

IZAOKAS

ISAAC



A FILM BY JURGIS MATULEVIČIUS



Logline

A Soviet style film noir about the murder of a Jew that changed the world for ages.

Short synopsis

The film starts in 1941 when the main character kills a Jew, Isaac, at the Lietukis garage massacre in Lithuania. Years later he is haunted by the images of the past and an increasing burden of guilt. The film discusses themes of friendship, love, regret and self-liberation in the difficult historical context of the Holocaust and post war Soviet era in Lithuania.



Long Synopsis

Andrius Gluosnis, a Lithuanian activist and passer-by, on the bloody day of Lietukis garage massacre, kills his Jewish neighbour Isaac - with a soldier's spade. Gluosnis suspects Isaac told on him to the NKVD, (later KGB) accusing Gluosnis of being a nationalist, resulting in him being jailed.

Years after an incident, in Soviet Lithuania, Gluosnis is haunted by his guilt. He works for the KGB as a forensic photographer, and lives with the woman he has dreamt about his whole life - but there is no way he can ever forget his sin.

As a coincidence his friend, film director Gutauskas comes back from the USA to make a movie about the Lietukis massacre, with a screenplay that portrays the massacres' details... Our movie simultaneously merges into another story - two friends are in love with one woman - Gluosnis who is taken over by the fears and distress of his sin, and the suppression of the Soviet system, and Gutauskas who escaped occupation after the war, and lived in a free country, now seeks the truth.



He investigates and reads archives about the killings and comes close to the fact that his friend Gluosnis took part in the murder, and was not just an observer there. This screenplay becomes a piece of evidence for an investigation that the KGB opened on the same events. Gluosnis' friend director Gutauskas becomes the main suspect for the KGB. The film director though identifies himself with his friend who is the murderer of Isaac who is convinced that Isaac will come back and have his revenge.

Director and screenwriter - Jurgis Matulevičius

Jurgis Matulevičius graduated from the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy with a degree in film directing. He has worked with well-known Lithuanian film directors Šarūnas Bartas, Algimantas Puipa and others. Jurgis made a number of short films that were seen and praised by critics, festivals and audiences in Lithuania and abroad alike - his films were presented in many local and international festivals like Los Angeles' Cinefest, Kiwi International, Krakow Film Festival, Oberhausen film festival, Odessa Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival Film Market „Marche du Film“ and others.

Co-Screenwriter - Nerijus Milerius

Nerijus is a Professor at Vilnius University, Department of Philosophy. He works in the field of theories and practises of everyday life, theoretical issues of urban studies, urban changes in Eastern and Central Europe, visual phenomena and philosophy of film. Nerijus organised and participated in numerous seminars and conferences on the issues of philosophy and urban studies, and is the co-editor of the issues on philosophy, urban studies and visual culture.



Co-Screenwriter - Saulė Bliuvaitė

Saulė Bliuvaitė is a young filmmaker who graduated from film directing studies at the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy. Saulė had studied journalism for a few years before studying film. Her field of interests covers different film styles and genres, from fiction to dance films and music videos. Her recently directed short films *Life is Beautiful and Never Ends* (2016) and *Yana* (2018), were presented at festivals in Lithuania and abroad. Saulė also worked on the film *Isaac* as the first AD (assistant director).

Cinematographer - Narvydas Naujalis

Narvydas Naujalis is a rising star of Lithuanian cinematography. He mainly works with younger generation directors and filmed well known and awarded Lithuanian short and feature films. Narvydas was awarded best cinematography for the short film Mobius Bond (2017, director Emilija Rivière) in (at the) ECU film festival (European independent film festival). He has been a member of the Lithuanian Association of Cinematographers since 2014. He has been a chairman of the association since 2017.

Producer - Stasys Baltakis

Stasys is a film producer with an experience in film making in Canada and Lithuania. He runs a film production company Film Jam that employs his former students and makes a movie or two per year. Films made by company vary in style, type and are intended for different audiences - sometimes for educational purposes, sometimes high art, sometimes commercially orientated. Since Stasys is an Associated Professor in Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy for many years he contributes and helps young talents of Lithuania as much as he can.



Cast

Leading actor - Dainius Gavenonis

Dainius Gavenonis is a well-known Lithuanian stage and film actor. His roles in numerous theatre performances directed by the best Lithuanian theatre directors Oskaras Koršunovas, Jonas Vaitkus, and Eimuntas Nekrošius are significant to Lithuanian theatre history. His parts in the films *Perpetuum Mobile* (2008), *Low Lights* (2009) and others mark his career as a film actor. Dainius received many awards for his parts in theatre and film. He was nominated as the best Lithuanian actor in 2012 as well, and received the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art in 2015, the most honourable award in a field of culture in the country.

Leading actor - Aleksas Kazanavičius

Aleksas Kazanavičius is an actor well known for his stage and film parts in the works by famous Lithuanian directors. He has been working in State Youth Theatre since 1997 and created plenty of significant roles since then; including leading and supporting parts in the feature-length films *Whisper of the Sin* (by Algimantas Puipa, 2008), *Back to Your Arms* (by Kristijonas Vildžiūnas, 2010), *Owl Mountain* (by Audius Juzėnas, 2018) and others. Aleksas occasionally appears in Lithuanian TV series as well.



Leading actress - Severija Janušauskaitė

Severija Janušauskaitė is a Lithuanian stage and film actress, occasionally performing as a singer, composer, costume designer and fashion model. She is well known for her role in the drama film *Star* (2014), for which she received an Award for Best Actress at the Kinotavr Film Festival, a Golden Eagle Award for Best Supporting Actress as well as Nika Award and White Elephant Award nominations in several categories in Russia. Other popular works include the comedy film *The Norseman* (2015) as well as the TV series *The Optimists* and *Babylon Berlin* directed by Tom Tykwer (both 2017).

Director's statement

Cinematic storytelling in a film is a long continuum of flawless swim-like shots, where the texture of things, walls, mirrors, water, buildings, and sculptures are shown. The texture of things is mixed with a similar form to the body structure of human portraits, thus creating a continuity of moving images: things become characters and characters (humans) become part of a whole image. Such a method is adjacent to the work of Flemish artist Peter Bruegel where an event takes place on a second plan and a main idea and theme is structured from small details of a landscape. I do not show things and connections between them as they are but the idea and essence of a thing. As E. Kant would say "Slowly moving frames of an image make viewer contemplate, consider and think the way he creates symbols himself."

Isaac film is framed in 2.35:1 format. This narrow movie format opens a wider prospect for a visual expressiveness. Horizontal space is benevolent to play in symbols where objects put into plans of a composition become a strong tool for storytelling, whereas a composition of a frame very often is subjective - it implements a relationship of an audience with an object shown. The film is in sharp contrast and shades become more aggressive.

Part of a film is in colour, part of it is in B&W. Colours appearing in a movie will determine a fragile relationship of a protagonist with a reality.