

MAY 2011

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION FOR 'THE MISERABLES'

'The Miserables', one of 2010's BA graduation films, has just been shortlisted for the 38th Student Academy Awards, which takes place in Beverly Hills in June.

This is an extraordinary honour for undergraduate students, as just five films from outside the USA are selected each year for the International section of the

Student Oscars, from elite National Film Schools around the world. Course Leader Peter Hort said: "This nomination shows that despite working with less than a fraction of the resources of the big film schools, our students can produce work that genuinely affects and moves audiences. 'The Miserables' is a really mature film, with strong performances and real depth".



SONY'S 'PROJECT HOLLYWOOD' CHALLENGE TAKES THREE WESTMINSTER STUDENTS TO L.A

Sixty 1st and 2nd year BA Film and Television Production students answered the call to come to the dubbing theatre for "a mysterious announcement", to be greeted by a film crew, and a representative of Sony Pictures. There were gasps as they learned that three of them would be selected to re-edit, overnight, the official trailer to the forthcoming blockbuster 'Priest 3D' and then fly the next day to Hollywood to pitch their work to the film's producer, director and star. The editor of the best trailer would win the extra prize of working at Sony Pictures in Hollywood over the summer.

All the students were interviewed, and three were selected: Moritz Riewolt (1st year), Saba Kia (2nd Year), Joshua Sanger (2nd year), who then had one night to edit their trailer before setting off for LA.

A film following their adventure is now available to watch on youtube, in short and long versions, where it has already received over 150,000 views. It's available through Sony's youtube page, where you can also watch all three of the trailers.

www.youtube.com/SONYUK

Armed with their completed trailers, the trio went off to the airport the following afternoon, ready to fly off to Los Angeles.

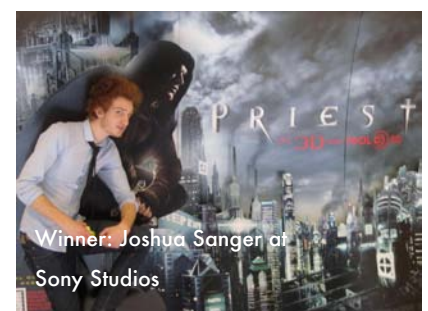


Saba Kia confided that: "I had no previous experience editing with Avid, so the process was a really exciting but nerve-racking challenge."

After an exhausting 11 hour flight, everyone headed to bed before waking up to a day they would never forget.

It began with a tour of Sony Studios, including a sneak peek at the Spiderman 4 set. Then they had to face the judges, each pitching their trailers to the director of "Priest in 3D" Scott Charles Stewart, one of the film's stars, Cam Gigandet, and Clint Culpepper, President of Screen Gems. The judges agonised over the winner, with Culpepper

commenting on the quality of the work they had seen: "to do this in such a short time really blows my mind". Eventually the nervous trio were called back and Joshua Sanger was revealed as the winner of a return trip to the studios, for work experience along side top professionals. "It was an incredible surprise. The whole trip was so surreal, an amazing opportunity. I can't wait to get back to the studios in the summer."



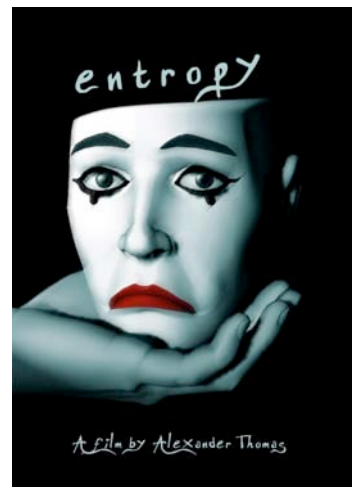
Westminster students to work on 2012 Olympics



Westminster is one of ten UK universities to have been chosen as an 'Olympic Broadcast Training Centre', and over 100 students from BA Film & Television Production, as well as students from other courses, have been selected for a training programme that could culminate in paid jobs as part of the team broadcasting the 2012 Olympic Games. Students will work for the Olympic Broadcasting Services for the duration of the games in roles such as camera assistant, audio assistant, liaison officers and production assistant, and will assist in the production of over 5,600 hours of coverage for broadcasters around the world. The programme is part of the 'legacy programme' of the Games, and will provide students with a fantastic opportunity to work alongside leading broadcast professionals from around the world.

MA NEWS FROM THE FILM SCHOOL

Films from the first year of the MA Directing programme have been doing well on the festival circuit. In March 2011 *"Entropy"* written and directed by Alexander Thomas, won best script and best performance at Screentest National Student Film Festival, London. *"Mosa"* directed by Ana Moreno has screened in festivals in Melbourne, Germany and Romania, as well as winning 2010 Iris Prize for Best UK Short, in Wales. The film's writer, Victoria Pilkington-Miksa of MA Screenwriting has been commissioned by Slim Jim Films to turn the short into a feature. Other graduates from MA Screenwriting have received distribution or serious development in a number of projects. Kat Moon is producing *"Men Don't Lie"* starring Michael Madsen; *"Island"* which is opening at the Renoir, was produced by screenwriting student Amy Gardner and stars Natalie Press (*"My Summer of Love"*, Oscar winning *"Wasp"*). Julio Bonet (class of 2006) has just become Head of Development at Elton John's Rocket Pictures.



'THE MISERABLES' AT SEHSÜCHTE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

'The Miserables' was in competition last week at one of Europe's largest student film festivals, Sesüchte in Potsdam, Germany. Writer/Producer Alex Lipman reflects on his experience there:

"The festival was really professionally organised, with films and filmmakers from all over the world, and some really superb films to watch. I ended up sharing a room with the director of another of this year's Oscar nominated shorts, the Norwegian Film School's *'Tuba Atlantic'*. He told me that their budget was very tight – just 38,000 Euros from the Film School and a further 15,000 that they raised themselves – which meant that their budget was more than ten times ours!

Incredibly, *'The Miserables'* seemed to be the only undergraduate film in the competition – all the others were from postgraduates who were in their late twenties or thirties. Ben Wheatley (the director) and I realised that we were very privileged to be competing in this company, and throughout the festival there was the opportunity to meet and network with other film makers from the top film schools around the world."



Writer/Producer Alex Lipman and Director Ben Wheatley, at Sehsüchte International Film Festival

NEWS FROM THE FESTIVALS

It's been a busy few months for film festivals, and our films have been screened at a number of them, picking up a host of nominations and prizes. All five 3rd year graduation films from 2010 have now won awards.



At the No Limits International Film Festival in Sheffield from 2nd to 3rd April, 'The Magician's Wife' picked up the Production Design Award. Designer John Wilkinson was delighted: "It's a great feeling – it makes all those long hours building the set worthwhile". 'Pigeon' picked up the special Student Jury prize, to add to the Corona Audience Award it won at the Exposures Festival late last year.



'All Fried Up' added to its haul of awards at No Limits, with Matthew Sim winning 'Best Actor' for his terrific performance. Sim commented: "I loved playing the role of Ghandi. I found him to be a complex character, which allowed me to really push my acting to new levels. I find it very special that people enjoyed the performance enough to give it an award."



Westminster swept the board at the Short and Sweet festival last week. 'The Situation', produced by Gemma Fairway, written by Ben Mills and directed by Ben Simpson, proved to be a tremendous crowd pleaser, and won Best of Festival and Best Screenplay. 'All Fried Up' collected another two awards – Best Director for Tom Marshall, and Best Actor, this time for Dai Patterson in his role as Martin.

'The Miserables' continued to impress audiences and judges, winning the top prize of Best Film at the Screentest National Student Film festival in London.



After winning the Kodak Student Commercial Awards outright for the last two years, Westminster students had to take a back seat in 2011, but still picked up 3rd best in brief for "Join the conversation" produced by a team led by Martin Dixon and Callum Smith with a script written by Patrick Benson.

