

# My Picks for Best Films of 2018

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

and director Carlos López Estrada have assembled a nimble exploration of how what we expect to see shapes what we actually see. The story is built around a long-term friendship between a white man (Casal) and a black man (Diggs) whose lives and paths are beginning to diverge in ways the white man especially cannot begin to appreciate. Humor and poetry and inventive imagery help to carry this film well beyond what most even attempt, and help us to see and hear what we mostly aren't able to name. [Rated R for language throughout, some brutal violence, sexual references, and drug use; deserved Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best Director (López), Best Lead Actor (Diggs), and Best Original Screenplay (Diggs and Casal).]

6. "Foxtrof" won an audience award at last year's Portland International Film Festival--which is especially noteworthy for a com-

plex film about grief and cycles of violence in families and countries. The film opens with an Israeli couple being informed that their son has been killed in action--but all is not as it seems. By telling a particular family's story extremely well, this brilliant film finds a way to surface the most difficult of larger questions; it feels both immediate and cosmic. This film deserves the most focused attention, as it shifts back and forth between locations and time periods to tell a story that would not have this impact told any other way. [In Hebrew; rated R for some sexual content including graphic images, and brief drug use; deserved Oscar nominations for Best Foreign Language Picture, Best Director (Samuel Maoz); Best Original Screenplay (Samuel Maoz); Best Actor (Leor Ashkenazi); Best Actress (Sarah Adler).]

7. I'm surprised and disappointed that "Mary, Queen of Scots" did not fare better this awards season. For my money,

there is no better performance by a lead actress than Saoirse Ronan in the titular role, and both she and Margot Robbie as Queen Elizabeth deliver complex and quite satisfying portraits of what it feels like to have positional power but not practical power (something I happen to know something about). Both women were monarchs by birthright, but in a world in which men controlled everything, and the film makes a convincing case that they chose conflicting routes to managing all that compromised power and male energy--and wisely, the film leaves as an open question who chose best. No film directed by a woman was nominated for Best Picture this year; no woman director was nominated for Best Director; and the best performance by a woman, who happened to be playing a powerful and clear woman leader, also wasn't recognized. Accident? I think not. See this underrecognized film, and give some thought to how the dynamics depicted have morphed but



Stephan James and Kiki Lane star as a young couple relying on their love to sustain them through unspeakable hardships in "If Beale Street Could Talk." Photo courtesy Annapurna Pictures

not disappeared--and learn about two fascinating women. [In English, French, Scottish Gaelic and Latin; rated R for some violence and sexuality; nominated for and should win Academy Award for makeup and hair; also nominated for costume design; deserved nominations for Best Picture, Best Director (Josie Rourke), and Best Actress (Saoirse Ronan).]

8. My favorite documentary of the year, "Eating Animals"

was not widely released, though you can now stream it on Amazon Prime. I saw it at the Portland International Film Festival--and I'll admit I was not enthused about seeing it, fearing that I would learn a bunch of horrifying information and not know what to do in response. That is indeed what happened--and yet I loved the film and found the energy to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



## Together, we do good things.

This page is sponsored by the Oregon Lottery®

# CALENDAR

# 2019 February

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
<p>18</p> <p><b>President's Day</b> <i>Former planet, Pluto, Discovered by Clyde Tombaugh in 1930</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p>○</p> <p><i>Phonograph Patented, 1878, Thomas Edison</i> <i>Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Debuted, 1968</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p><i>John Glenn Orbits Earth, 1962</i> Love Your Pet Day</p>	<p>21</p> <p><i>Malcom X Assassinated (1965)</i> <i>Washington Monument dedicated (1885)</i></p>	<p>22</p> <p><i>George Washington born, 1732</i> Be Humble Day World Thinking Day</p>	<p>23</p> <p>International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day <i>U.S. Flag raised at Iwo Jima (1945)</i></p>	<p>24</p> <p><i>Steve Jobs born, 1955</i> <i>Wilhelm Carl Grimm born, 1786</i></p>	
<p>25</p> <p>Quiet Day <i>Artist Pierre Auguste Renoir born, 1841</i></p>	<p>26</p> <p>◐</p> <p>Levi Strauss born, 1829</p>	<p>27</p> <p><i>Uri Shulevitz born, 1935</i> International Polar Bear Day</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Public Sleeping Day <i>Gold Seekers arrived in San Francisco (1849)</i></p>				