

NICOLE SYLVESTER MAKES DIRECTORIAL FEATURE FILM DEBUT WITH *LAYLA'S GIRL*

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DETROIT – Autumn Rain Features and bourgeois bohemian productions announce that the feature film *Layla's Girl* is complete and available for distribution. The drama about a woman forced to face the difficult and painful relationship with her mother had its premiere in January at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. *Layla's Girl* was directed by Nicole Sylvester and produced by Alisa R. Lomax.

Layla's Girl is the story of Carla Avery, a young woman estranged from her mother for seven years. Carla lives each day with the disappointment of a dysfunctional childhood. Her only goal in life is to reverse the effects of her past and map out a course that will dictate her future. That is, until the unexpected death of her mother forces her to reevaluate her expectations of family and the meaning of unconditional love.

The story for *Layla's Girl* is loosely based on Sylvester's relationship with her mother, Veronica. Veronica, who died of liver failure due to alcoholism, had been clinically depressed for most of Sylvester's life. "Although we had a good relationship, after she died I realized that there was a lot I didn't know about her," Sylvester says. She was thinking about making a documentary when she met screenwriter Rashim Cannad, who took her thoughts and blended them with ideas of his own to come up with the script for *Layla's Girl*.

Using local and national talent, *Layla's Girl* was shot and edited in Detroit. "We were able to put together a great cast and crew which allowed us to work efficiently yet have fun on the project," says Lomax. Sylvester is also pleased with the outcome of her first feature film directing experience. "The support and professionalism have been incredible. I couldn't have asked for more."

The cast includes Richard Gant (*The Big Lebowski*, *Nutty Professor II*), Theo Williamson (*MVP*, *17000 Block*), Rhonda Freya English (*SuperSucker*), and Walter Harris (*RICCO*, *17000 Block*). LaShae Martin makes her debut in the lead role of Carla.

Key crew members include T. Dominic Cochran, Director of Photography; Carolyn Sutton, Production Design; Carrieta Beach, Editor; and Nathan Talbot, Original Music and Sound Design.

All US and international rights are available for *Layla's Girl*.

More information is available at www.autumnrainfeatures.com.

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NICOLE SYLVESTER – Director

Nicole Sylvester's last effort, *minor blues*, a highly profound and diverse film about on-the-edge musicians, was an official selection of the East Lansing Film Festival as well as both the Motor City Film Festival and the Meet Martell at the Movies Film Festival where it won top honors. Her debut film, a short titled *The Stop*, was accepted into competition at the Detroit and Windsor International Festival of Film. *The Stop* won best short at the Cinema Shorts Internet Film Festival and has been aired on PBS. Sylvester has been awarded three Public Benefit Corporation grants for film productions. She received the Cable ICE award for her special, *The North American International Auto Show*, and her insightful documentary, *The Lonely Eagles: Airmen of Tuskegee*, was nominated for both a national Cable ACE and a Cable ICE Award. Sylvester is also a talented producer, having recently completed two films – a Japanese-inspired short, *Big Girl Lost*, and, a feature length urban drama, *17000 Block*, distributed by UrbanWorks.

ALISA R. LOMAX - Producer

Alisa R. Lomax is producing a documentary about a group of middle school girls as they participate in a two-year program to help them transition into their teen and adult years. She produced as well as directed her first film, *reality*. Lomax worked extensively as a production manager or coordinator for ten years before becoming an independent producer and director. Projects she has worked on include feature and short films (*Nobody Knows, minor blues*), television programs (*Shape Up Michigan, Babesworld, A Moment in Our History*), and commercials and industrials for clients such as Ford Motor Company, Kmart Corporation and Marygrove College. Lomax recently directed a second film, *Big Girl Lost*, which was produced by Nicole Sylvester.