

HALF a MAN

a short film by Kristina Kumrić

WORLD PREMIERE
TORONTO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL 2016



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LOGLINE

The family is finally back together, but will they find happiness again?

THE STORY IN SHORT

A village in the outback of Croatia, autumn of 1991. The war is raging nearby. 10-year-old Mía and 12-year-old Lorena are having a big day: their father, Mirko, is going to be released from the camp where he spent the last three months as a prisoner of war.



THE WHOLE STORY

It's Autumn of 1991. The story is set in a village in the inland part of Dalmatia in Croatia, near the Adriatic. A brutal war is raging across the country. For Mother and her two daughters - Lorena (11) and Mia (9) this is a great day: the girls' father Mirko is about to be released from a camp where he was held as a prisoner of war for the last 3 months. He's about to come home in the morning, that is if this exchange of prisoners goes well - unlike the last two that were canceled at the last moment. But, Mia and Lorena are in no hurry to get back home. After school they practice a dance routine for a school recital. They do it passionately and the return home doesn't even cross their minds.

Back at home, Mother is getting ready, nervously expecting the return of her husband. The neighbors appear to show support, also anxious to see Mirko. They bring food and something to drink. As two

girls finally get back home from school, the atmosphere is getting rowdy - Ante the neighbor is drunk and loud.

Mirko finally arrives, bruised, battered and broken. He's weak and barely able to stand on his own. The Officer who picked him up at the exchange carries him inside. The family is finally together again, but there's no happiness, only sadness and confusion. Mother is very visibly shocked and she doesn't hide the fact. Ante is drunk and starts making fun of the situation - Mirko is the lucky one, he'll get an army pension and all he had to do for it was a few weeks of camp. Mother loses her temper and attacks Ante, throwing the neighbors out of the house.

Lorena and Mia decide to practice their choreography and when the cassette player batteries finally die, all they're left with is silence.



DIRECTOR'S VISION

Before writing a story about her dad returning home from a prison camp in the town of Knin in Croatia, where he ended up being tortured sometime during 1991 as a prisoner of war, scriptwriter Maja Hrgovic was, as she said herself, angry by the exploitation of war in literature and in film. She spoke that it is about time to stop riding a dead horse that is the Serbo-Croatian conflict and subsequent war that followed and to present new material and stories that would engage themes from real life and have more connection to the present day; she was also upset about the notion of always looking back into the past, in a pathetic and insincere way.

She used those feelings and notions to rise, essentially, against herself when she wrote a war themed story named 'The Return', that she developed into a script for "Half a Man" afterwards.

I completely understand from where her resistance came from. It's easiest to keep your mouth shut about the experiences you suffered and at the same time it is very difficult to avoid that pathetic rhetoric and being whiney about everything when you start dealing with those issues. It is also extremely hard to offer any sort of novelty, art wise. And because Maja was aware of all those difficulties, she succeeded in overcoming them and bridging the toughest challenges in a creative, and sometimes even explosively funny way.

'Half a man' is a film that is new and exciting; one could call it even fresh, a film that is trying to always be two steps ahead of any long-winded emotions and clichéd feelings and moments. Our film is not looking back, but it connects to the everyday life trying to see what kids have to go through when faced with



terrible consequences during Croatian war of Independence. It talks about the contrast and the contradicting situations in life, when everything isn't really black or white or understandable. And it seems life is the least like that during the time of war.

"Half a Man" focuses on two distinctive worlds, one that kids roam in and the other possessed by the grown-ups – both world existing almost independently from one another. And the action and drama comes from the space forming between the two.

The characters of the little girls, the two sisters whose father is returning from the camp, are the ones who the audience will identify with. Their selfishness is at times almost diabolical; the time while the Father was away being maybe the best period of their short lives so they give in to life and the pleasures of spring and summer. They are wild, released from their prison, flippant and arrogant in their games with the other kids. One could argue that their

freedom is best reflected in the dance routine which they rehearse without fear – it could be mistook for a complete lack of empathy on their part. But this is in fact a quirky celebration of life and youth, which is touching, humane and honest. Mia and Lorena are naïve and manipulative at the same time – their sacrifice is subverted, turned upside-down; instead of being presented as poor victims of a family tragedy and then provoking the feelings of pity in people around them, they take on a role of being heroic and stoic characters which turn their awful situation into a triumph.

Mia and Lorena 'bought' me. I know them; I know their faces and their defiance. I recognize myself in them and my own generation, coming from the south of Croatia being at the same time stuck in the war; the kids who lived (oxymoronically) in a tame and timid coexistence with the creature that was war; the kids who then entered a symbiosis with all those contradictions – and remained within.

Kristina Kumrić



KRISTINA KUMRIĆ



Kristina Kumrić graduated design at the Faculty of textile technology of the University of Zagreb and later Film and TV directing at the Academy of dramatic art in Zagreb. She is the author of several short fiction and documentary films. Her short documentary “Welcome to Igrane” won a special jury prize at the Vukovar Film Festival, 1st jury prize at Liburnia Film Festival and best film awards at FRKA festival. Kristina has been working with the Croatian Radiotelevision and since 2013 she is a lecturer at the Culturology department of the University of Osijek in Croatia.



MAJA HRGOVIĆ

MAJA HRGOVIĆ, born in Split, Croatia in 1980, is an award winning fiction writer, journalist and cultural activist. Her first short story collection “Pobjeđuje onaj kojem je manje stalo” (HE WHO CARES LESS, Profil, Zagreb 2010) won the national Kiklop award (2010.) for the best newcomer of the year. In November 2013 her novel „Živjet ćemo bolje“ (WE SHALL LIVE BETTER, Arteist, Zagreb, 2013) was published and adapted for theatre (ZKM, Zagreb, January 2016., directed by Senka Bulić). She is also the author of the essay collection „Žena, majka, glupača“ (WOMAN, MOTHER, EMPTYHEAD, Arteist, Zagreb, 2014), in which she explores gender stereotypes in Balkan politics, media and pop-culture.

Her fiction has been included in several collections, including the anthology “Best European Fiction 2012” (edited by Alexandar Hemon and published by

Dalkey Archive Press) and The Granta Magazine. She was nominated for the European Prize for Literature in 2015. Her journalistic work has been represented in numerous international media, including the book “Identity: The Search for Belonging in a Changing Europe”. In 2009, she was awarded the first prize for journalistic excellence (Journalistic Excellence Award by Balkan Investigative Reporting Network). Her work for theatre includes a play „Terracotta Boy“, written for children’s theatre Meriton in Xian, China, where it premiered in May 2016. In 2013, she was awarded Marin Držić prize for her theatre play „Beautiful Ruins“. In 2015 she was commissioned by Mala scena theatre (Zagreb) to write a piece for children, about a boy who was in no rush to grow up. The play „Puž“ (THE SNAIL), directed by Staša Zurovac, premiered in Mala

scena in February 2016. Her award winning story „Half a man“, about a soldier’s return from torture camp, was made into movie by Croatian director Kristina Kumrić and will premiere this year at Toronto Film Festival. She is the editor of the online culture magazine Arteist.hr.



VANJA JAMBROVIĆ



Vanja Jambrović graduated philosophy and comparative literature at Faculty for social sciences in Zagreb in 2005 and in 2011 she graduated film production at the Academy of Dramatic Art, also in Zagreb. Vanja started working in film industry in 2002 as a production assistant and a festival coordinator. Since 2009 she's been making films with Restart. Vanja's track record includes more than 20 films of all shapes and sizes.

Restart as a production company is focused mostly on documentaries and making first steps towards fiction films. Restart is a multi-faceted organization, also running educational programs, it runs a distribution label (Restart label) and operates DOKUKINO KIC – a small art house cinema in the center of Zagreb dedicated to creative documentary.

Vanja is running the Restart Laboratory – a platform for first time directors

and Restart Masterclass – a year-long program dedicated to connecting world-class filmmakers with Croatian audiences through a series of interactive lectures.

With her projects Vanja was a part of several professional workshops such as: EAVE (2015), Producers on the move (Cannes 2014), Robert Bosch Coproduction Prize Germany Eastern Europe (Berlin, 2013), Berlinale Talent Campus (Berlin, 2013), Emerging Producers 2012 (Jihlava), Sarajevo Talent Campus (Sarajevo, 2012), EURODOC (France 2010) and many more. Her films have circled the globe, having been screened in competition at Hot Docs or Toronto IFF to Karlovy Vary IFF and hundreds more.

TIBOR KESER

Tibor Keser is film a producer living and working in Zagreb, Croatia. His areas of interest include film (both fiction and documentary), video and theatre. He is working as a producer with Restart. Tibor graduated Economics at the University of Zagreb. A few years later, he enrolled into the Academy of dramatic art in Zagreb later graduating film and theatre production. He is a guest lecturer for Palunko – a scriptwriting program by the Croatian Film Association. He is a member of Kino Klub Split – Cinema Club Split. He actively pursues workshops and festivals, including the 7. Sarajevo Talent Campus in 2013, EURODOC 2015, Berlinale Talents 2016 and Emerging Producers 2016 (Jihlava).



HÉLÈNE MITJAVILE

Hélène Mitjavile (born 1984 in Paris) is the cofounder and principal producer of Melocoton Films, a boutique production company focusing on arthouse international coproductions. After studying theatre at Cours Florent, media and arts management at HEC Paris and film production and distribution at La Femis, she first gained professional experience at Metronomic (animation studio) as a production assistant and at Natixis Coficiné (investment bank for cinema) as an analyst. She then worked for the established arthouse sales company The Coproduction Office. In 2011, she founded Melocoton Films with advertising producer and director Théo Laboulandine. Melocoton has 5 short fictions in its catalogue, 2 in production and 4 projects in development including an Argentinian feature selected for the San Sebastian Film Festival Co-Production Forum 2016



THE CAST

mia:
JANJA AVDAGIĆ
 lorena:
LEONARDA ŽIVKOVIĆ
 mother:
MARINA REDŽEPOVIĆ
 father:
FRANJO DIJAK
 neighbor ante:
NIKŠA BUTIJER
 neighbor kate:
JELENA KORDIĆ
 sergeant:
IGOR HAMER
 van driver:
JAKOV BILIĆ
 playground kids:
MIRNA LANA AVDAGIĆ, LUKA ČEVID,
FRANKA IVIĆ, FILIP MARČIĆ,
JAKOV MARČIĆ, EVA MIKULANDRA,
CVITA MRVICA, LUKA VUKOREPA,
LUCIJA ZEKANOVIĆ

THE CREW

director:
KRISTINA KUMRIĆ
 scriptwriter:
MAJA HRGOVIĆ
 director of photography:
IVAN ZELIĆ
 producers:
VANJA JAMBROVIĆ, TIBOR KESER
 co-producers:
HÉLÈNE MITJAVILE (for Melocoton Films),
HRVOJE OSVADIĆ (for UO Kinoljetka)
 editor:
FRANO HOMEN
 sound recordist and sound editor:
BORNA BULJEVIĆ
 casting director:
ORIANA KUNČIĆ
 production designer:
IVANA ŠKRABALO
 costume designer:
ZORANA MEIĆ
 make up & hair artist:
SLAVICA ŠNUR

prop master and set dresser:
BORKO BALEN
 first assistant director:
JOSIP ŽUVAN
 line producer:
IVAN KELAVA
 choreographer:
ZORANA MIHELČIĆ
 script supervisor:
LEA MILETA
 camera operator:
VIKTOR GLOTZ
 focus puller:
TOMISLAV MAREKOVIĆ
 2nd assistant camera:
SAŠA TUFEGDŽIĆ
 gaffer:
ŠIME KNEŽEVIĆ
 key grip:
TOMISLAV SOKAČ
 stills photographer and best boy electric:
DUJE KUNDIĆ
 best boy electric:
KREŠIMIR MASLEŠA
 sound re-recording mixer:
COLIN FAVRE-BULLE
 foley artist:
ROMAIN ANKLEWICZ

assistant art director:
MIRNA HORVAT
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PAVLA ALEKSIĆ
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JAKOV BILIĆ
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NIKOLA PETROVIĆ



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 back office administrator:
MARKO PEJIĆ
 associate producer:
OLIVER SERTIĆ

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 production coordinator:
ARCHIBALD MARTIN
 production assistant:
PHILOMÈNE CHABERT
 translation:
MARIE-PAULINE CHARTRON
 foley and mixing facilities:
YELLOW CAB STUDIOS
 grading studio:
COMMUNE IMAGE

MUSIC
 « Holding Out For A Hero »
 (Dean Pitchford / Jim Steinman)
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TECHNICAL
INFO

original title: Po čovika
english title: Half a Man

genre: drama
running time: 20 min

production year: autumn 2016
countries of production: Croatia/France

shooting format: digital cinema (ARRI
Amira + ZEISS optics)

screening formats: DCP SMPTE 25FPS 5.1
(EN or FR subs) | DCP INTEROP 24FPS
5.1 (EN or FR subs) | digital (H265/H264/
PRORES) with 5.1 or STEREO
ratio: 2,39:1

language: Croatian (dialect)
subtitles: English, French

FOR PRODUCTION NOTES
AND STILLS PLEASE VISIT:

www.halfamanfilm.com

FOR A DOWNLOADABLE
TRAILER PLEASE VISIT:

www.vimeo.com/halfamantrailer

COPY OF THE FILM WITH ENGLISH
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