

Afda student film wins at Durban International Film Festival

By Earle Holmes, issued by AFDA

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The Afda Cape Town 2021 honours graduation film, *Where is Mr Adams?* is making waves.



Directed by Cameron Murray and produced by Larise Krishnan, the film continues its fantastic run on the national and international film festival circuit, this time walking off with the Best Student Film Award at the inaugural Isiphethu International Student Film Festival programme hosted by the Durban International Film Festival 2022.

"On behalf of the *Where is Mr Adams?* cast and Afda Cape Town Honours crew, we'd like to thank The Durban International Film Festival, firstly for hosting us, and secondly for presenting us with this award. We are truly honoured and blessed to be here and in the wise words of our brilliant and somewhat inconsiderate Mr Adams, we hope that you are free from reality, if but for a moment, and that you enjoyed it. Because we certainly did." - Cameron Murray, director and writer of *Where is Mr Adams?*

"It is always such a great honour to be recognised for the hard work the cast and crew have put in. As a crew, we are always overwhelmed with joy when we hear the news of an award and getting to share our work at such a scale is truly indescribable. We hope that our audiences are not only able to find joy in the film but also take away from the very special

message it holds. Enjoy and appreciate all the little moments!" - Larise Krishnan, producer of *Where is Mr Adams?*

Where is Mr Adams? to date has received Official Selections at the Monthly Indie Shorts, First-Time Filmmaker Sessions by Lift-Off Global Network, a nomination for Best Trailer at The Monthly Film Festival based in Glasgow and two honourable mentions for Best Student Film at the New York International Film Awards as well as the Global Shorts Festival based in Los Angeles. The editor of the film, Ronan Irish, scooped up not one but two awards for Best Short Film Editor at the Onyko Film Awards in Ukraine and at the Istanbul Film Festival.

Where is Mr Adams? was first screened at the Afda Graduation Festival in November 2021 and walked away with a host of awards. The film was also rated in the Top 5 films at the festival by renowned film critic Spilling. This is what he had to say about the film:

Films like Noises Off starring Michael Caine as a director trying to keep his play of ceaseless calamities on the go have a way of presenting theatre that's difficult to capture on stage. The camera's roving eye takes us behind the scenes, captures more of the panic in close-up expressions, and takes us behind the façade of what should be a series of graceful interludes from the audience's perspective. Seeing what's been swept under the carpet unveils the magic of theatre but like a good blooper reel, winds up the hilarity. This farce style of comedy is the stuff of opening and closing doors, often used in the sitcom Frasier, which translates to some fiasco fun for audiences.

While Where is Mr Adams? is influenced by Birdman, taking an edgier approach to its language, its core is the 'what could possibly go wrong?' approach to theatre as a key character mysteriously vanishes during a live production. Taking place on stage and behind the scenes, a stricken director, stage hands and cast members flounder as they try to fill the gap using improvised bits. Taking place at a real playhouse amplifies the realism of the big night's real drama as people whip themselves into a good froth in trying to locate Mr Adams. Energy is on high in this short film comedy and the madcap performances from Thulani Nzonzo and Jordyn Linklater drive this home as Where is Mr Adams? builds to a crescendo.

Directed by Cameron Murray, the acrobatic emotions are soon brought under control as the film coasts into a calm bay. Moving from the nuttiness and spontaneity of being in the moment, things are brought back into alignment ending on a poignant note with many vivid interpretations on offer from life's philosophy to overarching narratives for our times. While it's not in the same league as The Big Lebowski or The Wolf of Wall Street when it comes to coarse language, the hype-inducing dialogue is liberally peppered with expletives. While this may even be an accurate reflection of the behind-the-scenes atmosphere of any theatre production, it's overuse does become distracting. While this may irk more sensitive viewers, the characters and story's charm, pizzazz and energy is infectious enough to wait on Adams.

The Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) fulfils a facilitative function as a promoter of the film industry, creating networking and cultural exchange platforms. It was initiated as a safe space for intellectual and creative dialogue to start conversations that spark innovation and question the world we live in and the lenses through which history is portrayed during a time of conflict and extreme racial tensions. It continues to do so, tackling contemporary challenges through various initiatives and industry engagements.

The Isiphethu International Student Film Festival (IISFF) at DIFF aims to create a platform and gateway for students to the big festival by exposing them to the role players in the film industry and showcasing their work on big cinema screens. IISFF will be the role player and centre focus on the continent to connect the continent and diaspora.

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