



MY LAKE

A FILM BY GJERGJ XHUVANI

ON FILM
PRODUCTION



ARITON **POLLOZHANI**
TRISTAN **HALILAJ**
VEDRAN **ZIVOLIC**
ELIA **ZAHARIA**
LUIZA **XHUVANI**
BIRÇE **HASKO**
JULINDA **EMIRI**
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY
DIMO **POPOV**
ART DIRECTION BY
DURIM **NEZIRI**
COSTUMES BY
STELA **LAKNORI**
MAKEUP BY
TATJANA **TOMSIC**
SOUND BY
MIRKO **FABBRI**
EDITING BY
JUAN **GAMBINO**
MUSIC BY
ROSARIO **DI BELLA**
CO-PRODUCED BY
PASQUALE **MINGOLLA**
ZVONIMIR **MUNIVRANA**
DARKO **POPOV**
LIRIDON **CAHANI**
PATRIZIA **FERSURELLA**
PAOLO **MONACI**
PRODUCED BY
DRITAN **HUQI**
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
GJERGJ **XHUVANI**





SHORT SYNOPSIS

Young Kristo lives in a village at the edge of gorgeous Lake Prespa, a body of water divided on the borders of three Balkan countries Albania, Macedonia and Greece. In order to support his family, Kristo has become a small-time marijuana smuggler, using his boat and knowledge of the lake waters to transport drug packages from the Albanian to the Macedonian side.



LONG SYNOPSIS

KRISTO lives with his aging GRANDPARENTS in a village on the edge of Lake Prespa. Their modest livelihood depends on the remittance of Kristo's absent parents who work and live abroad. Kristo is a sensitive and intelligent teenager and, like all the children in the area, a great sailor. In this forgotten part of the world, fishing is the sole source of survival. Prespa lake is positioned on the border of three Balkan countries - Albania, Macedonia and Greece - making it easy and profitable for drug traffickers to make deliveries. And Kristo is the perfect smuggler: not a child, nor a man, ambitious and without parental guidance, stuck in the poorest section of the geopolitical triangle. After a night on the job, Kristo arrives at school, deprived of sleep. His literature teacher, MIRANDA, has taken a liking to him. Kristo is also adored by his classmates since he's the only kid in school with an expensive mobile phone. Kristo's grandparents grow increasingly concerned with their grandson's midnight adventures. On his nightly fishing trips, Kristo transports drugs for ISMAIL, a sneaky, aggressive outsider in the lakeside community. But what Kristo truly seeks is the adoration of PASKO, a troubled local trafficker wanted by the police for the attempted murder of two police officers. Kristo is a blessing for the criminal Pasko. Kristo dutifully becomes the eyes and ears of Pasko, bringing him homemade food and news of his mother and bride, DITKA. There are even times when, under the watchful gaze of his protective angel, Pasko makes love to Ditka by the abandoned church altar. Kristo goes to the far-off town of Korça to surprise his teacher with a fresh fish catch. With fear in their heart, Kristo's grandparents nervously await their nephew's return. Back in the village, Ditka discovers that she's pregnant while Pasko's sick mother longs to see her son once again.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

MY LAKE, or “my movie”, although it is a cinematic narrative in itself, is quite simply an ordinary story, natural for its extraordinary reality, unnatural for Albanian society. For about three decades this same leitmotif has continued played out in one form or another. Drug trafficking, money...

Children are born and raised with an atypical moral code where making money to lift you out of poverty, by illegal means, somehow makes you a man. It makes you somebody...

The moral code, the highest one, the most holy one, is loyalty towards friends, to the gang. Confessing to the law, going to the police, is a like the death sentence. With this story, I will not analyze why the Albanian youth have entered into this labyrinth. I will not stress the abandonment of the rural areas for the urban centers. I will not stress the state's indifference to these occurrences.

However, I want to stress that this model ends up killing the most beautiful, the most fragile part of a human beings life: childhood. We are witnessing a generation of children growing up in front of us, without games and fairytales...



DIRECTOR BIO

GJERGJ XHUVANI was born in Tirana, Albania on December 20th, 1963. After writing several scripts for animated films, he directs his first dramatic short titled Black and White (1991) (Special Prize at the Larissa Film Festival - Greece). In 1992, he directs a second short film, The Last Sunday (Special Jury Prize at the Bastia Festival - Corsica). After another short, A Day of a Life (1993) he shoots his first feature film, The Last Love (Special Jury Prize at the Bastia Festival – Corsica and Best Script, Best Set Design and Best Actress awards at the Albanian Film Festival in 1995). In 1996, he directs the 35mm documentary Tirana '96, while his 1998 short fiction film Funeral Business enters the competition of the Venice International Film Festival and wins the First Prize award at Montpellier Festival (France), the Best Director award at the Euro Film Festival (Czech Republic), the FedEx Award at the Film Video 2000 (Italy) along with a Special Prize at the Albanian Film Festival in 1999. With his feature film Slogans (2001), Gjergj Xhuvani wins the Youth Award at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, The Grand Prix - Best Director and Best Actress awards at the 2001 Tokyo Film Festival, the Special Prize award at the Cottbus Festival (Germany) and the Best Actress and Best Script awards at the Albanian Film Festival. More critical acclaim and festival success comes with Dear Enemy, a feature film from 2004: Best European Script at the Sundance/NHK (USA), in competition at the Toronto, Edinburgh, San Francisco and Bratislava festivals and the Best Actor, Best Costume, Best Script prizes at the Albanian Film Festival. Gjergj Xhuvani's East West East receives the Jury Special Prize award personally awarded by Vanessa Redgrave at the Prishtina Film Festival in 2009, participates in the 2009 Thessaloniki International Film Festival and the 2010 Sofia International Film Festival. East West East: The Final Sprint wins the Best Actor award at the 2010 Alexandria Film Festival, Best Movie and Best Soundtrack award at the 2010 BAFF (Italy), participates at the 2010 Utrecht Film Festival and the 2010 Mediterranean Film Festival in Bruxelles along with winning the Best Director - Best Actor awards at the 2009 Tirana International Film Festival. East West East was selected to represent Albania in the Best Foreign Film category at the 2011 US Academy Awards. His most dramatic feature, Distant Angels, was an Albanian-Italian-Kosovo co production that premiered in 2017.



ON FILM PRODUCTION PROFILE

On Film Production is one of the leading audiovisual production companies in Albania. It was founded in 2008 by Dritan Huqi, producer and owner of the company. On Film Production works in Albania and Kosovo and has co-produced successful international projects, like *The Albanian* (2010) by Johannes Naber (Germany-Albania), that was awarded at Moscow IFF and screened at numerous other festivals; *Alarm Fur Cobra 11* (2015) by Nico Zavelberg (RTL Germany & Albania) and *Zana* by Antoneta Kastrati, screened at Toronto IFF. The company produced the recent feature films of Cannes awarded film director Gjergj Xuvani, *Distant Angels* (2017) and *My Lake* (2020), as an Albania-Kosovo-Croatia-North Macedonia co-production. Since 2009 the company has produced more than 10 TV Series for Digitalb Broadcasting and more than 20 student short films. Currently the company is developing two feature films.





On Film

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