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Sundance Film Festival: Stars Party and Celebrate Film in Park City



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For the 30th anniversary of the [Sundance Film Festival](http://variety.com/t/sundance-film-festival/) (<http://variety.com/t/sundance-film-festival/>), [Robert Redford](http://variety.com/t/robert-redford/) (<http://variety.com/t/robert-redford/>) wanted to jump out of a cake. Before introducing the Jan. 16 opening night film, Damien Chazelle's "[Whiplash](http://variety.com/t/whiplash/)" (<http://variety.com/t/whiplash/>)" (which Sony Pictures Classics acquired), Redford revealed to the Eccles Theater audience how *he* would have liked to celebrate the 30th year of his fest.

"I thought, 'How about we roll a big cake onto the stage and I jump out!'" Redford joked. "But that got shut down."

Fest director John Cooper followed Redford and clarified that he "did not veto the cake."

PHOTOS: Inside the Parties at the Sundance Film Festival (<http://variety.com/gallery/sundance-film-festival-parties-and-events/>)

After the premiere, writer-director **Damien Chazelle** and stars **Miles Teller** and **Paul Reiser** celebrated at an intimate cocktail event at Spur on Main Street. "It's about jazz. It's about music school. It's about drumming," Chazelle said. "It's not a easy thing to say I want to make a movie about a guy who wants to be a really great jazz drummer."

Cooper got teary-eyed later in the evening at the fifth annual "An Artist at the Table" Sundance benefit held at the Stein Erikson Lodge in Deer Valley. Sundance donors and board members as well as artists participating in the fest including **Aaron Paul**, **Mark Ruffalo** and **Roger Ross Williams** attended the 320-person dinner.

"People may wonder why I keep coming back (after 25 years of working at Sundance)," Cooper said. "Ironically it's because of one of the most silent things I do at this very noisy festival. And that is standing backstage with a first-time director in the dark (waiting for their film to premiere) and we both know that their life is about to change. That's what brings me back every year."

Celebrating the premiere of "Hellion," pic's star Aaron Paul called Sundance "bad ass." As for the sweeping success "Breaking Bad" experienced less than a week ago at the Golden Globes, Paul labeled the kudofest "incredible."

"It was a long, beautiful night," Paul said. "I'm so happy that we were all able to celebrate that night together."

On Jan. 17 Slamdance celebrated their 20th anniversary in a heated garage turned club at the Lodges in Deer Valley.

Filmmakers including **Bill Plympton** ("Cheatin'"), **Chris Furbee** ("Huntington's Dance) and **Thomas Morgan's** ("Waiting for Mamu") celebrated fest's first two decades.

Morgan Spurlock, who served as an exec [producer \(http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/\)](http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/) alongside Susan Sarandon on "Waiting for Mamu," explained why Slamdance, launched as an alternative to Sundance, was a good fit for the doc about CNN hero Pushpa Basnet (Mamu).

"Being in Park City where all the buyers are and where people are looking for movies is always more important than anything else, so when Thomas asked me what I thought about Slamdance, I said, 'Of course! We have to go!'" Spurlock explained. "Slamdance has proven that they aren't going anywhere. They have earned their respect."

The main drag in Park City hosted plenty other premiere parties over the weekend, including the Grey Goose-sponsored events for **Zach Braff**'s "Wish I Was Here" and **Lynn Shelton**'s "Laggies," where stars **Keira Knightley**, **Chloe Grace Moretz** and **Sam Rockwell** stayed tucked away in a private dinner party upstairs.

Down the street at the Next Generation Filmmaker Series event, "God's Pocket" stars **Philip Seymour Hoffman** and **Christina Hendricks** toasted their premiere, as did "Happy Christmas" actress **Anna Kendrick**, who requested dance-worthy jams for later in the evening on Sunday.

At the Participant party on Jan. 17, cohost Joseph Gordon-Levitt performed while party goers at SLS' The Sayers club including **Christina Hendricks** and **Emile Hirsch** caught Capital Cities' packed show. **Shailene Woodley**, **Kristen Stewart** and **Joe Manganiello** hit perennial hotspot Tao at Village at the Lift where guests danced until the club closed at 4 a.m.

UTA hosted its annual gathering at the Riverhorse on Main, with stars **John Lithgow** and **Elizabeth Banks**, while **Aaron Paul** hit the dance floor.

PHOTOS: Inside the Parties at the Sundance Film Festival (<http://variety.com/gallery/sundance-film-festival-parties-and-events/>)

Rob Reiner and "The Case Against 8" co-directors **Ben Cotner** and **Ryan White** celebrated the premiere of the HBO doc at Wahso on Main St. on Jan. 18. Approximately 15 gay and lesbian couples and their families joined them to celebrate marriage equality. Newly married couples cut wedding cakes while [Prop \(http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/props-wardrobe/\)](http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/props-wardrobe/) 8 case lawyers **David Boies** and **Ted Olsen** lead a champagne toast.

Helmets explained the origins of the doc — a behind-the-scenes look at the unlikely team that took the first federal marriage equality lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"We met five years ago at Sundance," Cotner said. "A few months later we found out that a case was going to be filed in the federal courts so we approached the American Foundation for Equal Rights about the possibility of making a documentary about it. At the time we had no idea that the case was going to be such a big deal."

"It was overwhelming," White said. "We had over 600 hours of footage. Eighty percent of our film was the trial itself and no one thought that this would even go to trial. It was a total curveball. So that made it very cinematic in our eyes."

HBO later made their presence known at the Ro*co Films International on Jan. 18. Before the party kicked off, Robert Redford stopped by to personally thank Ro*co film founder and CEO, **Annie Roney** for her work in the documentary community.

Also on Jan. 18 at the Stein Eriksen Lodge, *Variety* honored "Laggies" director **Lynn Shelton** with the Indie Impact Award. Shelton was joined by stars of the film **Chloe Grace Moretz** and **Sam Rockwell**, who spoke about the state of the indie biz. "I don't know if it's harder, but it's always a challenge because people want to make their money back," Shelton said, referring to the pressures

of making independent films. "You can make a movie for a lot less money now and actually take a lot of risks creatively," she added. Moretz praised Shelton for creating a comfortable place on set saying, "Lynn makes the environment safe where you can have those personal things and you're not afraid you'll be ostracized."

Elijah Wood also was in attendance receiving an award for the horror comedy "Cooties." He discussed acting and producing indie films, and how he enjoys doing both. He also added that he snuck into a latenight showing of "Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" with a regular audience to see Peter Jackson's latest epic.

Also on Saturday night, **Gwyneth Paltrow** was spotted dancing at the after-party for "Young Ones," directed by her brother Jake. **Nicholas Hoult**, who appears in the film, sat in a booth with friends.

Football was the big ticket on Jan. 19 where many were tailgating for the AFC/NFC playoff games. The cast of "Cooties" stopped by the #socialfilmloft powered by Google+ Suite, while at the Paige Hospitality Group's party, **Geoff Stults** and **Alex Ebert** watched the Denver Broncos advance past the New England Patriots.

Sundance Channel also threw a bash where guests including **Jason Momoa** and **Maggie Gyllenhaal** watched the NFL playoffs, before former Blur frontman **Damon Albarn** entertained the crowd with a stripped down set from his new solo album.

Guests at HBO's annual doc party on Jan. 19 at Hotel Park City's Ruth's Chris Steakhouse were equally impressed with the presence of **Robert De Niro** and the NFC Championship game being broadcast on televisions above the bar. A Seahawks interception caused the large crowd, which included doc juror, Tracy Chapman and guest, Lance Bass to erupt into applause.

De Niro, Bradley Cooper (who attended with girlfriend Suki Waterhouse) and Jane Rosenthal were in the house to celebrate "Remembering the Artist Robert De Niro Sr." directed by Perri Peltz and Geeta Gandbhir. About the iconic actor's late father and his career as a figurative painter, the short doc wasn't always intended for distribution.

"I did this (project) to document my father's life for myself and my family," De Niro said. "Then HBO saw it and wanted to pick it up. I was happy with that because they gave us objectivity."

As for exposing his father's journal entries in the film, thesp says he didn't have any hesitations.

"Life goes on. He was what he was. He's not here anymore and it's my responsibility to carry his legacy on. He'll be fine with it."

Fellow HBO doc directors including Jeremiah Zagar ("Captivated: The Trials of Pamela Smart"), Valerie Veatch ("Love Child") and Cynthia Hill ("Private Violence") were in attendance to celebrate their Sundance premieres.

This year some of the [corporate](http://variety411.com/us/new-york/corporate-video-production-) (<http://variety411.com/us/new-york/corporate-video-production->

[companies/](#)) sponsored lounges offered fitness sessions for festival attendees to get some exercise in between films and help sweat out the toxins from the night before. New to the Sundance scene was the swanky spinning studio SoulCycle's pop-up suite where the free classes were packed all weekend while The Eddie Bauer Adventure House offered an indoor rock climbing wall with expert guides.

(Addie Morfoot, Ramin Setoodeh, Jean Song and Andrew Stewart contributed to this report.)

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