



KLEZMER בליזמר

a film by Piotr Chrzan

KLEZMER

LOGLINE

„Klezmer” is a realistic and metaphoric story about a journey through wartime Land of Evil. It is set during World War II in the Polish countryside, although away from the frontlines. It seems that nothing has changed there and life goes on just like before the war. However, people carry the war in their hearts and souls...

SYNOPSIS

It is a sunny summer day in 1943. Poland is under German occupation. A group of young people, inhabitants of a nearby village, goes to the forest to gather fir cones and brushwood to use as firewood. They talk, flirt and make plans for the future. However this outing has an unexpected outcome – in consequence of a certain event they have to deal with a situation that is new to them and which has an impact on their lives and the lives of other people who appear as the story develops.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was brought up in the Polish countryside... One day, I was playing with other children in the yard behind a big, old house in which we lived with a few other families. During the war there was a military police station there. We were running around, when suddenly our nanny yelled: „Don't go running there, it's where they buried the Jew!” We sat down next to her on the grass and she told us about the only Jew that lived in our village before the war. He was shot dead on a summer day during the war by another villager, a General Government Polish policeman.

These strange facts, fascinating for a child – in the yard, behind the house in which I live, not in a cemetery, a man is buried, shot dead by another man from our village – stuck in my mind. Years later, from these memories, coupled with what I read about Holocaust, „Klezmer” was born.



KLEZMERDIRECTOR

PIOTR CHRZAN

Piotr Chrzan has always been interested in cinema, but the Polish education system decided that he is a born director and declined to educate him in that field. Therefore he graduated university in Philosophy, as no one tried to teach him anything there. He has been a creator ever since he can remember: he wrote over a dozen theatrical plays which often received awards in competitions held in Poland; two of them he directed for Polish television. In 2010 he made his way to the film set, where he regularly returned to. He directed two short films on the basis of his own screenplays – „Night Visit” and „Toreador’s Last Song”. He wrote screenplays for two Polish features: „Odd One Out” and „Gabriel”. „Klezmer” is his full-length feature film debut. Aficionado of Bergman, Kurosawa and Tarkowski films.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

WHEN DID YOU START THINKING OF KLEZMER?

I have been dealing with the subject of the Holocaust and issues connected with life in the Polish countryside under German occupation for years. In fact I've been dealing with these issues since I was a child, when I heard the first "wartime stories" told by the seniors living in my village. Sometimes in these stories these two subjects intertwined. So the idea for this film has always been with me.

HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR WRITING SCRIPT?

It took me a long time to prepare for writing „Klezmer”. I familiarized myself with many reports from that time, so I believe that I had sufficient knowledge to create a proper setting for the story told in „Klezmer” as well as present the characters of the film in a balanced and believable manner.

IT SEEMS IT TOOK YOU YEARS TO PREPARE FOR WRITING SCRIPT. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE IT?

... a month.

HOW MANY CHANGES TO THE SCRIPT HAVE YOU MADE WHILE FILMING?

A few changes were introduced, but not as a result of a filming necessity, because I directed the entire film in my head when writing the screenplay. But rather to lend a symbolic and metaphoric dimension to realistic scenes at the screenplay level.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE TITLE CHARACTER — KLEZMER?

The title Jewish character of my film, due to physical (he has been shot) and psychological (lost all hope of being rescued) exhaustion, is almost completely passive. Neither what he does nor says can have any influence on what the other characters in the movie do or decide. Such a dramatic setting of the initial situation (passivity of the character on whom all actions of the remaining characters concentrate) allowed me, among others, to show how the treatment of one person by another depends on the beliefs and ideas which were instilled in him or her.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

In „Klezmer” the characters carry within them a conception of a Jew, formed by Polish nationalist movements, the Catholic Church and folk superstitions. „Klezmer” shows how these conceptions and behaviours can present themselves in circumstances that allow for their manifestation. Presenting how these mechanisms of social violence work is undoubtedly one of the main themes of „Klezmer”.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ALLOW FOR THEIR MANIFESTATION”?

A War. It was truly important for me to capture and present the atmosphere of wartime occupation. It provoked various types of behaviours, both noble and full of sympathy and the most spiteful ones, even criminal. To this „atmosphere of occupation” I subjected characters of clearly diversified nature and different life experiences. Furthermore, the diversity of characters made it possible for me to review the wide range of attitudes that Poles expressed towards their Jewish countrymen during the war.

Extreme cases, both positive (selfless help, sacrifice at the cost of prison or even death), and negative ones (denouncing and even taking lives) were in essence very rare. Most Poles were generally passive observers and witnesses of the Holocaust. However, when circumstances forced them to take a stance, just like in „Klezmer”, their attitudes most frequently escaped simple categorisation and division into „explicitly good” or „explicitly evil”.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS IN POLAND ABOUT POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS DURING THE WAR?

„Klezmer” is not aspiring to become a voice in the national discussion of supposedly coming to terms with the past on „whether more Poles helped the Jews or harmed them”, with people whose polemical enthusiasm is reversely proportional to their knowledge of history. This is just an attempt to capture and present the entire complexity of that situation to the fullest degree possible.



KLEZMERPRODUCER

ALEKSANDRA ZAKRZEWSKA

Aleksandra Zakrzewska studied history of religions, psychology and film production. She produced two shorts written and directed by Piotr Chrzan – „Night Visit“ (2011) and „Toreador’s Last Song” (2014). „Klezmer“ is her feature debut as a producer and music consultant. Music- and film-maniac. Loves viola da gamba masters and all works by Vivaldi.

KLEZMERCINEMATOGRAPHER



SYLWESTER KAŹMIERCZAK

He is a graduate of the Direction of Photography Department at the National Film School in Lodz, one of the oldest film schools in the world. At present he is conducting doctoral studies, exploring a new branch of cinema – Virtual Cinematography. „Klezmer” is his full-length feature film debut.

KLEZMERCAST



DOROTA KUDUK
as Hanka

Graduate of the Acting Department of the National Film School in Lodz. Performed in films: „Ida” directed by Pawlikowski, „And There Was Love In Ghetto” directed by Wajda and Dylewska and „Innocent” directed by Fontaine.



LESŁAW ŻUREK
as Michal

Graduate of the National Academy of Theatre Arts in Cracow. He played in films: „It’s a Free World” directed by Ken Loach, „Little Moscow” directed by Krzystek, „Odd One Out” directed by Wendorff, „Warsaw Dark” by Doyle and many more.



WERONIKA LEWOŃ
as Marys

Graduate of the Puppetry Art Department of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Cooperates with a number of theatres. „Klezmer” is her full-length feature film debut.

KLEZMERC**CAST**



KAMIL PRZYSTAŁ
as Witus

Graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Performs in Warsaw and Cracow theatres. Played in films: „A Grain of Truth” directed by Lankosz and „Warsaw By Night” by Koryncka-Gruz.



FILIP KOSIOR
as Jew

5th year student of the Acting Department of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Performed in a number of theatrical plays. „Klezmer” is his full-length feature film debut.



SZYMON NOWAK
as Marek

Graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Performed on stages of Warsaw theatres. Played in various films: „80 Million” directed by Krzystek and „Hardkor Disko” by Skonieczny.

KLEZMERC**CAST**



MAREK KASPRZYK
as Mietek

Graduate of the Acting Department of the National Film School in Lodz. Performed in numerous films: „Ida” by Pawilkowski „Aftermath” by Pasikowski, „To Kill a Beaver” by Kolski and many more.



EWA JAKUBOWICZ
as Rozalka

5th year student of the Acting Department of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Performed in a number of theatrical plays. „Klezmer” is her full-length feature film debut.



RAFAŁ MAĆKOWIAK
as Pazyniak

Graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Played in numerous films; for his performance in „33 Scenes from Life” directed by Szumowska, he was nominated to the Eagle, a Polish Film Award in the Best Supporting Actor category.

KLEZMERC**CAST**



BARTOSZ TURZYŃSKI
as German Gendarme

Graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Played the starring role in „Odd One Out” directed by Wendorff. Appeared in supporting roles in a number of Polish productions.



THE CART

We had looked for a proper cart for many months all around Poland. Just when we were losing hope and the date for starting shooting was nearing – we found It! For over 70 years our perfect Cart was waiting for us in a peasant’s enclosure, just a few kilometres away from our set.



JACEK KWIECIŃ
as Blue Policeman

Graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw. Apart from „Klezmer”, he appeared in a couple of feature films: „Referee of Attention” by Polakowski and „Zero” by Borowski.



KLEZMERCREW

DIRECTOR *Piotr Chrzan*

SCREENPLAY *Piotr Chrzan*

PRODUCER *Aleksandra Zakrzewska*

PRODUCTION COMPANY *Human Power Sp. z o.o.*

CINEMATOGRAPHER *Sylwester Kazmierczak*

EDITOR *Cezary Kowalczuk*

CONFORMING AND COLOUR GRADING *Krzysztof Ptak*

PRODUCTION MANAGER *Maciej Łaszuk*

PRODUCTION DESIGNER *Piotr Chrzan, Aleksandra Zakrzewska*

SOUND DESIGNER *Franciszek Kozłowski*

COSTUME DESIGNER *Marta Wszyńska, Elżbieta Palczewska*

MAKE-UP *Joanna Łukijańczuk-Szczęsna*

Aleksandra Dutkiewicz

CASTING *Piotr Chrzan, Aleksandra Zakrzewska*

MUSIC CONSULTANT *Aleksandra Zakrzewska*



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