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Russians Rave Over Yura Borisov, Despite No Oscar For 'Anora' Role

By AFP

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Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS

Russian actor Yura Borisov missed out on a best supporting actor Oscar at Sunday's Academy Awards — but his role in the film "Anora" has catapulted him to celebrity status back home.

The 32-year-old actor was little known in Russia until his role in the low-budget movie secured him the first Oscar nomination for a Russian actor since the end of the U.S.S.R.

This success won praise both from opposition supporters – usually quick to criticise actors like Borisov, who have not spoken out publicly against Moscow's military offensive in Ukraine – as well as those who back President Vladimir Putin.

Borisov plays one of a gang of thugs hired by a Russian oligarch in "Anora", which won five Oscars, including best director and best actress.

But the Russian lost out in the best supporting actor category to Kieran Culkin in "A Real

Pain".

Despite this, "I can't remember such an orgy of admiration, such an avalanche of universal interest," film critic Larisa Malyukova wrote on Telegram.

A rare dissenting voice was filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov, whose film "Burnt by the Sun" won the Oscar for best foreign-language film in 1995.

A fervent backer of Putin, Mikhalkov criticized "Anora" for depicting Russians in a negative light.

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"What's this film about? A disgusting oligarch, his disgusting wife, their scumbag son and a bandit," he said at a youth forum, quoted by Ostorozhno Novosti Telegram channel.

But Malyukova said that despite Mikhalkov's words, people in Russia felt a sense of joy over Borisov's nomination, lifting the cultural isolation the country has plunged into since its military intervention in Ukraine.

"People don't want us to be completely cut off. They want the impossible, for a Russian name to be announced on the Dolby sound system in cinemas, to the whole world," she wrote.

"Yura Borisov did not win the Oscar, but he won the main award — the hearts of millions of viewers," Russian film distributor Central Partnership wrote on Telegram.

Borisov made a big splash at Cannes in 2021 when "Compartment No. 6" won the Grand Prix. The Finnish film told the story of an unlikely romance on a train between a Finnish student and his character, a Russian miner.

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