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RECENT MASON GRADUATE REACHES THE FINALS OF STUDENT ACADEMY AWARDS
Erblin Nushi’s film ‘BINI’ is one of only 8 finalists for the award.

Student Academy Awards Ceremony
Thursday, October 11, 2018

FAIRFAX, VA (September 11, 2018) – Film at Mason graduate Erblin Nushi (FAVS, 2017) has advanced to the finals of the Student Academy Awards in the Narrative (Domestic Films) category for his film BINI. His film is one of eight films to make it to the finals and the only work created by an undergraduate student. This is the first Student Academy Award nomination for George Mason University. Winners will be announced in a ceremony in Los Angeles on Thursday, October 11th.

Based on his own heart wrenching story, BINI tells the story of a young boy who, thrust into the horrors of war, clings to a piece of candy as he and his family are forced to become refugees. The story is based on experiences Nushi had as a child, when he and his family were forced to leave his home of Kosovo at age six during the Kosovo war in 1999. Erblin wrote and directed the film as his capstone work for a B.A. degree in Film and Video Studies at George Mason. He shot the film on location in Kosovo with Producer and Faculty Advisor Lisa Thrasher, Assistant Professor of Film Producing and Business of Film at George Mason. “Having written and directed a film that advances to the finals of the Student Academy Awards is a significant honor, but to be the only undergraduate finalist in a field of graduate-level filmmakers from the top ranked U.S. film schools is a tremendous achievement. It exemplifies the notable talent of Erblin Nushi and the quality of filmmaking education at George Mason University,” said Professor Thrasher.

In addition to the Kosovar crew that worked on the film, four Film at Mason students Mikayla Fridley (FAVS, 2017), Logan McKennah Brown (FAVS 2018) and Chris Rothgeb (FAVS, 2017) traveled to Kosovo with Nushi to work on the film and produce a behind the scenes documentary on the making of BINI.

BINI co-stars Eshref Durmishi as Adrian, the father of the character Bini. Durmishi is one of Kosovo’s most notable actors working in film, tv, and theater. He produced and starred in the Oscar-nominated film “Shok.”

BINI recently made its L.A. premiere at the Oscar-qualifying HollyShorts Film Festival and made its Washington D.C. premiere at DC Shorts Film Festival on Saturday, September 8, where it won a Jury Award for Best Local Filmmaker. BINI will screen at DC Shorts in the Youthful Indiscretions block on Thursday, Sept 13th and with the Best of Show block on Sept 15th & 16th.
**DIRECTOR:** Writer, Director, Erblin Nushi originally hails from Peja, Kosovo. He has been taking acting lessons since he was ten years old and his passion for film grew after following the footsteps of his sister who is also a professional actress. Among many passions, Erblin was a ski racer throughout his high school years. He has earned his B.A. at George Mason University where he studied film with a concentration in directing, and minoring in photography. He founded his company, Tilia Entertainment, in 2007. Erblin directed 10 films while at Mason, many of which have screened at film festivals nationally and internationally.

**PRODUCER and FACULTY ADVISOR:** Lisa Thrasher, J.D., is an independent film producer, entertainment law specialist, and Film Business Professor at George Mason University. Lisa earned her Juris Doctorate degree from Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles, focusing on Intellectual Property & Entertainment Law and studied at Parsons School of Design and Virginia Commonwealth University, earning a B.F.A. in Photography & Film.

At Power Up Films, Lisa was President of Film Production & Distribution conducting all film, TV & PSA development, production and distribution, including “GIRLTRASH: All Night Long,” “ITTY BITY TITTY COMMITTEE,” (Berlinałe “Teddy Award” Nominee & South by Southwest “Best Narrative Feature Jury Award), “Get to Know Us First” PSA (NBC, ABC, CBS), “Little Black Boot” (Sundance), “Billy’s Dad is a Fudge-Packer” (Sundance), and “DEBS” (Sundance, Berlinale), and “Stuck” (Sundance).

At 20th Century Fox, Lisa did International Anti-Piracy Litigation & Trademark Prosecution and Anti-Piracy Advocacy seated on the Motion Picture Association's International Anti-Piracy Committee with Sony, Universal, MGM, Disney, Paramount, and Warner Bros.

**CINEMATOGRAPHER:** Isak Duraku is a graduate of the Academy of Arts at the University of Prishtina where he earned his B.A. in Cinematography and Master's in film directing. He has worked in numerous feature and short films as a Director of Photography in Kosovo.
Ticket Information

BINI will screen Thursday, Sep 13, 2018 at 5:15 p.m. at Landmark’s E Street Cinema (555 11th St NW, Washington, DC 20004).

Additional screenings will be Saturday, September 15, at 8 pm and Sunday, September 16, at 4 pm and 8 pm as part of the Best of DC Shorts, Show A at the Miracle Theater, 535 8th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.

For single tickets and information, please visit http://festival.dcsshorts.com/.

About Film at Mason

George Mason University’s Film at Mason program is the first multidisciplinary undergraduate degree in filmmaking in Virginia. With 200 students, we offer a B.A. in Film and Video Studies with concentrations in Directing, Producing, Production (Cinematography), Post-Production (Editing and Sound) and Screenwriting. Each concentration includes a business course, ethics course and capstone experience, where students are mentored by faculty on original projects in their senior year that prepare them for work as professional media makers. Film and Video Studies is driven by an independent film spirit. Faculty, who actively work in the industry, are keen to increase self-reflexivity and cross-cultural understanding in our students. We inspire students to work collaboratively and explore a variety of filmmaking styles and techniques. Creative solutions and original thinking are paramount. film.gmu.edu

About the College of Visual and Performing Arts

The College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) provides an academic environment in which the arts are explored as individual disciplines and interdisciplinary forms that strengthen one another. The college prepares students for careers as creators, performers, teachers, scholars, arts leaders, and arts entrepreneurs. Understanding that an education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists, the Center for the Arts, the professional presentation and production arm of the college, welcomes a variety of professional and world-renowned artists, musicians, and actors to its stage. Students have the opportunity to perform, create, and exhibit their work in a wide variety of public venues including a 2,000-seat Concert Hall. CVPA is home to the Schools of Music, Dance, Art, and Theater, as well as the Computer Game Design, Arts Management, and Film and Video Studies programs. cvpa.gmu.edu

About George Mason University

George Mason University is Virginia’s largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls more than 33,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility. Mason is also one of the best values in higher education, producing graduates who lead all Virginia schools with the highest annual salaries.

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