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X-Dance Awards/Closing Night Party

Harry O's, Park City, Utah

Shannon Gibson, Your On-The Scene Surfer Girl Hits X-Dance Party, Park City Utah

My first day at this year's 2006 X-dance/Sundance Festival had a bad beginning. Driving up to meet my friend in LA and then depart from LAX, I hit the usual Traffic. Then after rushing to check in my luggage, my flight was delayed. The icing on the cake was a late shuttle to Park City.

After arriving, I immediately received a call from my friend Keiko who was shooting a surfing documentary and wanted to interview me for a short segment. I had 30 minutes to get dolled up. Thankfully her taxi was running late and I had some extra time to put on finishing touches. Finally, she picked me up and we sped to The Fuel House (fueltv.com) where she was conducting the interviews.

The house was packed with filmmakers, creative artists, action sports athletes, and others who are part of the emerging x-treme film making scene. While I was outside waiting on Keiko, and taking in the serene snowy backdrop, I struck up a conversation with an Austrian Director named Michael who had made a film entitled Zen and Zero. As we were speaking I thought to myself "Austrians making surf films?" Musing this, my Swiss friend Marcel, (former pro snowboarder who took up surfing) came to mind. He now runs a surf camp in Morocco. Never rule out those mountain people, a lot of them adapt very well to unfrozen mountains of water.

As Keiko and her crew were setting up the shot upstairs, I was playing pool with former X-Games Skier "Sugar" Shane Anderson (lead actor in the short film Flying Cross) . All of the sudden Matt Dillion walked in and the whole room froze. I stared right at him and he looked back at me, wondering, I suppose, what was going on. He's very handsome in person I might add and made for a pleasant distraction! "Now that was a pleasant delay", I thought. Downstairs, the chef prepared some tasty comfort food and I was content listening to the eclectic beat of the house DJ.

My interview was finally set up. You can't imagine how difficult it was to play pool, be interviewed, and formulate responses in an articulate manner. All this to say that there was a lot going on at the 2006 X-Dance festival: Action sports industry leaders, athletes,

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celebrities, enthusiasts and filmmakers, packed the house with the festival culminating at the X-Dance closing ceremonies. It was the party to be at on Main Street with the gorgeous backdrop of snow on the mountains. The night was alive and festive with lights. Inside the energy was eclectic at Harry O's nightclub, headquarters for the Awards Ceremony and Closing Party.

Known as the "Academy Awards" of the action sports world (which launched in 2001), X-Dance ran simultaneously with the Sundance Film Festival from Jan.20-24. Sponsored by Irvine based Wireless Communication Company Boost Mobile and Television Sponsor FUEL TV (which will air a 90-minute special) scheduled to telecast in March 2006 (on a week-long series of the X-dance festival films, including this year's winners.)

Hosted by the voice of the X-Games, Sal Masekela, and one of Utah's finest snowboarders, Jessica Dalpiaz, they announced this years winners:

Best Picture, Presented by Fuel TV went to Full Circle-Rich Van Every (Studio 411 Productions)

Flying Cross (Train Jump Entertainment) won Best Short Film presented by Boost Mobile.

Best director presented by MySpace went to Austrian Michael Ginthor with Zen And Zerro film (Liquid Frame Films).

The Emerging Filmmaker Award presented by Scion and STA Travel went to Peter Goetz from Sophia (Mosaic Entertainment).

Ross Clark-Jones with Sixth Element (RCJ Productions) received Best Athlete Award.

Best Cinematography went to All Aboard The Crazy Train (Bam Man Productions & Studio 411 Productions).

In Through The Out Door (Fishegg Films) were awarded Best Editing.

Best Soundtrack went to Adrenaline Hunters-The Movie-Ad Valorem International.

Best Original Score went to Wave of Compassion (Roughcut Production)

Best Core Film went to Community Project (1242 Productions & Oakley)

Best Biography went to Bode Miller-Flying Downhill-Flying Downhill Productions.

Best Story went to Zen & Zero with Liquid Frame Films.

and Best Documentary was awarded to Flow (Thirty Four Films).

X-Dance first timer, Michael Ginthor, Zen & Zero Writer/Filmmaker commented on winning Best Director and Story Awards.

"It came as a huge surprise to us. I thought we would be well off with a couple of nominations considering the movies we were running against. Going up against competition such as: All Aboard The Crazy Train, Sofia, Going Downhill, among others, the cast and crew were pleasantly surprised to receive Best Director/Story Awards."

Coming from a landlocked country such as Austria, Ginthor didn't think he had a shot of winning an award in the first place, especially without having any big names or big companies attached to the movie; "The crew was just stoked to even have been selected." Michael was inspired to create "Zen And Zero" after learning to surf, which he described as having "knocked him off [his] boots."

"I think it's just very interesting what happens to you on a psychological and philosophical level," he added. From there he immediately hammered out a screenplay, "then Phillip approached the road-trip-idea and the rest of the story, well, you'll have to see the film for yourself."

When asked about what direction he sees X-dance going, Michael added "It depends on if the filmmakers are willing to produce movies for a broader audience and take a broader audience into consideration", which he feels would change the structure of the films.

"The great advantage action-sports-flicks have is that they usually come with spectacular, truly stunning visuals. Surfing is just really beautiful and cinematic. But these precious seconds on a perfect wave are only the tip of an iceberg in a surfer's life. Much more time is spent on preparation, analyzing and simply waiting. And that's where you sort of start your dialogue with nature: what is the weather doing, and how is it influencing the sandbar and so on. There's more story to it than first meets the eye."

Michael added, "It was a big honor to have been selected as a guest at the festival. There are a lot of great filmmakers and great athletes involved and I have the greatest respect for all of them. I think X-dance to some degree just celebrates the beauty of nature, the beauty of gravity-defying acts and basically just a pure, over boarding, lust for life. And that's what sort of makes it so sympathetic. There's a note of innocence to it that you don't find very often in the entertainment industry and I hope we can keep that for awhile,"

As if a camera was panning through a sea of humans all celebrating, the scene was filled with people on their feet jiving to the exhilarating sounds of the energetic hip hop band Sweatshop Union and The Swollen Members as Hawaiian Tropicana Girls clad in racy, tight pants with pierced bellies brought energy to the crowd. Spin master Tommie Sunshine closed the evening with an eclectic rock-punk disco mix and throughout the night VJ Brien Rullman of V Squared Labs entertained the crowd with a hot back. Whatever direction the film making takes next year, it's going to be one hell of a party and you know the creative artists in the action sports industry are going to deliver.

Shannon Gibson, Your On-The Scene Surfer, signing off.

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For more information on X-Dance Awards visit www.x-dance.com .

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