

Nova Scotia-shot feature films Weirdos, Werewolf vie for Canadian Screen Awards

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1 / 8 The Nova Scotia-shot feature film *Weirdos*, starring Dylan Authors and Julia Sarah Stone, has earned six Canadian Screen Award nominations including best picture. (MICHAEL TOMPKINS)

Marc Almon received an invite to the announcement of the Canadian Screen Award nominations in Toronto on Wednesday, but stayed home in Halifax.

He should have gone.

Weirdos, the '70s-set teen road-trip drama that he produced, earned six nominations, including best picture.

"It was a total surprise," Almon said by phone from Halifax on Wednesday afternoon. "It's a real honour."

Weirdos was the third most nominated film after Xavier Dolan's *It's Only The End of the World*, Canada's entry for the Oscars, which had nine nominations, and *Race*, the story of Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympics, which had eight.

Almon is looking forward to attending the awards — presented in multiple ceremonies by the [Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television](#), March 9 to 12 in Toronto — where he expects to celebrate with many other Nova Scotia nominees.

Ashley McKenzie's gritty drama *Werewolf*, shot in Cape Breton, earned four nominations including best actor for Andrew Gillis, best actress for Bhreagh MacNeil, best editing for McKenzie and best cinematography for Scott Moore.

Halifax-shot TV series [Mr. D](#) earned six nominations and [This Hour Has 22 Minutes](#) earned five. Both air on CBC-TV.

Weirdos also earned nominations for best original screenplay for Governor General's Award-winning writer Daniel MacIvor, a Cape Breton native now living in Halifax, best actress in a supporting role for Molly Parker, art direction for Matt Likely, costume design for Bethana Briffett and editing for Duff Smith.



*Molly Parker, who plays glamorous, artistic and unstable Laura in *Weirdos*, arrives at the Atlantic Film Festival gala screening in September. Parker has been nominated for a Canadian Screen Award*

for best supporting actress. (RYAN TAPLIN / Local Xpress / File)

Shot in black and white and directed by Bruce MacDonald, *Weirdos* premiered to great acclaim at the Toronto International Film Festival in September as did *Werewolf*. Both had sold-out Atlantic Film

Festival screenings the following week.

[See also: The world shifts for Weirdos in sweet, '70s-set coming-of-age film](#)

Werewolf, a drama about a young couple struggling with substance abuse issues as they try to get by day-to-day, won three awards at the Atlantic Film Festival.

New Waterford native McKenzie, who now lives in Whitney Pier, won the Best Atlantic Director Award for her feature film debut, MacNeil won the Joan Orenstein Award for Outstanding Performance by an Actress and Gillis won the David Renton Award for Outstanding Performance by an Actor.

"I feel very grateful and honoured to be nominated for an award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. It is a very meaningful thing. I probably don't understand just how meaningful it is. A little flickering light of gratitude burns inside of me," Gillis said in an email.

[See also: McKenzie's feature debut shows struggle of young Cape Bretoners](#)

Almon says there was a lot of rejection trying to get Weirdos off the ground and he was told it was because not a lot happened in the movie. For the producer of Blackbird and Your Money or Your Wife, that was the beauty of the film, which he describes as a subtle, beautifully explored slice of life with a poignant ending that is unique to the story.

"It was a beautifully written story about two kids growing up in 1976. The story stands on the wonderful characterizations and the dialogue that is wonderfully in tune with the time. It harkens to an age of filmmaking and cinema I think has been lost, a time of well-crafted simple films."

[See also: Weirdos stars walk red carpet at Atlantic Film Festival](#)

A former chair of Screen Nova Scotia, Almon is also proud of the success of Werewolf, "a small low-budget film that got huge honours including best actor, actress and editing," nominations.

"It's a great opportunity for emerging Nova Scotia creators and crew," he says, noting the nominations of up-and-comers Briffett and Likely.

TV series Mr. D, about an in-over-his-head teacher played by Gerry Dee, is now in its sixth season. It earned nominations for best comedy and best actor in a comedy for series creator and star Dee, who is also a writer and producer, best supporting actor for Jonathan Torrens, who plays vice-principal Robert Cheeley, best supporting actress for Naomi Snieckus, who plays gym teacher Bobbi, best supporting actress for Kathleen Phillips, who plays librarian Emma Terdie, and best photography in a comedy for Ian Bibby.

[See also: Dynamic duo from Body Break put Mr. D through his paces in Season 6](#)

Bibby is also nominated for best photography in a variety program for This Hour Has 22 Minutes. Other nominations for This Hour Has 22 Minutes are: best direction for Vivieno Caldinelli and Michael Lewis, best performance in a variety and sketch comedy series for Mark Critch, Cathy Jones, Susan Kent, Shaun Majumder and Meredith MacNeill, best variety or sketch comedy and best writing in a variety or sketch comedy.

MacNeill is also nominated in the best performance in a variety or sketch comedy program for Baroness Von Sketch, along with Jennifer Whalen and Aurora Browne.

Mary Walsh is among the other Nova Scotia nominees, with a nod for best performance by an actor in a supporting role in a comedy for her work on Sensitive Skin.

[CBC Nova Scotia News](#) at 6 hosts Amy Smith and Tom Murphy were nominated for best local news anchor. The duo have been hosting the show together for about six years and the show has previously been nominated for best local newscast.

CBC's hit comedy series Kim's Convenience earned 11 nominations including best actor in a comedy for star Paul Sun-Hyung Lee. Lee reprises his role as patriarch [Appa](#) in the play on which the series is based that is running at Neptune Theatre until Feb. 5.

The highest-profile Canadian Screen Awards will be presented live on CBC on March 12 at 9 p.m. from Toronto's Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.

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