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INAUGURAL SAMSUNG AACTA AWARDS TAKE CENTRE STAGE Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony – Sydney Opera House January 31st 2012

Tonight, AACTA President **Geoffrey Rush** was joined on stage by internationally acclaimed Australian actors including **Cate Blanchett**, **Mia Wasikowska**, **Jonathan** and **Anthony LaPaglia**, **Jacki Weaver** and **Rachael Taylor** to honour the year's best achievements in Australian film and television at the inaugural **Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony**, held at the Sydney Opera House.

Awards were evenly distributed across some of the most renowned names in the industry as well as to a raft of fresh faced, up and coming practitioners who herald the next generation of Australian talent.

RED DOG took home the prestigious Samsung AACTA Award for Best Film. **RED DOG** was also awarded the AFI Members' Choice Award, which was presented at the Samsung AACTA Awards Luncheon, Presented by Digital Pictures on 15 January, reflecting both the industry and the general public's appreciation of the film.

Snowtown led the feature film awards, honoured with four AACTA Awards including Best Direction for **Justin Kurzel** and Best Adapted Screenplay for **Shaun Grant**. In an impressive sweep, emerging actor **Daniel Henshall** took out Best Lead Actor for **Snowtown**, trumping some of Australia's most revered actors, as did newcomer **Louise Harris**, who was awarded Best Supporting Actress; impressively, **Snowtown** was the first feature film for both performers. This brought **Snowtown's** total tally to six AACTA Awards, with Best Sound and Best Editing previously awarded at the Samsung AACTA Awards Luncheon.

One of Australia's most respected actresses, **Judy Davis**, received the AACTA Award for Best Lead Actress for her performance in **The Eye Of The Storm**, while the equally loved **Hugo Weaving** received the AACTA Award for Best Supporting Actor for **Oranges And Sunshine**.

Imaginative and whimsical **Griff The Invisible** took home the AACTA Award for Best Original Screenplay for **Leon Ford**, who also directed the film.

It was also an exciting year for television, with this year marking the 25th anniversary of awarding television excellence in Australia through the AFI | AACTA.

The Slap for ABC1 received the most nods in the television categories, with five AACTAs awarded. These included Best Telefeature, Mini Series or Short Run Series, with Episode 3 'Harry' in particular acknowledged for Best Direction in Television for **Matthew Saville** and Best Screenplay in Television for **Brendan Cowell**. **Diana Glenn** was also awarded for her work in this episode, taking out the Best Guest or Supporting Actress in a Television Drama. **The Slap** also saw **Alex Dimitriadis** awarded for Best Lead Actor in a Television Drama.

Two talented rising stars were acknowledged in the television acting categories with **Sarah Snook** receiving Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama for **Sisters of War** (ABC1) and **Richard Cawthorne** receiving Best Guest or Supporting Actor in a Television Drama for **Killing Time - Episode 2** (FOXTEL - TV1).

Lara Robinson received the AACTA Award for Best Young Actor, for her mesmerising performance in **Cloudstreet - Part 1** (FOXTEL – Showcase).

Gritty drama **East West 101, Season 3 - The Heroes' Journey** (SBS) won Best Television Drama Series, and the popular **The Gruen Transfer, Series 4** (ABC1) took home Best Light Entertainment Television Series.

Two television awards, voted on by the public via News Limited publications, were also presented. The Switched On Audience Choice Award for Best Television Program went to perennial favourite, the Seven Network's **Packed To The Rafters**, while Australia's darling **Asher Keddie** received the Switched On Audience Choice Award for Best Performance in a Television Drama for her portrayal of Ita Buttrose in ABC1's **Paper Giants: The Birth Of Cleo**.



Highlights of the **AACTA International Awards Ceremony**, held on 27 January in Los Angeles, were screened at tonight's event, with six winners announced across five categories:

AACTA International Award for Best Screenplay (Joint Winners)

- *The Ides Of March*. George Clooney, Grant Heslov, Beau Willimon
- *Margin Call*. J.C. Chandor

AACTA International Award for Best Direction

- *The Artist*. Michel Hazanavicius

AACTA International Award for Best Actor

- Jean Dujardin. *The Artist*

AACTA International Award for Best Actress

- Meryl Streep. *The Iron Lady*

AACTA International Award for Best Film

- *The Artist*. Thomas Langmann

In addition to Award presentations by some of Australia's most successful performers and practitioners, the inaugural Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony featured some of the most popular names in Australian entertainment, including show-stopping performances by **Olivia Newton-John** and **Megan Washington**.

Speaking of the Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony, AFI | AACTA CEO, Damian Trehwella, said:

"Tonight's stunning event capped an unprecedented Awards season for the Australian screen industry.

"Within the last five months since the Australian Film Institute launched AACTA, we have held two of our most successful Awards events in the 54 year history of the AFI, with the internationally iconic Sydney Opera House proving the perfect location for tonight's stylish Ceremony.

"We have also held our first Awards events internationally. By announcing and presenting our first ever AACTA International Awards in Los Angeles in January, we have established the AACTA Awards as part of the global screen awards conversation, drawing greater recognition for our Awards, our talented award recipients, and the Australian screen industry.

"On behalf of AFI | AACTA, I congratulate all those announced as the Australian Academy's inaugural winners, and look forward to building on the momentum established by this proud moment in Australian screen history."

Tyler McGee, Vice President of Telecommunications, Samsung Electronics Australia, said:

"Samsung is thrilled to support the inaugural AACTA awards – an incredibly prestigious event in Australia's film and television industry calendar.

"Being leaders in innovation and committed to providing consumers with the latest sleekly designed products, we are excited to see our new devices used on the red carpet and during the event Ceremony."

The **Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony** was broadcast tonight on the Nine Network.

The complete list of winners announced at the Samsung AACTA Awards Ceremony is as follows:

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ACTOR

- **Lara Robinson.** *Cloudstreet - Part 1. FOXTEL - Showcase*

TELEVISION

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

- **East West 101, Season 3 - The Heroes' Journey.** Steve Knapman, Kris Wyld. *SBS*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST TELEFEATURE, MINI SERIES OR SHORT RUN SERIES

- **The Slap.** Tony Ayres, Helen Bowden, Michael McMahon. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION SERIES

- **The Gruen Transfer, Series 4.** Andrew Denton, Anita Jacoby, Jon Casimir. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTION IN TELEVISION

- **The Slap - Episode 3 'Harry'.** Matthew Saville. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SCREENPLAY IN TELEVISION

- **The Slap - Episode 3 'Harry'.** Brendan Cowell. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTOR IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- **Alex Dimitriadis.** *The Slap. ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- **Sarah Snook.** *Sisters Of War. ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST GUEST OR SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- **Richard Cawthorne.** *Killing Time - Episode 2. FOXTEL - TV1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST GUEST OR SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- **Diana Glenn.** *The Slap - Episode 3 'Harry'. ABC1*

SWITCHED ON AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST TELEVISION PROGRAM

- **Packed To The Rafters.** *Seven Network*

SWITCHED ON AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST PERFORMANCE IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- **Asher Keddie.** *Paper Giants: The Birth Of Cleo. ABC1*

FEATURE FILM

SAMSUNG AACTA AWARD FOR BEST FILM

- **RED DOG.** Nelson Woss, Julie Ryan.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTION

- **Snowtown.** Justin Kurzel.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

- **Griff The Invisible.** Leon Ford.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

- **Snowtown.** Shaun Grant.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTOR

- **Daniel Henshall.** Snowtown.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTRESS

- **Judy Davis.** The Eye Of The Storm.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

- **Hugo Weaving.** Oranges And Sunshine.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- **Louise Harris.** Snowtown.

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