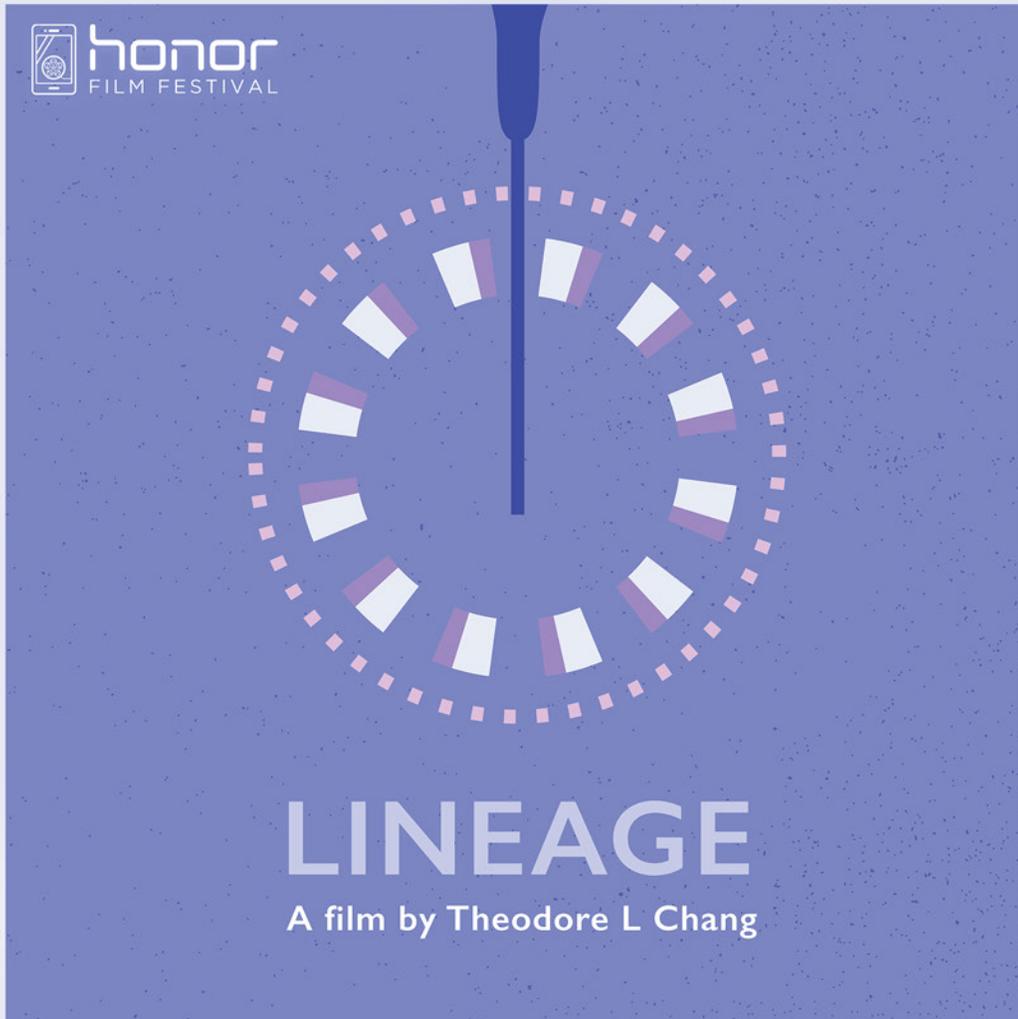


Top 10 Finalist



2016

Joseph McBride, in his 50's, is a world-famous classical music conductor and teacher. He mentors a musician in his late 20s, Tim Kantor, aspiring to be a successful conductor. Tim looks up to Joseph as role model and a father figure. One evening, Tim is practicing with a Mozart symphony. Joseph stops him, giving instructions and advices on what he could improve on. Joseph emphasizes on the importance of pacing in conducting and says his usual phrase "patience will pay off". As Joseph is spending hours on Tim, Tim respectfully reminds Joseph of his big concert coming up, and he should concentrate on that.

It is the day of Joseph's big concert. The back stage is filled with energy of excitement and tension. The orchestra makes their way out. The only people left in the backstage are Joseph, Tim, and several orchestra members who are reserve players. Joseph calmly gathers his sheet music and starts to walk towards the curtains. He sees Tim waiting by the curtains in excitement for his mentor, and the flashback starts.

It is the same setting; backstage of the same venue. Joseph, in his 20s, sees his mentor, Sir Alfred, walking towards him as he is about to take the stage. Alfred stops in front of Joseph.

"Joseph", Alfred points at the 'second-string' orchestra players that did not take the stage. "Do you know the importance of these people? In my opinion, they are not any less skilled than the people on the stage. Most people out there just had seniority over these people. Being reserve players, they would only take the stage if someone had an emergency absence. Yet, they were at every practice, every rehearsal. They know the arrangement just as well as people on the stage. These people behind the curtains prepared for this concert just as hard as the ones that have the lights shining on them, knowing that they will probably stay backstage. All because they believe their time will come one day. I admire their patience."

Young Joseph looks dumbfounded. Sir Alfred smiles at him.

Alfred continues, "And as I always say, their time will come when their patience pays off. Your patience, my friend, no different than theirs. You have been gentle and persistent with your patience, Joseph. And it pays off today." Alfred hands Joseph the sheet music. "You are in charge."

Joseph returns from his flashback. He takes a moment to take in his surroundings. Tim is standing in front of him. Joseph smiles at him, proud of what he has become. Joseph holds out his sheet music.

"Tim, you have been patient being my reserve conductor over the years. You are in charge from today."