

Minari (Members' Choice)

Director: Lee Isaac Chung. USA, 2020. 115min. (12)

With: Steven Yeun, Ye-ri Han, Yuh-jung Youn, Alan Sun Kim



His self-produced debut feature *Munyurangabo* (2007), about the friendship of two boys in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, premiered at Cannes to great acclaim. A decade later and on the verge of retiring from film-making, Chung was inspired by Willa Cather's writing about her Nebraska roots. He started compiling a list of recollections from his own rural upbringing and found himself noting countless *"little visual memories, little details,"* including the titular herb: *"My grandmother brought over minari seeds from Korea and we planted those seeds in this little creek bed in Arkansas."* - *"Once I had this set of memories, I realized that there was an arc of a story there."*

The Korean War and its lingering impact on Korean immigrants (including Chung's family) originally formed *"the thread we had going through the film,"* but direct allusions were gradually eliminated, as he refocused on more general themes: *"I don't think it's about us, you know, as Asian Americans expressing who we are and recognizing that. But I think it's really about the relationships that we have in our own personal stories. ... And immigration stories are family stories."*

His own family is intensely private, and Chung kept the film project secret from them until the final stages. Watching it for the first time together *"was such a cathartic experience for all of us."* His father's response was to plan a screening for American veterans of the Korean War, *"just because he wants to kind of support that community."*

3 Oscar wins; 3 BAFTA wins; Golden Globe for 'Best Foreign Language Film' *

* The film was ineligible for 'Best Motion Picture – Drama' due to the Globes' rule that any film with <50% of its dialogue in English must be considered a Foreign Language Film. The exclusion was controversial. Lulu Wang, whose film *The Farewell* was subject to the same rule the previous year, *tweeted, "I have not seen a more American film than #Minari this year. It's a story about an immigrant family, IN America, pursuing the American dream. We really need to change these antiquated rules that characterize American as only English-speaking."*

You can rate the main feature film by a show of 1 - 5 fingers (5 = top) at the door on the way out. A committee member will be noting the scores.

You can also comment on: Twitter @wfc screenings ; the WFC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WimbledonFilmClub/> ; or by email to info@wimbledonfilmclub.com

Please dispose of these notes yourself or take them with you. Thank you!