

WINNERS

UK (2022) 85 minutes

Director: Hassan Nazer

Cast: Hossein Abedini (Saber)
Reza Naji (Nasser Khan)
Mahmoud Jafari (Driver)
Parsa Maghami (Yahya)
Shahrzad Kamalzadeh (Mrs Sadeghi)



Screening 13th December 2023 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

In a small, provincial Iranian town, the children work hard to support their families. One day 9-year-old Yahya and his friend Leyla find a precious statue (an Oscar). Sharing a passion for cinema, Yahya's boss, Nasser Khan decides to help them find the owner.

Reviews



The Oscar is discovered in a remote village by a nine-year-old cinophile (Parsa Maghami) and his friend (Helia Mohammadkhani), who attempt to locate the item's intended recipient with help from the owners (Nasser Khan, Hossein Abedini) of a scrap-yard where Maghami helps out. These adult characters are gradually revealed to have hidden pasts in films, and their experiences complement and deepen the film's wryly amiable take on innocent childhood obsessions.

Kevin Harley, Radio Times

Jump to young Yahya (Parsa Maghami), a refugee from Afghanistan who lives with his widowed mother and is obsessed with cinema. In fact, the very opening scene of *Winners* involves him watching Panahi's 2015 Golden Bear-winning *Taxi* long beyond his bedtime. Obviously he's destined to find Oscar, but less predictably, Nazer has inserted a sub-plot where Yahya works scavenging plastic from a huge local dump to be brought to a Fagin-like set-up for cash. Running the scrapyards are Nasser Khan (*Sparrows'* lead actor and Silver Bear-winner Naji) and his sidekick Saber (played by Hossein Abedini, who broke through in Majidi's *The Father*). The twist is that they really are Naji and Abedini, but in disguise, trying to evade the attention of audiences and the authorities.

Fionnuala Halligan, Edinburgh Review

Film Facts

- Hassan Nazer, the director, arrived in the UK in 2000 as a refugee from Iran and, after working in a takeaway, completed a degree at Aberdeen University as well as starting a restaurant business. Eventually, he raised enough money to start producing his own low budget films.
- Supported by Screen Scotland, *Winners* was financed entirely in the UK but was shot on location in Nazer's home town of Garmsar with local actors.

swindonfilm.org.uk