DGA's Best Spot Director Nominees: Lance Acord, Dante Ariola, Fredrik Bond, Steve Miller, Noam Murro

Field consists of two past winners, a four-time nominee, a helmer who's earned his second career nomination, and a first-timer

LOS ANGELES, January 10, 2012, --- The Directors Guild of America (DGA) has named its nominees for best commercial director of 2011: Lance Acord of Park Pictures; Dante Ariola of MJZ; Fredrik Bond, also of MJZ; Steve Miller of @radicalmedia; and Noam Murro of Biscuit Films.

Ariola and Murro are past DGA Award winners and each has been nominated five times in his career. Ariola won the DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Commercials for Traveler’s “Snowball,” Johnny Walker’s “Humman” and Coca-Cola’s “First Taste” in 2006. He was also nominated for the honor based on his work in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2007.

Murro won the DGA Award as best commercial director of 2004 for Adidas’ “Carry,” Starbucks’ “Giant” and eIddy’s “Toy Boat.” He also earned nominations for his spotmaking exploits in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

Bond has just garnered his fourth DGA Award nomination for commercials. He was previously nominated in 2004, 2007 and 2008. Acord now has his second career DGA nomination under his belt, the first coming for his work in 2000.

And Miller has earned his first DGA nom.

In contrast to a first-timer, Ariola and Bond continue what has become a DGA Awards tradition for MJZ. This marks the ninth time in the last 10 years that MJZ has had two or more nominees for the coveted Guild spot honor. MJZ has had at least one director nominated in 13 of the last 14 years. And MJZ directors have won the DGA Award four of the past six years (a different MJZ helmer each time).

Bodies of work

Acord’s nomination came on the strength of: three spots for Dos Equis—“Pommeled Horse,” “Speed Dating” and “Pygmy”—out of Euro RSCG Worldwide, New York; two Geico ads, “Guinea Pig” and “Sushi,” for The Martin Agency, Richmond, Va.; Cheeters’ “Fort” from Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco; and Oreita’s “Parking Lot” via Grey Worldwide.

Acord became a nominee for the second time thanks to last year’s hit Super Bowl commercial “The Forest” for the Volkswagen Passat out of Deutsch LA; Nike Basketball’s “Paint the Town” from Wieden + Kennedy, Portland, Ore.; Nike’s “The Chosen” for 72andSunny; and the National Basketball Association’s “Sweetest Moment” via Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco.

A pair of Heineken commercials, “Date” and “The Entrance” earned Bond his fourth career DGA nomination. Both spots came out of Wieden + Kennedy, Amsterdam.

Murro’s sixth DGA nomination was bestowed on the basis of: Heineken Premium Light’s “Handle Bar Moustache” from Wieden + Kennedy, New York; DirectTV’s “Hot House” for Grey New York; Volkswagen Tiguan’s “Anita” from Deutsch LA; and EA Battelfield 3’s “Is It Real?” for Wieden + Kennedy, Portland.

And Ariola became a six-time DGA nominee with Jim Beam’s “Parlors” for Strawberry Frog, New York; Volkswagen’s “Black Beetle” from Deutsch LA; and Nissan LEAF’s “Gas Powered Everything” out of TBWA\Chiat\Day, Los Angeles.

TV news of note

As in previous years, the TV program front, director Michael Cuesta—who’s handled the ArtList Projects for commercials and branded content—earned a DGA Award nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Dramatic Series for the pilot episode of Showtime’s Homeland. This is the first career nomination for Cuesta.

In the Comedy Series category, director Michael Spiller received his second career nomination for the Modern Family episode “Express Christmas.” Spiller—who’s repped for spots and branded content by Lookout Entertainment—won the DGA Award last year for Modern Family’s “Halloween” episode.

Also scoring in the Comedy Series category for Modern Family this year is Fred Savage. For the episode titled “After The Fire.” Savage, who recently signed with Uber Content for commercials, has four career DGA nominations to his credit, the prior three coming in the Children’s Program category.

And director Stephen Gyllenhaal—repped for spots by MBB Productions—earned his second career nomination, this one in the Movies for TV and Miniseries category for the Lifetime original movie Girl Fight. He won a DGA Award in the Dramatic Specials category back in 1992 for Paris Trout.