



THE RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH FILM AWARDS 2008 RESULTS

Atonement scoops four awards including Film of the Year

Sam Riley is Outstanding Newcomer

31 January 2008: Cinema Days, the trade events for UK regional film journalists, today announces the results of the Richard Attenborough Film Awards 2008. This is the first year these annual awards, voted for by UK regional film journalists, have been named the Richard Attenborough Film Awards.

■ Film of the year	Atonement
■ Filmmaker of the year	Joe Wright
■ Rising Star of the year	Sam Riley
■ Actor of the year	James McAvoy
■ Actress of the year	Cate Blanchett
■ Screenwriter of the year	Christopher Hampton

Regional arts/entertainment writers in all media, including critics and editors, staff and freelance, participated from Aberdeen to Aberystwyth, Preston to Plymouth, Belfast to Birmingham, and many points in between. Voting in the six categories took place online at cinemadays.com from 3–28 January 2008.

Film of the year is **Atonement**, produced by Tim Bevan, Eric Fellner and Paul Webster, and directed by Joe Wright. A home-grown critical and commercial hit on its UK cinema release in autumn 2007, the romantic drama is currently the focus of enormous attention in the international awards season.

Paul Webster, Producer of *Atonement*, said: *"This film was shot entirely in England with a completely British cast and crew so it is especially thrilling that our film has been so honoured by the Richard Attenborough Film Awards."*

Filmmaker of the year is Londoner, **Joe Wright**. *Atonement* is the second feature film he has directed, the first being the award-winning *Pride & Prejudice* (2005).

The UK regional critics' Rising Star of 2008 is **Sam Riley**. Aged 28, Riley was born and raised in Yorkshire. He had a small part in *24 Hour Party People* (2002) but *Control*, directed by Anton Corbijn, gave him his first leading role. His spellbinding portrayal of Joy Division frontman, Ian Curtis, who committed suicide aged 23 in 1980, is attracting international acclaim.

Sam Riley said: *"I am very honoured to receive this award. Thank you to the Richard Attenborough Film Awards and to all the regional critics. I would also like to thank Anton Corbijn for his support and the incredible cast who made this possible."*

Actor of the year is Glaswegian, **James McAvoy**, whose career has flourished since he was named BAFTA's Rising Star in 2006. UK cinemagoers have seen him over the last year in *Becoming Jane* and *The Last King of Scotland*, with *Penelope* and *Wanted* coming soon, but it is for his leading performance as Robbie in *Atonement* that he wins the Richard Attenborough Film Award.

James McAvoy said: *"Atonement was both an emotional and a physical film to work on, and it was an honour to be among such a great cast and crew. I'm really proud to be a part of this film and excited to be taking home this award. My thanks go to Joe Wright and to the regional critics for their great vote of confidence. So often films like Atonement don't get meaningful nationwide releases and I am so glad to see that it has been enjoyed throughout Britain."*

Actress of the year is **Cate Blanchett** for her fierce yet vulnerable performance in the title role of Elizabeth: The Golden Age. This came nine years after she starred as the younger Queen in Shekhar Kapur's original Elizabeth. UK cinema audiences, who have also seen Cate recently in I'm Not There, will next see her in a very different guise in Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.

Christopher Hampton has scooped Screenwriter of the year, a new category introduced for the regional critics' 2008 awards. His screenplay for Atonement was adapted from Ian McEwan's novel published in 2001. A writer in various media for more than thirty years, Hampton previously won an Oscar® for his script for Dangerous Liaisons (1988), adapted from his own stage play.

Christopher Hampton said: *"As a long time friend of Dickie Attenborough, I'm especially delighted to receive this award."*

Lord Attenborough CBE said: *"The last year has shown the cinema to be both resilient and innovative, with large audiences eager to enjoy the unique theatrical experience. It has also brought a superb crop of terrific films with compelling performances from both experienced and fresh talents. I offer my warmest congratulations to this admirable set of winners."*

Peter Scott, Co-ordinator of Cinema Days, said: *"Despite the shrinking world, local media remains highly influential. One-third of the population turns first to their trusted local media for editorial coverage and opinion of new films. We are thrilled with the response to the vote from regional journalists right across the UK and join Lord Attenborough in congratulating the winners – what a celebration of contemporary British cinema!"*

In recognition of their achievement, each winner will be presented by Cinema Days with a glass diamond mounted on a plinth, inscribed and engraved with Lord Attenborough's signature.

Further information

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Notes to editors

- Established in 1988, **Cinema Days** are UK film industry trade events for regional journalists, critics and arts/entertainment writers in all media. Held three times a year in January, June and October at a regional multiplex, each event lasts four days (Thursday – Sunday). Film distributors arrange preview screenings and press conferences with associated talent. Programme information, and more, is available at www.cinemadays.com.
- Cinema Days administers the Richard Attenborough Film Awards, for which voting took place online at cinemadays.com between 12.00 noon GMT on Thursday 3 January and 12.00 noon GMT on Monday 28 January 2008. Feature films from any country of origin were eligible for consideration, provided they had a UK theatrical release in the 12 months to 8 February 2008. Voting was open to arts/entertainment journalists working in any branch of UK regional media.
- As part of the Richard Attenborough Film Awards 2008, a **public vote**, inviting film lovers to name their own favourite film of the past year, is launched today (31 January) and runs until 15 February. Votes may be cast online at www.focusonmovies.co.uk.