



BUTTERFLY JAM

A FILM BY

KANTEMIR BALAGOV

STARRING **BARRY KEOGHAN, TALHA AKDOGAN, RILEY KEOUGH, HARRY MELLING & JALIAH RICHARDS**

WRITTEN BY **MARINA STEPNOVA & KANTEMIR BALAGOV**

PRODUCED BY **WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS,**

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH **SENATOR FILM PRODUKTION, LES FILMS DU FLEUVE, ARTE FRANCE**

CINÉMA, A.R CONTENT, AND GOODFELLAS

PRODUCERS **PASCAL CAUCHETEUX, PAULINE LAMY, MARCO PEREGO, ALEXANDER RODNYANSKY**

Language | English, Circassian

Run Time | 102 Minutes

INTERNATIONAL & US PR - DDA
ButterflyJam@ddaglobal.com

FRENCH ATTACHE - RACHEL & JULIEN
rachel@rb-presse.fr &
julien@julvi.fr

SALES
goodfellas
sales@goodfellas.film

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

05/13 AT 10:00 THÉÂTRE CROISSETTE
05/13 AT 18:30 THÉÂTRE CROISSETTE
05/13 AT 21:45 THÉÂTRE CROISSETTE
05/14 AT 09:00 CINÉMA LA LICORNE
05/14 AT 16:30 CINÉMA STUDIO 13
05/14 AT 19:00 CINÉMA ALEXANDRE III
05/16 AT 11:00 CINÉMA LE RAIMU
05/22 AT 21:00 THÉÂTRE CROISSETTE

*For more information, please visit the official website.



SYNOPSIS

16 years old Pyteh splits his time between the wrestling mat and his family's struggling Circassian diner in Newark. A single impulsive decision by his hustling father changes the course of his life, shaping a tale of pride, legacy, and masculinity.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I started writing *Butterfly Jam*, I lived in Russia. I wanted to tell the story of a son and a father - about how we want and believe our fathers to be heroes, how we realize that they are merely human, how we learn what true and small heroism really means, and how we grow through reconciling our parents' human follies and frailties. I wanted this to be set in my native city of Nalchik, and endeavored to write it as a personal note to my Kabardian people.

But like a superhero father to a son, the world rarely lives up to your expectations. I protested Russia's senseless war against Ukraine and had to flee, settling in Los Angeles. I didn't know what fate awaited me or my film. I was inspired when I found that a community of Kabardians live in Newark, New Jersey, and began adapting *Butterfly Jam* to a new reality.

Adding the layer of immigration to the story (not to mention to my life) enriched *Butterfly Jam*. It further separated the father, who immigrated to the US as a boy and kept his native humility, with my 15-year-old hero Pyteh, a champion wrestler born into the land and worldview of big dreams. The separation Pyteh longs for, coupled with his deep love for his father, echoed my own sentiments to my community.

When I started writing this, I thought I was Pyteh. Today, I might be more the father. But their story hasn't changed, and it is the story I am excited to share with you today. *Butterfly Jam* is a masculine story told in pink. It carries in it a brutality, but I would argue that its brutality is overcome by its tenderness, and this is the essence of Pyteh's complicated journey into early manhood.

I have always explored, unflinchingly, the bonds of family and friendship. I believe in this way, *Butterfly Jam* is a continuation for me. But in its scarring search of familial separation in favor of individual identity, and in its quest for hope after disillusionment, I hope to find my own cinematic evolution. Like Tesnota and Beanpole, *Butterfly Jam* lives in the emotions of our actors. For Pyteh and his friend Alika, a 15-year-old Nigerian wrestler, I've discovered true-to-age young actors, as I did in my first two films.

Butterfly Jam is an experience I believe we are all familiar with - the experience of fighting for faith when you've lost that which is most precious and finding the hope to grow beyond defeat.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share this story with the world.

KANTEMIR BALAGOV



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

KANTEMIR BALAGOV Writer/Director

Kantemir Balagov is a Russian Director, writer, and cinematographer. Born in Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, Kantemir joined the film department at Kabardino-Balkarian State University – Alexander Sokurov Studio, where he directed three short films in 2014. In 2017, Kantemir made his first feature film *Tesnota (Closeness)* which won him the FIPRESCI Prize in the “Un Certain Regard” section at Cannes. Kantemir’s second feature film *Beanpole*, a period drama set in Leningrad post-WWII, tells the raw story of two women

reintegrating into civilian existence. *Beanpole* screened at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, winning both Best Director Award and the FIPRESCI Prize in the “Un Certain Regard” section. The film was also shortlisted for the 92nd Academy Awards Best International Feature Film category. *Butterfly Jam* starring Barry Keoghan, Riley Keough and Harry Melling is Balagov’s first English-language film and will premiere as 2026 “Directors’ Fortnight” / “Quinzaine des Cinéastes” Opening Film.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Barry Keoghan (as Azik)

Barry Keoghan is an Academy Award®, Golden Globe®, SAG Award nominated performer as well as a BAFTA Award winning film and television actor, working with the industry's leading auteurs.

Keoghan is currently in production on Sony's upcoming *The Beatles* biopics, where he will portray Ringo Starr, starring opposite Paul Mescal as Paul McCartney, Joseph Quinn as George Harrison, and Harris Dickinson as John Lennon. The films will be directed by Sam Mendes, and he is creating four separate films, each focusing on the perspective of one of the band members, set to be released in April 2028.

Keoghan recently finished production on *Lemonade*, directed by Kim Bartley, which explores the turmoil of family heroin addiction, as well as Cannes prizewinning director Kantemir Balagov's English language-debut *Butterfly Jam* opposite Riley Keough and Harry Melling. The film is set to premiere as the Directors' Fortnight opening night film at the 79th Cannes Film Festival.

Recently, Keoghan starred in Netflix's *Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man*, alongside Cillian Murphy and Rebecca Ferguson. Directed by Tom Harper, the film is an epic continuation of the multi-award-winning, six-season gangster saga. He was also recently seen in Bart Layton's thriller *Crime 101* for Amazon MGM, starring

opposite Chris Hemsworth, Halle Berry, and Mark Ruffalo.

Keoghan previously starred in Emerald Fennell's *Saltburn*, co-starring Jacob Elordi, Rosamund Pike, and Richard E. Grant, for Amazon Prime. The film follows Oxford University student Oliver Quick (Keoghan), who is struggling to find his place, and finds himself drawn into the world of the charming and aristocratic Felix Catton (Elordi), who invites him to Saltburn, his eccentric family's sprawling estate, for a summer never to be forgotten. For his role, Keoghan received a 2024 Golden Globe® Award nomination and is nominated for a BAFTA Award in the category of Best Leading Actor.

Most notably, in 2023, Keoghan received the BAFTA Award for Best Supporting Actor as Dominic in Martin McDonagh's *The Banshees of Inisherin*, opposite Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson. The same year he was also nominated for the 2023 Academy Award® in the category of Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role; Golden Globe® for Best Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture; Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Supporting Actor as well as Outstanding Cast in a Motion Picture; Critics' Choice Award for Best Supporting Actor and Best Acting Ensemble; Irish Film and Television Award for Best Supporting Actor; as well as The London Film Critic's Circle Award for Supporting Actor of the Year among many other accolades.

Additional film credits include Trey Edward Schults' and The Weeknd's project *Hurry Up Tomorrow*, Andrea Arnold's *Bird*, Christopher Andrews' *Bring Them Down*, Matt Reeves' DC Universe *The Batman*, opposite Robert Pattinson; Chloe Zhao's Marvels' *Eternals*, with a cast that includes Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Brian Tyree Henry & Kumail Nanjiani; David Lowery's *The Green Knight*; Nick Rowland's *Calm with Horses* (BAFTA, BIFA and IFTA nominations); as well as Bart Layton's *American Animals* (BIFA nomination); Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* opposite Colin Farrell and Nicole Kidman (Independent Spirit Award nominations and Irish Film & Television Award win); Christopher Nolan's blockbuster *Dunkirk*, with Mark Rylance, Tom Hardy, Kenneth Branagh and Cillian Murphy; Lance Daly's *Black '47*; Konstantin Bojanov's *Light Thereafter*; Rebecca Daly's *Mammal*; Adam Smith's *Trespass Against Us*; Rachael Moriarty and Peter Murphy's *Traders*; as well as Yann Demanges' '71.

Additional television credits include AppleTV+ series "*Masters of The Air*", executive produced by Steven Spielberg; Craig Mazin's Emmy® and Golden Globe® Nominated "*Chernobyl*"; and the third and final season of "*Top Boy*".



Talha Akdogan (as Temir/Pyteh)

Talha Akdogan is a Turkish-American young actor born in 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and raised in Wayne, New Jersey. He began competing in wrestling at a very young age. His love for acting came in his teenage years as a secret passion. His athletic performance led him to land a role in *Butterfly Jam*, where he portrays Pyteh a 16-year-old promising high school wrestler navigating his training sessions and family struggles. With a strong screen presence shaped by his multicultural background, he brings depth and authenticity to his work across film and television.

Riley Keough (as Zalya)

Riley Keough is an Emmy, Golden Globe, and Independent Spirit Award–nominated actress and director, best known for her roles in the independent films *American Honey* (2016) and *Zola* (2021), as well as the television series “*Daisy Jones & the Six*” (2023) and “*Under the Bridge*” (2024).

Over the course of her 20-year career, Keough has collaborated with a wide range of directors, including Steven Soderbergh, Andrea Arnold, Barry Levinson, Lars von Trier, George Miller, and Janicza Bravo.

Most recently, Keough was seen in Noah Baumbach’s *Jay Kelly* alongside George Clooney and Adam Sandler. She will next be seen in Brazilian filmmaker Karim Aïnouz’s

Rosebush Pruning, which will be released theatrically in the U.S. in July, and Kantemir Balagov’s *Butterfly Jam*, which will premiere this May at the Cannes Film Festival. She recently wrapped shooting the Zellner Brothers’ sci-fi dramedy *Alpha Gang*, featuring Cate Blanchett, as well as acclaimed Spanish filmmaker Albert Serra’s upcoming film *Out of This World*.

In addition to her acting career, Keough is a co-founder and partner at the production company Felix Culpa, alongside her creative partner Gina Gammell and Academy Award–nominated producer Sacha Ben Harroche.

Keough made her directorial debut at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival with *War Pony*, which won the Caméra d’Or.



Harry Melling (as Marat)

Harry Melling is a British screen and stage actor who has emerged as one of the most acclaimed performers of his generation.

He currently stars in *Pillion*, the feature directorial debut of filmmaker Harry Lighton, which world-premiered at Cannes to universal acclaim. Released by A24 with an awards-qualifying run in December 2025 ahead of its February 2026 wide release, the film earned six BAFTA longlist mentions, including Outstanding British Film, with Melling longlisted for Best Leading Actor. The film took home the BIFA Award for Best British Independent Film, with Harry nominated for Best Leading Actor. He was also honored with the Breakout Award at the 2026 Newport Beach Film Festival U.K. and Ireland Honors, and The Hollywood Reporter named his work one of the 25 Best Movie Performances of 2025.

Upcoming projects include lead roles in the feature films *Butterfly Jam* opposite Barry Keoghan and Riley Keough, and the musical drama *Stuffed* opposite Jodie Comer.

Melling recently starred opposite Christian Bale in Scott Cooper's *The Pale Blue Eye* for Netflix, portraying Edgar Allan Poe in the gothic mystery set at West Point in 1830. In Netflix hit "*The Queen's Gambit*", he starred opposite Anya Taylor-Joy.

Recent film work includes Oscar-nominated feature film *The Tragedy of Macbeth* opposite Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand; *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* from Joel Coen and Ethan Coen; *The Old Guard* directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood and starring Charlize Theron; the psychological drama *The Devil All the Time* alongside Tom Holland and Robert Pattinson; and *Please Baby Please* alongside Andrea Riseborough and Demi Moore.

An accomplished stage actor, his theatre work includes *King Lear* opposite Glenda Jackson at The Old Vic, *Mother Courage and Her Children* at the National Theatre, and *Hand to God* in the West End. He also wrote and performed in the one-man play *Peddling*, later staged Off-Broadway and named a Critics' Pick by The New York Times.

Melling trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and resides in London.

Jalayah Richards (as Alika)

Jalayah Richards is an Honor Roll student, athlete, and emerging actress from New Jersey born in 2009. She began competing in sports at a young age, starting with gymnastics and soccer before becoming a standout football and wrestling athlete. Jalayah's love for wrestling and growing interest in acting led her to make her acting debut in *Butterfly Jam* as Alika, a high school wrestler navigating personal struggles while building an important friendship with one of the film's lead characters. The role allowed her to combine her athletic background with her passion for the arts. Since filming, she has continued to excel in wrestling and flag football while balancing academics, athletics, and the arts.

CAST

Pyteh	Talha Akdogan
Azik	Barry Keoghan
Zalya	Riley Keough
Marat	Harry Melling
Alika	Jalayah Richards

CREW

Directed by Kantemir Balagov
Screenplay Kantemir Balagov, Marina Stepnova
Director of Photography Jomo Fray, ASC
Editing Kantemir Balagov, Juliette Welfling, Mathilde Chazaud
Production designer Angelo Zamparutti
Original music by Evgueni and Sacha Galperine
Costume designer Judy Shrewsbury
Casting by Eleonore Hendricks, Christel Baras
First Assistant Director Marion Dehaene
Line Producer Olivier Thery Lapiney
Sound Engineer Régis Boussin
Sound design Valérie De Loof
Re-recording Mixer Cyril Holtz
Co-recording mixer Lucas Le Neouanic
Production Manager Jean-François Voisin
Key Makeup designer Vesna Peborde
Hairdresser Kay Phillips
SFX Key Makeup artist Jean-Christophe Spadaccini
VFX Supervisor Sébastien Nebout

Producers Pascal CAUCHETEUX, Pauline LAMY, Marco PEREGO, Alexander RODNYANSKY
Executive Producers David TAGHIOFF, Masha MAGONOVA, Michael CERENZIE, Michael PALETTA, Kantemir BALAGOV, Michael KUPISK, Barry KEOGHAN, Dessie BYRNE, Riley KEOUGH, Gina GAMMELL, Sacha BEN HARROCHE, Gaetan ROUSSEAU
Associate Producer Benjamin TOUSSAINT
Co-Producers Olivier PÈRE, Rémi BURAH, Jean-Pierre DARDENNE, Luc DARDENNE, Delphine TOMSON, Vincent MARAVAL, Eva DIEDERIX, Livia VAN DER STAAY, Reik MÖLLER

**A Why Not Productions film
in co-production with** Senator Film Produktion, Les Films du Fleuve, Arte France Cinéma, A.R Content, Goodfellas
in association with Library Pictures International, Leaf Entertainment, Wolfcub Productions, Felix Culpa
with the participation of Arte France
with the support of Eurimages - Conseil de l'Europe Pictanovo et la Région Hauts-de-France
US Executive Production Paradoxal Inc.
French distributor Le Pacte
International Sales Goodfellas