



Karlovy Vary  
International Film Festival

# DEAR ONES / BLISCY

BY GRZEGORZ JAROSZUK

# DEAR ONES / BLISCY

SCRIPTWRITER AND DIRECTOR  
GRZEGORZ JAROSZUK

POLAND/CZECH REPUBLIC 2020

trailer: <https://vimeo.com/451682166>  
<https://www.facebook.com/bliscyfilm>

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Axman Production spol. s r.o.  
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DURATION: 74'; COLOR; SOUND 5.1  
PICTURE RATIO 2.39:1, 25 FPS

World Sale Agent:  
Antipode Sales & Distribution

texts and interviews: Aleksandra Salwa  
designed by: Katarzyna Borkowska  
used materials are the property of MD4



## MAIN CAST

OLAF LUBASZENKO – FATHER  
ADAM BOBIK – PIOTR  
IZABELA GWIZDAK – MARTA  
PIOTR ŻURAWSKI – GUY

## DIRECTOR/SCRIPTWRITER

GRZEGORZ JAROSZUK

## CINEMATOGRAPHERS

JOHN MAGNUS BORGE  
ROBERT LIS

## MUSIC COMPOSER

PETR OSTROUCHOV

## EDITOR

KRZYSZTOF KOMANDER

## PRODUCTION DESIGNERS

MAGDALENA DIPONT  
PAWEŁ BARYŁA  
ANTONÍN ŠILAR

## FX SUPERVISOR

MICHAŁ KŘEČEK

## COSTUME DESIGNER

HANKA PODRAZA

## SOUND

MICHAŁ FOJCIK MPSE

## SOUND ON SET

MARTA KOSIOROWSKA

## PRODUCERS

AGNIESZKA KURZYDŁO  
KARLA STOJÁKOVÁ

## LINE PRODUCER

KAMILA KUŚ

## PRODUCERS AND CO-PRODUCERS

MD4 Sp. z o.o.  
AXMAN PRODUCTION spol. s r. o.  
EC1 ŁÓDŹ

## PARTNERS OF THE FILM

MAGIC LAB  
LODZ FILM SCHOOL  
GRUPA WARSZAWA

## FILM CO FINANCED BY

POLISH FILM INSTITUTE  
CZECH FILM FUND  
CITY OF LODZ

## WORLD SALES

ANTIPODE SALES & DISTRIBUTION



## SYNOPSIS

In this quirky dramedy, a father and his estranged grown-up children set out on a search for their missing mother. They snoop around blocks of flats, playgrounds and a farmer's market, and question neighbors. As they learn funny and strange secrets about their mother's life, the truth about their own lives is also revealed.

Piotr is a thirtysomething loner, who believes in the power of rituals and the energy of secret stones. However, when his estranged father calls him and asks for a meeting, Piotr knocks on his door the next day. He is also reunited with his sister Marta, whom he last saw on her wedding day a long time ago. Piotr's low-spirited father, who is seemingly more interested in his plants than in his children, informs them that their mother is missing. Piotr and Marta move back into their childhood home

and start an investigation together with their reluctant dad. At first, they go around in circles – literally and figuratively – as they look for answers in the same blocks of flats, a local dive-bar-cum-casino and a farmers' market. Gradually, they learn about their mother's gambling addiction and her clandestine activities. The informers are their neighbors and a street-smart man called „Guy”. The family reunion feels awkward, but the trio has a common goal: to find the missing matriarch. Incidentally

they also get a lead on their own dissolved connection.

„DEAR ONES”, a lovable, melancholic and funny crime dramedy, is the second feature by Grzegorz Jaroszuk, produced by Polish MD4 and Czech Axman Production, in co-production with EC1 Łódź – City of culture. The film was supported with Polish Film Institute's microbudget grant, Czech Film Fund and by City of Łódź.

## DIRECTOR'S BIO

**GRZEGORZ JAROSZUK** was born in Warsaw. In 2011 he graduated from the directing department of the Film School in Łódź. He directed several successful shorts, including FROZEN STORIES (presented at over 30 international festivals). His full-length features debut was KEBAB & HOROSCOPE which premiered in Karlovy Vary IFF and was awarded at Raindance IFF and Rome Ind. IFF.

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:

- 2021** **Dear Ones** – planned premiere: Karlovy Vary East of the West
- 2015** **Mine de rien** – feature short
- 2014** **Kebab & Horoscope** – full-length feature, debut, World premiere Karlovy Vary IFF *selected awards*: The Best Debut Raindance IFF, The Best Int. Feature Film – Rome Ind. FF, The Award of the network of art-house and local cinemas 39 Gdynia FF, and many others
- 2011** **Frozen Stories** – feature short, Pianifica Prize – Locarno Film Festival, Nomination for EFA 2011, Grand Jury Prize – AFI FEST, and many others
- 2009** **Historia o braku samochodu** – feature short

## How did you come up with an idea for the film?

People often don't know how to talk to each other, or how to tell each other the truth, especially if it's a hard truth. That attitude originates in the family; I'd say that a family is a laboratory in which one can observe patterns and phenomena that occur in society.

Additionally, I find it fascinating how people have a huge capability to convince themselves – as well as others – of even the craziest theories, only to avoid telling them the truth. Or to avoid being confronted with it.

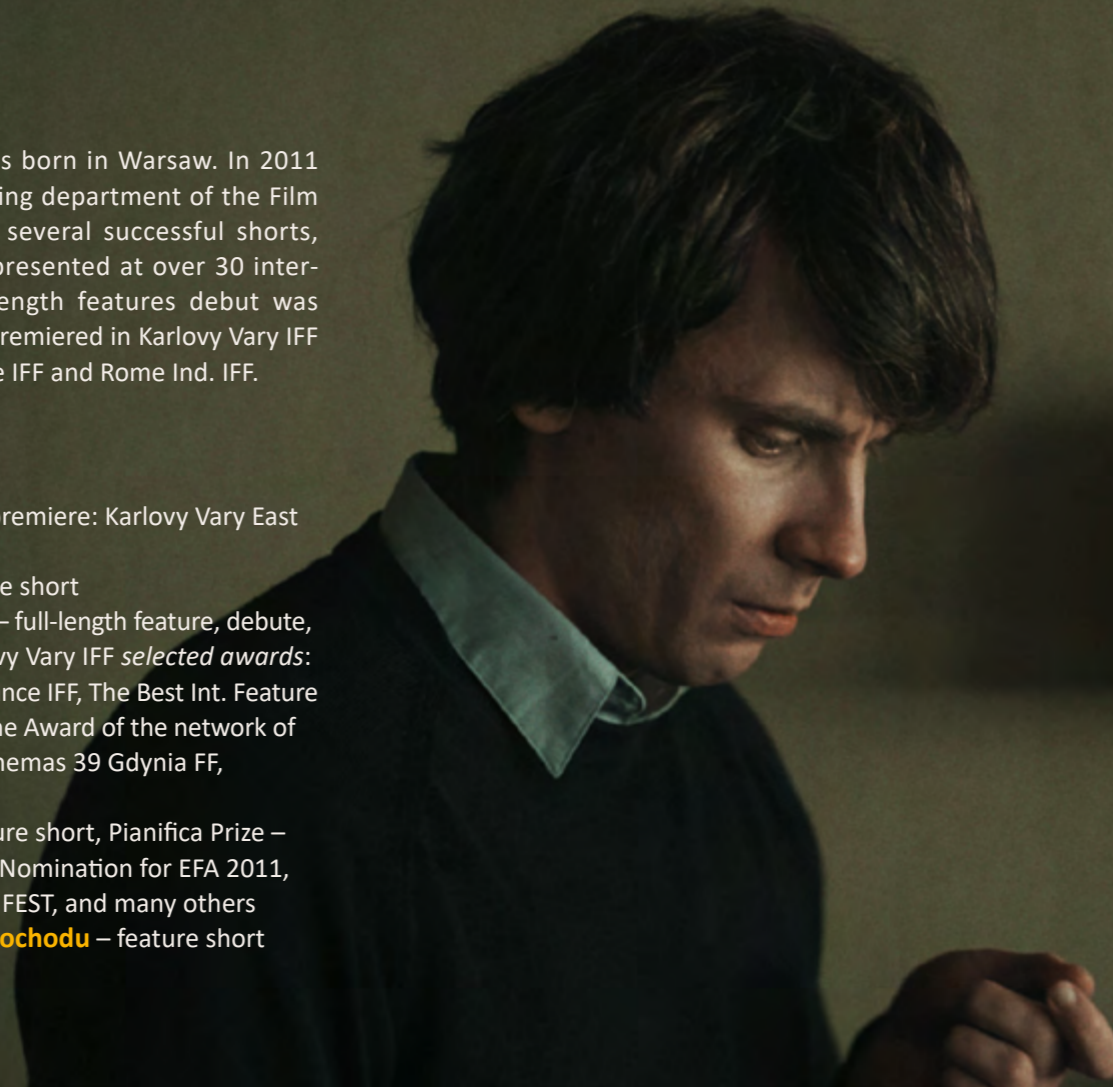
I wanted to make a film about people, who create a certain theory about the world, and who will do everything to make others believe in it. And since it's all happening in a small family, the story is denser, and events are more dynamic – everyone is looking for a solution to a mystery, that they're facing.

**Olaf Lubaszenko plays the Father. Why did you choose him for this character? Polish audience knows him very well, but mostly from gangster comedies and Krzysztof Kieślowski's A SHORT FILM ABOUT LOVE.**

The character of the father is mysterious, his behavior is irrational and many of his traits can be seen as flaws. When we were casting this part, we were looking for an actor, who could add some warmth and human value to these flaws, who could help an audience to identify with the father. And maybe recognize some of their own failings. Olaf brought a lot of vulnerability and sensitivity to his protagonist and made him likable. When I think of Olaf, the first film that comes to my mind is A SHORT FILM ABOUT LOVE, not his mainstream projects. My intention was to find the sensitivity he displayed in Kieślowski's masterpiece.

## How did you pick other lead actors?

I saw Adam Bobik, who plays Piotr in few short films, and I liked him so much that I asked him to come for an audition. When he was reading lines with Iza Gwizdak it became clear to me that they were a perfect match and that they should play siblings. With Piotr Żurawski, who plays the Guy, I had already worked three times and I love and cherish our collaboration. His skills and vibe match the tone and style of my movies.





The family seems quite ordinary, except Piotr, who performs special rituals every day.

I am a superstitious person myself, which actually amuses me. When I started to think about why I need these superstitions, I realized that they replace religion in my life, even though I am not a very religious person.

Piotr is just like me in this respect – he just has many religions at once. He lives in isolation and doesn't have any friends and these rituals help him find comfort and security in something other than social outings.

He is a loner, but also a modest, quiet person. The kind of guy who would never make the news or the headline of a paper. Why does your film evolve around Piotr and other people like him?

At some point I realized that I don't really relate to stories about „celebrities” or „heroes”. By that I also mean famous doctors or writers, who have a unique biography and achievements. I understand why people

may like stories about people who are „bigger than life” – they are contemporary myths and give the audience a point of reference. I made a film about people living in blocks of flats, who are not special or spectacular. They would probably feel intimidated, if someone suddenly put them in the spotlight. And that type of character is closest to me. My film is set in an average residential area, which implies that nothing extraordinary can or will happen there – that some people and some lives are just ordinary, and they won't be any different.

You were brought up in a similar residential area, which is very typical of the Polish urban landscape – blocks of flats made of concrete, during communism and after its fall. Can you say something about that setting?

While scouting for location, I wanted to find a big residential area, with tall buildings, so that they make a bigger impression on the screen. When I came to a Warsaw district called Piaski I liked how it looked, but also, I felt strangely at home there. It dawned on me that this is what my „magical place from childhood” looks like. According to many books and films, that sort of idyllic place should be by the river, or at least feature a big, old tree. But for

me it is a place made of concrete buildings painted in pastel colors, inhabited by people I secretly called names like „Mrs Patience”. Everyone knew each other and helped each other. I realized that I will never have any other, or any better place than my very own homeland. I don't know if that's good or bad...

There is one more protagonist in a film: the music composed by Petr Ostrouchov. How did your collaboration work?

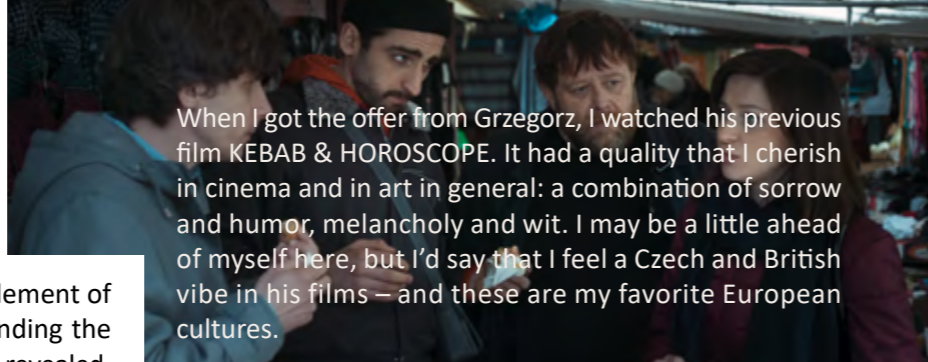
Music in general is very important in my films and I was pleasantly surprised by how Petr scored it for DEAR ONES. After I made a rough cut of the film, I showed it to Petr and soon after we met in Prague. He presented me with just one minute of music or even less and my jaw dropped. He understood all the emotions and all the tones I wanted to convey on screen, even though we never discussed any of it. I felt deeply understood, which doesn't happen to me that often. Petr wrote music that was independent of the story, but at the same time it was complementing and enhancing it. It was a discovery for me that a composer could express the same feeling as I did, using a different means.

## MAIN CAST ON THEIR CHARACTERS AND ABOUT THE FILM

### OLAF LUBASZENKO (FATHER)

The film centers on a mystery, which is a key element of the plot, but which is also crucial to understanding the character of the father. The secrets are gradually revealed, which proved to be quite a challenge for the director and for me – we didn't want to show or say too much too soon. A character with a secret is always the most interesting – in film and in life. The father is focused on not revealing anything he doesn't want to, which forces him to control his voice, gestures and everything else. And forces me, as a result, to act in a very constrained, spare way.

What I also find intriguing about this film are the family dynamics: the father and his children have grown apart and it's quite possible that they won't ever be close again. I jokingly said to the director that DEAR ONES is a road-movie – the characters set out on a journey to locate a missing person, but also to find a missing bond.



When I got the offer from Grzegorz, I watched his previous film *KEBAB & HOROSCOPE*. It had a quality that I cherish in cinema and in art in general: a combination of sorrow and humor, melancholy and wit. I may be a little ahead of myself here, but I'd say that I feel a Czech and British vibe in his films – and these are my favorite European cultures.

### ADAM BOBIK (PIOTR)

Piotr is a very peculiar man and a loner by choice. He lives in his own world and surrounds himself with all kinds of superstitions. I believe it's his defense mechanism, which makes his life easier. Piotr is also very pragmatic – when he learns that his mother is missing, he will not stop until he learns what happens to her. He needs to find a solution, because if he doesn't, everything will lose its meaning.

People often consider people like Piotr weird or „not normal”, while he is just like everyone else – he has his quirks and the will to live by his own rules.

The film is very subtle, it leaves a lot of space for an audience and addresses a subject that has a very deep resonance: that every family is unhappy in its own, unique way.

### IZA GWIZDAK (MARTA)

Marta is a very down-to-earth and no-nonsense woman. She likes sticking to a plan, and when there is no plan – as in the case of her mother's disappearance – she tries to make one. She is very observant and secretive – we know that she is married, but we don't learn anything about her husband or their relationship.

For me *DEAR ONES* is about people who didn't get enough love. Therefore loneliness plays the lead in their lives. It sounds sad and serious, but at the same time the film is a dramedy – I found many of the characters hilarious and authentic at the same time.



### PIOTR ŻURAWSKI (GOŚCIU)

Guy is the key figure and brains of the investigation. He is a street-smart guy, who knows everything and everybody. Also, he has a heart of gold and lives by the local honor code, that says to respect thy neighbor and to help those in need, even if they are poor or light-fingered.

It's the third time I've been working with Grzegorz Jaroszuk. I think he is an outstanding writer – his scripts are precise and concise. As an actor, I love adding or changing my lines, but working with Grzegorz I never do that – his dialogues are just that good. Since *DEAR ONES* was made on a so-called „micro-budget” the shooting was a bit grueling; however, the result is quite the opposite. I sometimes joke that the smaller the budget, the better the film.

## MD4 (MENTAL DISORDER 4)

is a film production company established in 2011 and based in Warsaw, Poland. It is a creative environment that brings together filmmakers of the up-and-coming generation, who have a passion for making innovative films that deal with contemporary themes.

We are a collective of friends working together with Agnieszka Kurzydło as a CEO and producer, Dagmara Piasecka as general manager and producer, Kamila Kuś as line producer, Kinga Krzemińska, screenwriter and script-consultant, Krzysztof Komander, director and editor, and Grzegorz Jaroszek, director, and others.

MD4 has produced several feature films which have been very well-received at many international film festivals. In 2018 we premiered FUGUE by Agnieszka Smoczyńska in feature film competition at La Semaine de la Critique in Cannes and VIA CARPATIA by Klara Kočańska (a winner of the Student Academy Award) and Kasper Bajon at Karlovy Vary IFF.

Our newest film is the DEAR ONES by Grzegorz Jaroszek.

Currently we are preparing our first film for children: THE ADVENTURE HUNTERS directed by Krzysztof Komander.

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

**2021 DEAR ONES**, dir. **Grzegorz Jaroszek**  
World premiere at Karlovy Vary East of the Wests.

**2018 FUGUE**, dir. **Agnieszka Smoczyńska**  
World premiere at La Semaine de la Critique, Cannes 2018.  
Selected awards: Silver Méliès Award for the best full-length feature film at Sitges IFF 2018, Polish Academy Award 2019 in Category Discovery of the Year for Gabriela Muskala for her script for FUGUE, Special Jury Mention at IFIstanbul 2019

**2018 VIA CARPATIA**, dir. **Klara Kočańska-Bajon, Kasper Bajon**  
World premiere at Karlovy Vary IFF 2018.  
Selected awards: Special Jury Mention at FilmPolska Berlin 2019, Special Jury Mention for Directors Klara Kočańska and Kasper Bajon and Best Actress Award for Julia Kijowska at 'Youth and Film' Koszalin FF 2019

**2015 THE RED SPIDER**, dir. **Marcin Koszałka**  
World premiere at Karlovy Vary IFF 2015.  
Selected awards: Shadi Abd El Salam Award for Best Film at Cairo International Film Critics Week 2015, Best Director and FIPRESCI Award on goEast Wiesbaden FF 2016, Best Director Award at East & West Orenburg Film Festival

**2014 KEBAB & HOROSCOPE**, dir. **Grzegorz Jaroszek**  
World premiere Karlovy Vary IFF 2014.  
Selected awards: The Best Debut Raindance IFF 2014, The Best Int. Feature Film – Rome Ind. FF 2015

**2013 IN THE NAME OF**, dir. **Małgorzata Szumowska**  
World premiere: Berlinale 2013 Competition.  
Selected awards: Teddy Award, Silver Lions Gdynia FF, The Best Film Dortmund-Koln IFF

**2012 BABY BLUES**, dir. **Katarzyna Rosłaniec**  
World premiere: Toronto IFF; European premiere: Berlinale 2013.  
Selected awards: Crystal Bear and Special Mention at the Berlinale 2013 Generation 14plus, Special Jury Prize Taipei IFF, The Best Polish Film Off Camera IFF

## AXMAN PRODUCTION

is an independent film production company based in Prague, Czech Republic since its foundations in 2000. Axman is dedicated to produce feature fiction films, documentary films, TV productions as well challenging short films for the wide international market. Company is developing film co-productions from all around the world. Its credits also include service production of international projects, such as feature films or TV series.

Axman also focuses on non-commercial events – proud founder of FILMASIA – first Asian film festival in the Czech Republic, [www.filmasia.cz](http://www.filmasia.cz)

Member of APA (Czech Producer's Association).  
Karla Stojáková is the board member and the vice-president of ACE Producers.

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2021 Documentary film **ARCHITECTURE 58-89** – in production  
2021 Feature film **DEAR ONES** (coproduction with Poland) – competition Karlovy Vary IFF  
2018 Feature film **FUGUE** (coproduction with Poland) – IFF Cannes / Semaine de la Critique  
2017 Line Producer – TV drama series **ARE YOU HUMAN TOO?** – Korea  
2016 Feature film **HOME IS HERE** (coproduction with Austria) – Tallinn Black Nights festival  
2014 Line producer – feature film **THE BEAUTY INSIDE** / Korea  
2014 Feature film **CORN ISLAND** – Crystal Globe Karlovy Vary IFF 2014, Oscars Academy Awards shortlist  
2014 Feature film **LOUSY BASTARDS** (Všiváci), feature debut of director Roman Kašparovský  
2014 Feature film **LIFE IN A FISHBOWL** (coproduction with Iceland), Icelandic entry for Oscars  
2014 Line producer – feature film **ODE TO MY FATHER** / Korea, 2nd most successful film in the history of Korean cinema, with more than 14 million admissions  
2012 Feature film **FROST** (coproduction with Iceland)

## PRESS ABOUT A FILM AND ITS DIRECTOR

*Grzegorz Jaroszuk [...] is a filmmaker with the greatest sensitivity of absurd in Polish cinema, DEAR ONES surprise at the end the most.*

Piotr Wyszomirski

*Return to the world of this director, at the same time chilled and smoldering with delicate humor (born somewhere on the imaginary border between the Czech Republic and Scandinavia) – gave me joy and relief [...]. It is worth waiting for this inconspicuous [...] film, which after the screening does not really want to leave our head.*

Michał Oleszczyk

*On the one hand, the world created in the film seems distant, a bit surreal due to the surprising plot, but in the end, it becomes painfully dear.*

Marta Ossowska

*[...]when we watch Jaroszuk's film, the eccentricity disappears, and what is absurd seems at once tame, sanctioned, ordinary. Briefly dear one.*

Łukasz Maciejewski

*Ostentatiously artificial dialogues masterfully show how empty and schematic communication can be. The condition for the success of this convention is a kind of acting sacrifice – here it brought an excellent effect.*

Przemysław Gulda

## ABOUT OLAF LUBASZENKO

*Finally, a brave director had to appear, who reminded us of the Lubaszenko we remember from years ago [...]. I am glad that Grzegorz Jaroszuk is this director.*

Łukasz Maciejewski

*DEAR ONES is [...] a beautiful come back to the leading role of Olaf Lubaszenko [...], who it is good to watch as he softly beams in the comfort zone built for him by Jaroszuk's director's attention.*

Michał Oleszczyk

## ANTIPODE SALES & DISTRIBUTION

Moscow-based company Antipode Sales & Distribution was created in 2012.

We are huge fans of our films and firm believers in their potential, which gives us energy and inspiration to promote them. Our catalog includes both wellknown directors as Andrey Konchalovskiy, Konstantin Lopushanskiy, Alexey Fedorchenko and young, up-and-coming film

makers who we help work their way into international cinema.

We love to find new talent who tell stories that can change the generally accepted views, be spirit – uplifting for audiences across the globe.

Our films are screened at main international festivals.



