





*Inside the new building  
of the Azerbaijan State Film Fund*

Adalat VALIYEV  
Professor

# AZERBAIJANI CINEMA: 120 YEARS ON

Cinema is the newest of the most common art forms and its emergence directly stemmed from scientific and technological advances. December 28, 1895 is considered the date when cinema came into existence. On that day, the first film, shot by the Lumiere brothers, was screened in Paris. And it is logical that shortly thereafter, **on August 2, 1898, Baku hosted a special screening featuring the first-ever documentaries of Azerbaijan, filmed by Baku-based photographer Alexander Mishon**, including "Fire at the oil gusher in Bibi-Heybat", "Caucasus dance", "The oil gusher in Balakhany", "Public promenade in the city garden", as well as the scenic film "Got you!". For this very reason, August 2 was declared Cinema Day in Azerbaijan. Thus, this year marks the solemn 120th anniversary of Azerbaijani filmmaking.

In the early 20th century, subsidiaries of numerous foreign film studios, such as Pate, Pirone and Filma, were operating in Baku, which served as the world's center of oil production at that time. Those companies made entertaining movies. The popularity of cinema was growing rapidly as the viewers were thrilled to see "live photos". It was the "amusement period" in the development of cinema for countries around the globe. In 1910, there were 14 movie theaters in Baku, and many of the

*Announcement in popular newspaper  
"Caspian" about a film demonstration in Baku. 1898*

Суббота, 1-го августа 1898 года.

ГОДЪ XVIII ИЗДАНИЯ.

# КАСПИЙ

Выходитъ ежедневно, кромѣ послѣпраздничныхъ дней.

Въ воскресенье, 2 августа 1898 года,  
въ театрѣ-циркѣ В. И. Васильева-Витского,  
фотографъ А. М. Мисонъ, снимающій коллекцію оживленныхъ фотографій  
средней Азии и Кавказа для предстоящей Всемирной выставки въ Парижѣ,  
будетъ демонстрировать ТОЛЬКО ОДИНЪ РАЗЪ, усовершенствованный  
**„КИНЕМАТОГРАФЪ“**  
Бр. ЛЮМИЕРЪ,  
построенный инженеромъ Г. Сегреньеръ.  
Между прочими изрѣченіи будутъ показаны: 1) Новѣйшій нефтяной фонтанъ  
на Иджи-Эйбатъ. 2) Проводы Его Высочества Омаръ Бухарскаго на пароходѣ  
„Бел. ии Азаксъ“. 3) Кавказская шалаша. 4) „Поплавокъ“ юмористическій  
Подробности въ афишахъ. Начъ въ 9 часъ вечера.

cinema halls were located in facilities built specially for this purpose. Movie theaters were also being opened in some other cities, including Ganja, Nakhchivan and Lankaran. Moreover, portable motion picture equipment was used in the country's provinces.

Prior to the Sovietization, both documentaries and feature films were shot in Azerbaijan, such as "The



*First state film factory in Baku. 1923*





*Shooting of the film "If not that one, then this one". 1956.*

*Director G. Seidzade, cameraman A. Atakishiyev, actors T. Gozalova and A. Mirzaguliyev*

wife", "The way wives make careers for their husbands", "Love without boots", "An hour before death", etc. Most of these films were typical commercial products of the film industry. "Arshin mal alan" ("The cloth peddler"), which was based on a popular Azerbaijani operetta, is one of those films. In addition, such documentaries as "Oil extraction" and "The national holiday of freedom in Baku" were made.

A turning point in the history of pre-revolutionary Azerbaijani cinema came in **1916 when the first full-length feature film, "In the kingdom of oil and millions", was produced** based on the novel with the same title by Ibrahim-bay Musabayov. The movie featured the everyday life of Baku millionaires and the life of workers who were toiling in the oil fields to earn a living. Well-known Azerbaijani actor and theatrical figure Huseyn Arablinski played the lead role, starring as Lutfali-bay, a failed millionaire, which made him the first-ever Azerbaijani movie actor.

The Bolshevik coup of 1920 ushered in a new stage in the history of Azerbaijani cinema, which became a mouthpiece of the communist ideology. In the early period of the Soviet rule and onward, cinema was deemed by the ruling Communist Party as a pivotal element in the ideological nurturing of the working class. The themes and ideological content of the films made had to comply with the canons of the Socialist compre-

hension of the essence of art. The first pieces of Soviet Azerbaijani filmmakers were the chronicles "Entry of the 11th Red Army's units to Baku", "The first anniversary of Soviet Azerbaijan" and "The first congress of the peoples of the East in Baku".

**On April 28, 1923, Baku hosted the official opening of the state Film Factory under the Azerbaijan Photo and Cinema Administration.** The first movie made at the film studio was "The Legend about the Maiden Tower", which was screened in 1924. Afterwards, the film studio was titled Azgoskino, Azerkino, Azerfilm,



*Shooting of the film "Arshin Mal Alan". 1945.  
Director R. Tahmasib, cameramen M. Dadashov  
and A. Atakishiyev, actor R. Behbudov*



Azgoskinoprom, and in 1958, it became the Azerbaijan-film studio. The following year, it was named after Jafar Jabbarli, a prominent Azerbaijani poet and playwright. The studio, which is currently operating, has been called Azerbaijanfilm ever since.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the film studio produced the feature films "In the name of God", "Haji-Gara" (directed by Abbas-Mirza Sharifzade), "On different shores" (directed by Alexander Litvinov), "Sevil" (directed by Alexander Beknazarov), "Latif", "Ismat" (directed by Mikayil Mikayilov), "26 commissioners" (directed by Nikolay Shengelaya), "Almaz" (directed by Agharza Guliyev), "Baku residents" (directed by Viktor Turin), and "Peasants" (directed by Samad Mardanov). The films mainly focused on historical developments of the recent past, the societal changes, countering superstition and ignorance. Of these, **"In the name of God" (1925) was the first feature film shot by an Azerbaijani film director.**

Undoubtedly, the ideological slant of these films and their pseudo-patriotism are rather unconvincing nowadays, but their creative value is undisputed. Two trends began to take hold in the Azerbaijani cinema with the production of these films, namely, an exalted recreation

of the present-day realities and the professionalism of their creators. Undoubtedly, owing to the talent of their authors, many of those films stood out in terms of their significant level of artistic expression and figurative comprehension of reality. **"By the deep blue sea",** a 1935 comedy directed by Boris Barnet, became the first-ever Azerbaijani sound film.

Overall, dwelling upon the works of Azerbaijani literature and creative art of the actors of the drama theater, and reflecting a relevant era, domestic life and the peculiar identity of the nation in movies, the national cinema itself, as a form of art, was becoming one of the key elements of culture. Film directors were successfully mastering the expressive means of filmmaking, employing a variety of techniques in the composition and editing of films and gaining experience in working with film actors. This success was significantly facilitated by the involvement of film actors of the realistic school, such as Mirzagha Aliyev, Kheyri Amirzade, Marziya Davudova, Alaskar Alakparov, Lutfali Abdullayev, Agha-Sadig Garaybayli, Mohsun Sanani and others.

In the 1940s, war and patriotism were the main themes in cinema, and mainly documentaries were



*Shooting of the film "On distant shores". 1958.*

*Director T. Taghizade, cameraman A. Atakishiyev, actors A. Fayt, L. Bordukov, M. Figner*



filmed. At the same time, famous Soviet director Grigory Aleksandrov shot the fiction film "One Family" at the Baku film studio during the war. Well-known writer Mir Jalal co-wrote the screenplay and music for the film was composed by Gara Garayev. The lead roles were played by Marziya Davudova, Mirzagha Aliyev, Lyubov Orlova, among others.

**The creation by directors Rza Tahmasib and Nikolay Leshchenko of the musical comedy "The cloth peddler"** based on the operetta by Uzeyir Hajibayov, starring popular singer Rashid Behbudov in the lead role, was a major event in the world of cinema in this period. The release of the classical comedy, which clearly reflected a full range of the colors of national identity, perfectly coincided with the end of the world war and gained acclaim of the Soviet viewers. It was successfully screened in dozens of countries around the world.

A new stage in the development of Azerbaijani cinema dates back to the mid-1950s after a group of graduates of the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) started working at the Baku film studio. The ideological and artistic quest of Azerbaijani filmmakers, which was known to have been curtailed

by the generally accepted regulatory framework within a single political party and the government, as a rule, was in line with the general Soviet tendencies. Nevertheless, the national cinema managed -- to a certain extent -- to shape up its identity and produce a number of skillful filmmakers, who were distinguished with the originality of creative patterns and the uniqueness of the cinematographic language. Among them were such prominent film directors as **Hasan Sayidbayli, Azhdar Ibrahimov, Shamil Mahmudbayov, Latif Safarov, and Tofiq Taghizade**, who left an indelible mark in the history of Azerbaijani cinema. The second half of the 1950s saw the production of such landmark films as "Bakhtiyar" (directed by L. Safarov), "If not that one, then this one" (directed by H. Seyidzade) based on the homonymic operetta by Uzeyir Hajibayov, "Her big heart" (directed by A. Ibrahimov), "On the faraway shores" (directed by T. Taghizade), "Stepmother" (directed by Habib Ismayilov), "The mystery of one fortress" (directed by Alisattar Atakishiyev).

The 1960s and 1970s are commonly referred to as the "golden age" of **Azerbaijani cinema**. The films produced in that period featured different views regarding

*Shooting of the film "Magic robe". 1964.  
Director A. Atakishiyev, cameraman T. Akhundov, actor A. Agayev*



history and modernity, bringing to the forefront profound societal and moral issues. The motion pictures of that time allowed the viewers to sense the breath of real life, featuring a real person with his or her everyday challenges. The screen was becoming a bright mirror clearly reflecting the peculiarity of the nation, its appearance, tangible and spiritual culture. The film

directors, who took the lead in the national cinema of the 60s and 70s, decisively declared their focus of interests and the peculiarity of their creative aspirations. The following films became the pearls of Azerbaijani cinema: "Telephone operator", "I remember you, teacher", "Nasimi" (directed by H. Sayidbayli), "The unrestrainable Kura", "The invincible battalion" (directed by H. Sayidzade), "Divide bread equally", "Dark girl" (directed by Sh. Mahmudbayov), "In a southern city", "Babek" (directed by Eldar Guliyev), "Seven sons of mine", "Dada Gorgud" (directed by T. Taghizade), "The last pass-over" (directed by Kamil Rustambayov), "The day has passed" (directed by Arif Babayev), "Interrogation" (directed by Rasim Ojagov), as well as the documentary portraiture film "The truth sets in. Composer Gara Garayev" (directed by Ogtay Mirgasyimov), etc.

Azerbaijani filmmakers have produced fascinating films **for children** as well. Movies produced in different years are still popular among Azerbaijani children, namely, "Friends" (directed by Agharza Guliyev), "Dancing turtles", "An unbridled bunch" (directed by Alexander Popov and Gamar Salamzade), "I am making a song" (directed by Tofiq Ismayilov), "Ismayil-bay's box", "But





***Shooting of the film "In a southern city". 1969.******Director E. Guliyev, cameraman R. Ojagov, actors H. Mammadov and E. Zeynalov***

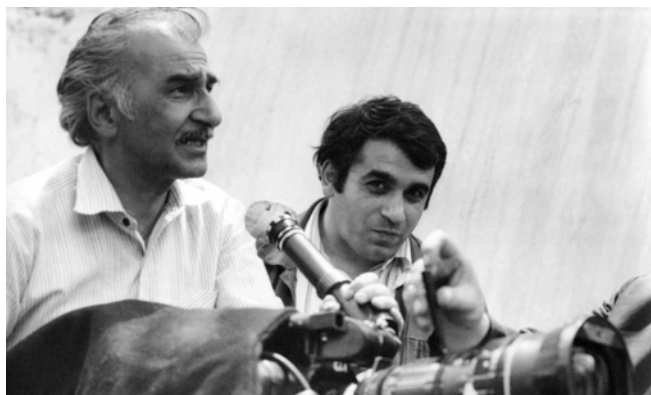
you can't take an island with you" (directed by Gulbaniz Azimzade), "The secret of the ship clock" (directed by Rufat Shabanov), "Asif, Vasif and Agasif" (directed by Rasim Ismayilov), "The Lesson" (directed by Rafiq Aliyev and Javid Tevekkul). The fairy-tale films "The mystery of one fortress", "The magic robe", "Garib in the land of genies" (directed by Alisattar Atakishiyev), "The lion has left home" (directed by Rasim Ismayilov), and "You won't see paradise here" (directed by Tofiq Ismayilov).

In the 1980s, the Azerbaijani cinema was enriched by such remarkable feature films as "Birthday", "The air temple" (directed by Rasim Ojagov), "The rascal" (di-

rected by Vagif Mustafayev), "A devil under the windshield" (directed by Ogtay Mirgasymov), "Endless night" (directed by Shahmar Alakparov), "It's time to saddle the horses" (directed by Abdul Mahmudov and Hasanagha Turabov), "The legend of the silver lake" (directed by Eldar Guliyev), "The last night of the outgoing year" (directed by Gulbaniz Azimzade), "They have kidnapped the groom" (directed by Jeyhun Mirzayev and Vagif Mustafayev), "Traffic accident" (directed by Teymur Bakirzade), as well as such documentaries as "Father" (directed by Ayaz Salayev), "Nomad camp" (directed by Zaur Makharramov), "Balaban" (directed by Khamis Muradov), etc.

***Shooting of the film "Sharing bread". 1969.******Director Sh. Makhmudbayov,  
cameraman T. Akhundov******Shooting of the film "The day has passed". 1971.******Director A. Babayev, script by Anar,  
cameraman R. Ismayilov, actor H. Mammadov***





*Shooting of the film "If I die, forgive me..." 1987.*

*Director and actor R. Ojagov, cameraman R. Gambarov*

Undoubtedly, **along with film directors, people of other walks of life related to cinematography have made a significant contribution** to the achievements of the national cinema. Several generations of screenwriters have been nurtured in the Azerbaijani cinema, including the classical ones, such as Jafar Jabbarli, Anvar Mammadkhanli, Sabit Rahman, Mehdi Huseyn, Imran Gasymov, Isa Huseynov, as well as representatives of the subsequent generation, including Anar, Elchin, Alla Akhundova, Magsud and Rustam Ibrahimbayovs, Vagif Samadoghlu and Yusif Samadoghlu, Ramiz Fataliyev, Natig Rasulzade and others. The best of the screenwriters are capable of developing the artistic side of film screenplays, while avoiding pretentiousness, coming up with new stories reflecting the diversity of life and managing to live through the destinies of their characters so that they would be remembered by the viewers.

In the post-war Azerbaijani cinema, a wonderful school of acting formed, and its brightest representatives included, among others, Alaskar Alakparov, Mammadrza Sheikhzamanov, Leyla Badirbayli, Ismayil Osmanli, Barat Shekinskaya, Yusif Valiyev, and Nasiba Zeynalova. They were succeeded by such talented personalities as Hasanagha Turabov, Shafiga Mammadova, Hasan Mammadov, Malik Dadashov, Shahmar Alakparov, Rasim Balayev, Samandar Rzayev, Fuad Poladov, Hamlet Khanyzade, Mukhtar Maniyev, Shukufa Yusupova, Hamida Omarova, Amalia Panahova, Yashar Nuri, Fahraddin Manafov, Haji Ismayilov, Anvar Hasanov, Eldaniz Zeynalov and others. They created a plethora of Azerbaijani characters, persons of versatile types and ages, different social and public status, which will familiarize people of the future generations with their fellow countrymen who lived in the 20th century.

As for the characters played by film actors, it is worth mentioning that the cinematic image of the movie is

also created by the production designer. Whereas an actor creates the image of a person on the screen, an artist creates an imaginative environment for action, which is a diverse world of various objects in which the characters exist. The contribution to the development of cinema made by such outstanding Azerbaijani film artists as Nadir Zeynalov, Jabrayil Azimov, Elbay Rzaguliyev, Mammad Useynov, Fikrat Bagirov, Kamil Najafzade, Mais Aghabayov, and Fikrat Ahadov is remarkable.

The filmmakers responsible for the graphic solutions in films and the photographic quality of the images included such skillful camera operators as Khan Babayev, Askar Ismayilov, Arif Narimanbayov, Tayub Akhundov, Vladimir Konyagin, Javanshir Mammadov, Valery Karimov, Rafail Gambarov, Mirza Mustafayev, Leonid Koretsky, Vladimir Zbudsky, Alaskar Alakparov, Tofiq Sultanov, Faig Gasymov, Sardar Valiyev, Kochari Mammadov, and Sharif Sharifov.

The best composers have been traditionally involved in creating soundtracks for films. A great number of such wonderful samples were created by classical composers Gara Garayev, Fikrat Amirov, Tofiq Guliyev, Niyazi, Rauf Hajiyeve, Jahangir Jahangirov, Rafiq Babayev, Emin Sabit-oghli, Arif Malikov, Khayyam Mirzazade, Vasif Adigozalov, Agshin Alizade, as well as their successors Polad Bulbuloglu, Rafiq Babayev, Siyavush Karimi, Javanshir Guliyev, Rauf Aliyev and others.

In 1968, a **workshop of animated films was opened** at the Azerbaijanfilm studio. **This paved the way for launching production of national cartoons** capable of instilling a wide variety of feelings in children, such as kindness, mercy, and justice. The dramatic composition of these films was based on the national folklore and straightforward stories created by screenwriters. Many generations of children enjoyed such animated films as "Fitne", "Spring amusement" (directed by Aghanagi Akhundov), "Ring, my saz" (directed by Magsud Panahi and Hafiz Akbarov), "A man has come to the forest" (directed by Kh. Akbarov), "Beauty Fatma" (directed by Nazim Mammadov), "Here comes Kosa" (directed by Arif Maharramov), "The lying shepherd" (directed by Bahman Aliyev), etc.

Azerbaijani animators have also created a series of cartoons for adults, including "Create a dream", "A session" (directed by Firangiz Gurbanova), "Stone" (directed by A. Mammadov), "Contemplation" (directed by Ni-



*Shooting of the film "Scream". 1993.  
Director and actor J. Mirzayev,  
cameraman K. Mammadov*

gar Narimanbayova), "Dedication" (directed by Shamil Najafzade), "Once upon a time somewhere..." (directed by Vahid Talibov).

Since 1970, the **satirical newsreel Mozalan** has been operating in Azerbaijan, and it has produced about 200 releases to date. Each of the releases consisted of several independent stories, which were either documentary or scenic. The miniature programs lambasted various shortfalls of the Soviet public and private life, exposing careerists, bureaucrats, bribe takers and mismanagement, and ridiculing philistinism. The newsreel enjoyed wide popularity. The releases of the past years have been viewed by hundreds of thousands of people online.

From the 1960s till the 1980s, the voiceover department of the Azerbaijanfilm studio dubbed up to 60 feature films on average into the Azerbaijani language annually. These were movies produced by the film studios of the Soviet republics. As late as at the end of the 1980s, films of socialist and capitalist countries began to be dubbed. In general, the dubbing of movies enabled people who did not have a good command of the Russian language to enjoy their cinematic experience to the fullest. The experimental **youth studio "Debut"**, which was launched in 1987 and is still successfully operating, has been producing short feature films and documentaries. In recent years, 18 short feature

films have been shot by young film directors. In 1989, the **"Rakurs", "Salname" and "Yaddash" documentary film studios** were established in lieu of the union of chronicle-documentary films under Azerbaijanfilm, and these studios continued the traditions of Azerbaijani documentary filmmaking. The products of Azerbaijani documentary filmmakers created a chronicle of the people's life, which begins at the time of the inception of cinema, covering the most significant developments in the socio-political, cultural and economic life of Azerbaijan. The extensive chronicle footage, as well as thousands of films, which were produced in different periods and focused on people's spiritual values, historical monuments and their protection, national customs and traditions, and outstanding Azerbaijani personalities, mirrored an era reflecting the image of the country and the contemporary person. Currently, one may conclude confidently that amid strict ideological restrictions, imposed by the Soviet political party system, the Azerbaijani cinema managed to develop its own one-of-the-kind style to a certain extent, fostering a number of outstanding filmmakers. The USSR's collapse marked the end of an important chapter in the history of Azerbaijani cinema and ushered in a new stage, which dwells upon a search for new paths of development in the new socio-political and economic conditions.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s caused



*Shot from the film "Fate of the ruler". 2007*

crisis and stagnation essentially in all spheres of life in Azerbaijan, as well as in other former Soviet republics. Cinema was no exception as the number of produced films dramatically decreased, many movie theaters in cities and rural cinema facilities were shut down and the aspiration of young people to pursue a career in cinematography diminished. However, the country's economy was gradually recovering and despite financial constraints, the government began allocating funds for the production of films. **The law "On cinematography" was passed in 1998.** The law outlined the forms of state support to the art of filmmaking and set forth the legal framework of the state policy in the area of rendering assistance to and the development of cinema. The outcomes of the state support quickly yielded fruit. The 1990s saw the production of such remarkable feature films and documentaries as **"Takhmina", "Istanbul flight" (directed by Rasim Ojagov), "Gazelkhan" (by Shahmar Alakparov), "Fascinators" (by Ogtay Mir-Gasym), "Scream" (by Jeyhun Mirzayev), "It's all for the best" (by Vagif Mustafayev), "The Bat" (by Ayaz Salayev), "Alien time" (by Huseyn Mehdiyev), "Sari-gelin" (by Yaver Rzayev), "What a marvelous**



**world" (by Eldar Guliyev), "Black and white world" (by Shamil Najafzade), "The ring of happiness" (by Ramiz Azizbayli).** These films reflect the real life, in accordance with the present-day aesthetic standards.

In 1993, the Azerbaijan State Film Foundation (**Azgosfilmofond**) was established. It played an exceptional role in maintaining the primary footage of Azerbaijani films and creating a collection of foreign films. The building of Azgosfilmofond was constructed and commissioned in Baku in 2009.

Azerbaijan's post-independence period is character-

*Shooting of the film "Javad Khan". 2008*





*Shot from the film "Fortress". 2008*

ized by the emergence and expansion of the network of privately owned film studios. The film production companies that are operating today include Buta Film, Narimanfilm, Sinealyans, Galafilm, Birlik, SineX, Ritm Production, Ultra Production, Exa Production, the Baki Film studio, AF Media, Oksi Media, İlk Media, Media Master, Sinemazade, etc. Privately owned studios have produced over 60 feature films in the past three to four

years. Notably, independent film studios shot under state orders such remarkable films as **"The fate of the ruler"** (directed by Ramiz Fataliyev and Dilshad Fatkhulin), **"Actress"** (by Rovshan Isakh), **"Breath"** (by Khayyam Abdullayev and Elmeddin Alyev), **"The fortieth door"** (by Elchin Musa-oghli), **"House"** (by Asif Rustamov), **"Knot"** (by Ali Isa Jabbarov), **"One step"** (by Fariz Ahmadov and Nargiz Bagirzade),

*Shot from the film "Messenger of the dawn". 2012*





**"Lot" (by Ilgar Safat), "Buta" and "Pomegranate garden" (by Ilgar Najaf).** These films were awarded prizes and diplomas at international contests. Currently, more than 50 movie theaters operate in Azerbaijan, with most of them located in Baku and its suburbs. Moreover, up to 250 palaces and houses of culture, Heydar Aliyev Centers, which also have all the necessary conditions for the screening of films, are active in towns and settlements across the country.

The adoption of the **State Program on the Development of Cinematography in 2008-2018** was a significant event for the development of Azerbaijani cinema. During the past period, the logistics of film companies has been substantially strengthened, the scope of the production of feature films, documentaries and animation films expanded to the state order, the preparation of staff for the film industry boosted, international relations in the field of cinematography expanded, **the participation of Azerbaijani filmmakers in international projects stepped up, and numerous measures taken regarding the co-production of films.** A cinema center named after Nizami, equipped with the latest technologies, which was opened on the basis of the re-equipped and renovated Nizami movie theater in Baku, became the main film distribution facility in the country. The Encyclope-

dic Dictionary of Azerbaijani Cinema and a number of books on the history and theory of cinema have been published. Over the past 12 years, 44 full-length feature films, 50 short feature films, 208 documentaries and 22 animation films, as well as 18 issues of the satirical newsreel Mozalan, have been released in Azerbaijan at the expense of state budget funds. **Heroism of the defenders of the Motherland in the Karabakh war was a focal point of nine feature films and 85 documentaries, including 75 documentaries, which were filmed in 2013-2017 as part of the "National Heroes of Azerbaijan" series.** Such outstanding feature films, documentaries and animated films as **"Alarm bell", "The fortieth door" (directed by Elchin Musa-oghli), "Steppe inhabitant", "Azerbaijani carpet" (by Shamil Aliyev), "Downstream" (by Asif Rustamov), "Red garden" (by Mirbala Salimli), "Icheri Sheher" (by Ilgar Safat), "Don't die without revenge" (by Ogtay Mir-Gasym), "His father" (by Zamin Mammadov), "The last one" (by Sergey Pikalov), "The melting island" (by Fariz Ahmadov), "An old clock" (by Javid Ahadov), "The pomegranate garden" (by Ilgar Najaf)** have been demonstrated at numerous international film festivals more than 200 times. A total of 21 Azerbaijani films received the "best film" award at prestigious international festivals and



*Nizami cinema center in Baku*

contests, while six were awarded for the best directing, nine for best acting, and four for the best screenplay. A separate Azerbaijani pavilion was active at the Cannes International Film Festival on the initiative and with the assistance of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in 2011-2016. In 2015, **director Asif Kapadia made the film "Ali and Nino" based on the well-known novel by Kurban Said** with the support of the Foundation, and its worldwide premiere was held as part of the international Sundance Film Festival in Los Angeles. To order of the Foundation, **film director Robert Magrenot produced the documentary entitled "Objective - Baku: how Hitler lost the battle for oil"** in 2013, which was dedicated to the role of Baku oil in World War II. The film was broadcast on the international National Geographic TV channel in 26 languages. The semi-documentary **"Eternal trip", directed by Vugar Islamzade and Fariz Ahmadov**, dedicated to the dramatic fate of the members of the Azerbaijani delegation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, gained a wide acclaim of the audience. During the independence period, the Days of Azerbaijani Cinema have been held in a number of countries, including Turkey, Georgia, Iran, Tajikistan, Italy, France, Britain, Hungary, Russia, Uzbekistan, Korea and Brazil. In addition, Baku hosted five international tourism film festivals and two

international sports film festivals, and the 9th International Short Film Festival is scheduled for this October.

Today, a plethora of talented young and middle-aged filmmakers, actors and script writers are breathing a new life into the Azerbaijani cinematography. These include, among others, Elkhan Jafarov, Ulviye Konul, Mirsadig Aghazade, Rufat Hasanov, Vugar Islamzade, Ilgar Fahmi, Nizami Abbas, Nadir Mehdiyev, Rauf Gurbanaliyev, Firudin Allahverdi, Adil Azay, Fikrat Alakparov, Shamil Suleymanli, Gurban Ismayilov, Ayan Mirgasymova, Gulzar Gurbanova, Mehriban Zaki, Rasim Jafar, and Bahruz Vagifoghlu. In recent years, 64 film directors have made their debut in the Azerbaijani cinema, making their first movies with the state support. Some of them have been conferred with awards at international film festivals. Moreover, **the teaching of the main cinema-related specialties, including technical ones**, in Russian, Turkish, British and Canadian universities with the state support has been arranged. Within the country, staff for the film industry are prepared by the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts. Thus, the mentioned measures taken by the government to develop cinematography in Azerbaijan and certain success achieved after the country gained independence inspire optimism concerning the future of the national cinema. 🌟