



February 2013

Sundance and Slamdance 2013

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Recommended Citation

Lyden, John C. (2013) "Sundance and Slamdance 2013," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 17: Iss. 1, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.jrf.17.01.01>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol17/iss1/1>

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Abstract

Introductory remarks and photos from Sundance and Slamdance 2013

Keywords

Film festivals, Sundance, Slamdance

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Sundance Film Festival 2013

Once again, *Journal of Religion and Film* reviewers attended the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, and we saw many of the fine films shown there. These included documentaries that dealt with a clear religious subject matter, such as *God Loves Uganda* or *Fall to Grace* (both of which deal with Christian approaches to homosexuality), as well as some with a more indirect relationship to religion. Dramatic films also tell stories related to religion, such as *Fill the Void*, about arranged marriage among Ultra-Orthodox Jews, as well as stories that relate less explicitly to religion such as *Touchy Feely*, a story about human relationships and the importance of physical connection. The films that are shown at Sundance often challenge the normal conventions of filmic storytelling (such as *Interior. Leather Bar.*) or they tell stories that might otherwise not be told at all about suppressed emotions, lost hopes, or new possibilities. All of these are about the human condition, and so arguably are religious as well.

As always, we want to thank the Press Office of the Sundance Film Festival for all of their help. Elizabeth Latenser, Eric Sherman and all of the people in the Press Office do a terrific job. We could not do our jobs without their assistance. But, they also do their job with a smile that makes us feel welcome. We also want to thank the volunteers who assist everyone at the

Festival and the Sundance Institute employees who work so hard to make the Festival an enjoyable experience.



Representing the volunteers we have Alex Bua of Michigan and Jonathan Hudson of Indiana pictured with John Lyden (above center). Both are in their second year as a volunteer.



Representing the staff, we have Tammy Wallace (above right with Bill Blizek), from Salt Lake City in her ninth year working the Festival, and Chris Floyd (with Bill Blizek), from Boise, Idaho, in his sixth year at the SFF.





(From left) *Journal of Religion & Film* representative Dereck Daschke; Salma, the Muslim poet who is the subject of the documentary feature directed by Kim Longinotto, and Jeanette Reedy Solano, who covered films for *JR & F*, at Sundance



Stevie Nicks (above) on the red carpet for the film, *Sound City*, at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival and, at right, Shailene Woodley, on the red carpet for *Spectacular Now*. Woodley played the older daughter in Alexander Payne's film, *The Descendants*.

Slamdance Film Festival 2013



The Slamdance Film Festival is in its 19th year. Over the years it has grown in size and it now attracts many high quality films. We were able to find a number of Slamdance films that fit our criteria for being related to religion. Of particular note are *Bible Quiz*, which dealt with the national competitions focused on Bible memorization that exist in the world of Evangelical Christians, and *Resurrection Slope*, an unusual story of death and rebirth. We want to give a special thanks to Melanie Márquez of the Slamdance Press Office. Melanie is the person who makes everything run smoothly for us. Melanie is pictured (above) at her desk.

We hope you enjoy all the reviews you find here, and that you have the chance to view many of these as they become available for viewing in other places.

----John C. Lyden, Editor



Bill Blizek (left) with Dan Mirvish, co-founder of Slamdance and a native Omahan. His latest film *Between Us*, was shown at Slamdance this year.



Michael Urie, director of *He's Way More Famous than You*, shown at Slamdance 2013.



James Duff of Omaha (left) and Bill Blizek, founding editor of the *Journal of Religion & Film*. Duff's film, *Hank and Asha*, was shown at Slamdance this year.