



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

DJ AHMET (12)

Director: Georgi M. Unkovski

Starring: Arif Jakup, Agush Agushev, Dora Akan Zlatanova

North Macedonia, 2025, 1 hour 39 minutes, Turkish/Macedonian + English subtitles

"The bright-coloured interiors and cool, retro bomber jackets in *DJ Ahmet* at first look plucked straight out of a John Hughes teen comedy. But when the camera pulls back in the opening scene, we're met not with an American high school but a Yuruk farming community in North Macedonia. This sharp left turn is the first of many pleasures to come in Georgi M. Unkovski's charming coming-of-ageer.

"Surrounded by sprawling mountains, this isolated village is home to the titular teenager Ahmet (Arif Jakup), his stern father (Aksel Mehmet) and little brother, Naim (Agush Agushev). Naim has not uttered a single word since the death of their mother, meanwhile Ahmet daydreams aloud during class, until his dad pulls him out of school and into full-time shepherding.

"But fantasy comes to the teen once more in the shape of neighbour Aya (Dora Akan Zlatanova), whose hand is promised to someone else. Following her late one night, Ahmet stumbles into a clandestine rave, his sheep not far behind him. Their bleating bleeds into the pulsating beats of EDM and, almost immediately, the video of Ahmet and his flock bursting through the party goes viral, leaving the boy further torn between duty and rebellion." Rafa Sales Ross, **Sight and Sound**

"Picture *Footloose* happening right now in a tiny village in Northern Macedonia, and you'll get the vibe behind writer-director Georgi M. Unkovski's touching feature debut, *DJ Ahmet*.

"Working with a mostly amateur cast, Unkovski gets them all to deliver solid naturalistic performances, especially the likeable newcomer Jakup. Playing a teenager whose face is sunburnt from toiling all day outside, and who wears the same muddied jumpsuit in nearly every scene, he gradually reveals Ahmet to be a true Kevin Bacon-style rebel behind his country bumpkin demeanor. And while the boy is never anything close to an actual DJ, he does the one thing all good DJs do: He keeps the beat coming." Jordan Mintzer, **The Hollywood Reporter**

Notes compiled by Steve Freer (Borderlines Chair)

Preview courtesy of Conic

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