

# UNDER THE STARS WINS BEST FIRST TIME DIRECTOR PRIZE AT MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

Under the Stars (KATO APO TA ASTERIA) a UK, Cyprus, Greek, co-production completed in the early summer of this year having shot on location on Cyprus has picked up it's first award at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Director, Christos Georgiou won the prestigious "Prix de Montreal" the Best Film by a First Time Director award, from a jury headed by Alissa Simon, Head of international sales company Cine Qua Non.

Handing over the award, Alissa said: "It's a wonderful film, with good strong characters, well acted and beautifully shot. It thoroughly deserves the award "

The film, is a road movie dealing with the lives of two Greek Cypriots whose lives have been torn apart by the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974. After a period of intense fighting, the UN intervenes and draws a Green Line through the middle of Cyprus, separating the Turkish and Greek territories.

Twenty-six years later Lukas lives a hermit's life in the divided Nicosia (Lefkosia), haunted by memories of the past. Like Lukas, Phoebe is a child of the war, but unlike him she refuses to dwell on painful memories. Instead, she lives for the present, working as a smuggler, trading goods with Greeks and Turks on both sides of the border.

Tempted by an offer of cash, Phoebe reluctantly agrees to escort Lukas back to his family village on the Turkish side of the island. Along the way this odd couple fight, argue and confront their personal demons. They meet some Turkish footballers, a sentimental old couple, and drink with Turkish mechanics. When they finally reach their destination, the deserted village magically comes alive. As Lukas and Phoebe dance among the ghosts of their long-lost relatives, they discover a way of moving forward into the future.

A plethora of festival invitations followed the film's screening in Montreal, including, controversially the Istanbul Film Festival as well as the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, the Palm Springs International Film Festival and Taos Talking pictures Festival.

In addition to being the first international festival outing for the film, and it's first award, it also marks the debut feature of Film and Music Entertainment (F.&M.E.), the newly formed international production division of Munich based publicly owned media conglomerate FAME AG. The film was produced by F.&M.E.'s Samantha Taylor.

Financial partners in the film were British Screen Finance, The Cinema Advisory Committee of Cyprus and The Greek Film Centre.

*Credits >>*

## CREDITS:

Producer: Sam Taylor  
Direction/Script: Christos Georgiou  
Photography: Roman Osin  
Editor: Annabelle Ware  
Music: George Hadjineophytou  
Prod Design: Sossee Eskidjian  
Sound Design: George Triantafylou

Cast: Akis Sakellariou, Myrto Alikaki, Andros Kritikos, Stella Fyrogenni, Antonis Katsaris, Lenia Sirokou and others.

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### *Editor's Notes:*

#### *Christos Georgiou*

*Born in London in 1966 to Greek Cypriot parents, Christos Georgiou grew up and completed his basic education in Cyprus. After receiving his B.A. from the University of Warwick in 1989, he worked for a number of television and production companies in the U.K., Cyprus and Greece. In 1993, he received his masters in film directing from Leeds Metropolitan University. A year later, he received a scholarship to study direction at the Polish National Film School in Lodz. His shorts, Grandmother's Hands, Jal Uthna, Tomasz and, The Baptism were selected for broadcast by Channel Four in Britain and screened at various international film festivals, including awards in Drama (Gr.) Tampere (Fin) Chicago (USA). UNDER THE STARS is his first feature.*