jonal Cosculluela’ and produced by record label Colibrí, RTV Comercial and Spain’s firm Mediapro, won a prize for the film with best educational values with its story of a nine-year-old Cuban boy who dreams of learning to play the piano.

Best Animated Film went to the darkly-humored “Birdboy, the Forgotten Children,” a coming-of-age adventure set in a dark, sometimes appalling, post-apocalyptic world. Directed by Pedro Rivero and Alberto Vazquez, one of Spain’s fastest-rising animation directors who won both best animated feature (“Birdboy”) and short (Cannes Directors’ Fortnight title “Decorado”) at the 2017 Spanish Academy Goyas. Crowning Vazquez’s international recognition, Gkids acquired North American distribution rights to [“Birdboy: The Forgotten Children”](#) on the cusp of Cannes.

Best Original Score went to Spain’s thrice-Oscar nominated Alberto Iglesias for his Herrmann-esque work – though Almodovar cites Toru Takemitsu, Mahler and Alban Berg as influences – in “Julieta.”

Striking the most political note of the kudoscst, actress Prakriti Maduro produced a Venezuelan flag on stage, calling for a free Venezuela. Her gesture drew strong applause.

Accepting his Honorary Platino Award, Edward James Olmos said that “talent doesn’t know frontiers or limits, it just needs opportunities.”

2017 PLATINO IBERO-AMERICAN FILM AWARDS

BEST IBERO-AMERICAN PICTURE

“The Distinguished Citizen,” (Gaston Duprat, Mariano Cohn, Argentina, Spain)

BEST DIRECTOR

Pedro Almodovar, (“Julieta,” Spain)

BEST ACTOR

Oscar Martinez, (“The Distinguished Citizen,” Argentina, Spain)

BEST ACTRESS

Sonia Braga, (“Aquarius,” Brazil, France)

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

Alberto Iglesias, ("Julieta," Spain)

BEST ANIMATED FILM

"Birdboy, the Forgotten Children," (Alberto Vazquez, Pedro Rivero, Spain)

BEST DOCUMENTARY

"2016, Born in Syria," (Hernan Zin, Spain)

BEST SCREENPLAY

Andrés Duprat ("The Distinguished Citizen," Argentina, Spain)

BEST IBERO-AMERICAN FIRST FEATURE

"From Afar," Lorenzo Vigas (Venezuela, Mexico)

BEST EDITING

Bernat Vilaplana, Jaume Marti, ("A Monster Calls," Spain, U.S.)

BEST ART DIRECTION

Eugenio Caballero, ("A Monster Calls")

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Oscar Faura, ("A Monster Calls")

BEST SOUND EDITING

Peter Glossop, Oriol Tarrago, Marc Orts ("A Monster Calls")

BEST EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN A FEATURE FILM

"Esteban," (Jonal Cosculluela, Cuba, Spain)

BEST MINI-SERIES OR TV SHOW

"Four Seasons in Havana," (Felix Viscarret, Cuba, Spain)

PLATINO AUDIENCE AWARDS

BEST PICTURE

"The Distinguished Citizen"

BEST ACTOR

Oscar Martinez

BEST ACTRESS

Natalia Oreiro ("I Am Gilda," Argentina)

<http://variety.com/2017/film/news/platino-awards-the-distinguished-citizen-best-picture-1202503727/>