

WESTERN TRANSYLVANIA STUDIOS AND EYRIE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH ZDF / DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL
AND IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTE

CLARA

A FILM BY SABIN DOROHOI

LOGLINE

A young Romanian woman has left her home in a small fishing village by the Danube and her 12-year-old son to earn money as a live-in nanny in Germany. When one day her son goes missing, she returns back home. Confronted with the live she has left behind she has to face her failure as a mother in her attempt to become a reliable parent.

KEY FACTS

TITLE:	Clara
GENRE:	Social Drama
DIRECTOR:	Sabin Dorohoi
SCRIPTWRITER:	Ruxandra Ghițescu
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:	Lulu de Hillerin
CAST:	Olga Török, Ovidiu Crisan, Luca Puia, Elina Leidl, David Rott
PRODUCERS:	Sabin Dorohoi, Dan Burlac, Daniel Ehrenberg
PRODUCED BY:	Western Transylvania Studios, Eyrie Entertainment, Chainsaw Europe Studio
IN COPRODUCTION WITH:	ZDF / Das Kleine Fernsehspiel in collaboration with ARTE
SUPPORTED BY:	Centrul Național al Cinematografiei
SHOOTING LOCATIONS:	Banat, Romania & Ulm, Germany
RUNNING TIME:	ca. 85 Minutes
SPOKEN LANGUAGES:	Romanian, German
STATUS:	In Post-Production
ESTIMATED DELIVERY:	May 2023



SYNOPSIS

Clara, a young Romanian woman, has left her home in a small Danube fishing village and her 12-year-old son Ionut, to earn money in Germany. She now lives thousands of kilometres upstream, but still on the Danube, where she takes care of young Johanna, who loves her like a mother, the child's father Markus and grandmother Edith. Ionut becomes increasingly a distant voice on the phone and the elegant Southern-German city becomes ever more her new home. But then Ionut, who is in the care of his grandfather, disappears suddenly one day: a disaster that with one blow reveals the hopelessly inescapable situation in which Clara finds herself. She takes time off to travel to her faraway homeland, not knowing if her child is even still alive, whether she will see Johanna and her German home again and with absolutely no idea what to do next.

Set on the background of economical migration CLARA tackles a sensitive social theme by using poetic images to tell the story of a woman who leaves her country, home and family to escape poverty. A woman with few chances of really choosing a fate, who is constantly trying to minimize the harm she is provoking, in her attempt to do the best she can in a no winning situation. Clara stands for millions of Romanian women who have sacrificed themselves for their families and for the relatively unknown theme of the Eastern European migration of entire generations and the resulting consequences for their families.



CLARA, a young Romanian mother, earns a living as a live-in nanny in Germany where she takes care of an old lady and a little girl. The woman feels trapped between two worlds: the first world is abroad, where she works hard in order to provide for her own son and the second world, back home in Romania, where her absence is causing suffering to her family. The character Clara is evolving throughout the story from the shy young woman who obviously lacks self-confidence, to the fierce warrior who strongly believes she can protect her family when the social services try to take away her son. She becomes a strong-willed woman who gains perspective and maturity when she decides that the best thing to do for her son is to go back to her job in Germany, and thus provide for his needs.



IONUT is the pre-teen whose actions and thoughts are sometimes childish and sometimes surprisingly mature for his age. The narrative line tells the story of how life forced maturity upon him and how he came to understand the social conditioning of the world he was born into. The child Ionut, who still desperately needs his mother, becomes the grown-up man in the family, and comes to terms with the idea that the best thing his mother can do for their family is to continue to work abroad, even though this means he will be deprived of her love and affection.



NICOLAE – Clara's father and Ionut's grandfather, is the one who still holds together what is left of their family. Nicolae supports his daughter's decisions and looks after his grandson, thus trying to compensate for his own lack of dedication as a father, when Clara was a child herself. The old man is the witness of their family's history and holds his own personal truth about life and redemption.



JOHANNA is a five-year-old little girl who lost her mother; she grows fond of Clara, her baby-sitter, whom she now sees as her new mommy. For Clara, Johanna is the chance to take back her place as a mother in a child's life on an emotional level. When she left her country and went abroad to find work, her son Ionut was the same age as Johanna. For this reason, she tries to compensate and be a good mother-like figure to the little girl, feeling like she was given a second chance to do things right this time. She knows how to approach the little girl and create a connection, while she also knows she has difficulties to connect with her own son who is now almost a teenager and requires a different kind of approach.



MARKUS - Johanna's father is a well-put together mature man who lost his wife a few years ago. He is Clara's employer and acts accordingly, but somehow, he sees her as part of his own family now. Although he shows empathy for Clara and her situation, Markus has to prioritize the happiness and well-being of his mother Edith and his daughter.



EDITH is 75-year-old and deaf-mute. She is part of the generation that worked hard to bring prosperity to Germany after the war. Just like Nicolae, the rich old lady is part of a generation that will soon be gone with the wind. Although she has a cold attitude towards Clara, deep down in her soul she feels affection and empathy for the young woman who struggles to be a good mother.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2014 I directed the short film WAY OF THE DANUBE. It was a big festival hit: over 20 awards and nominations. It was also awarded at an Oscar qualifying festival and had a unique screening at the Eurovision Song Contest. After this international success, I decided to develop that short story into my first feature film. As a consequence, my project CLARA was born. This film tells the story of a mother who has to face her failure in relation to her underaged son while still hoping to prove her motherhood as a baby-sitter for a little girl in Germany. For me, it is a challenge and a joy to tackle such a powerful and yet delicate subject. The poetry of this film is that the Danube river metaphorically connects the boy and his mother, Romania and Germany, East and West.

Sabin Dorohoi, Director / Producer





SABIN DOROHOI – Director / Producer

Sabin graduated from Bucharest Film Academy as film director. In 2013 he founded WTS - Western Transylvania Studios, a production company in the western part of Romania, to provide full production services for international projects from Western Europe or the US. He produced short films and TV documentaries, some of them selected and awarded at film festivals around the world. His most internationally acclaimed creation was the short film WAY OF THE DANUBE (2013), which won the grand prize at Oscar qualifying Chicago International Children's Film Festival, USA, a Cinematography Award at Capalbio, Italy, the Young Audience Award at CINEMED – Montpellier, France and was selected in many festivals around the world such as Palm Springs ShortFest, Nordkapp, Vilnius or California Independent Film Festival. CLARA is Sabin's first feature film.



RUXANDRA GHIȚESCU – Scriptwriter

Ruxandra is a Romanian writer-director. She is a graduate student of the Media Art School in Karlsruhe, Germany. Her short films have been selected in international film festivals like Sofia, Cottbus, Cork, Helsinki, Transylvania IFF a.o. Ruxandra was selected as participant for Transylvania Talents 2014, Sarajevo Talents 2014 and Berlinale Talents 2015. Next to CLARA she co-wrote the feature film HAWAII (Dir. Jesus del Cerro) that premiered in Romania in 2017. In 2020 Ruxandra Ghițescu's feature-length directorial debut OTTO THE BARBARIAN premiered in Official Competition at the Sarajevo Film Festival.





DANIEL BURLAC – Producer

A graduate in Film Direction from LA FÉMIS in Paris, Daniel Burlac participated in the EAVE and ACE training programs. He served as a production assistant on Alexandre Arcady's *ENTRE CHIENS ET LOUPS* (2000), Costa Gavras' *AMEN*, and Laurent Boutonnat's *JACQUOU LE CROQUANT* (2005) as well as promotion manager for Cristi Puiu's *THE DEATH OF MR LAZARESCU* which won *Un Certain Regard's* Grand Prix in 2005. Since then, Daniel was the executive producer on Corneliu Porumboiu's *Camera d'Or* winning 12.08 *EAST OF BUCHAREST* and associate producer of Mungiu's 2007 Golden Palm winner *4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS*. Daniel also worked with Albert Serra for the Golden Leopard winning *HISTÒRIA DE LA MEVA MORT* (2014).



DANIEL EHRENBURG – Producer

After graduating from Hamburg University with an MA in German Language and Literature Studies, History and Political Science, Daniel started his producing career at Warner Bros. Pictures Germany before joining the independent production company Egoli Tossell Film in 2010. His producer credits include Peter Chelsom's *HECTOR AND THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS* (2014), starring Simon Pegg, Rosamund Pike and Christopher Plummer; Sinan Akkuş' culture-clash comedy *3 TURKS AND A BABY* (2015) as well as *GERMANY IN A DAY*, Sönke Wortmann's take on Ridley Scott's much acclaimed „...in a Day“-format (2016). In 2018, Daniel launched Eyrie Entertainment, an independent production company that focuses on cross-over and arthouse films from exciting and diverse new talent. Daniel is a graduate of EAVE and a member of the German Film Academy.



WESTERN TRANSYLVANIA STUDIOS is an international media production company. A full-service cinema, television, and commercial studio founded by director and producer Sabin Dorohoi and located in the Western heart of Romania's Transylvania region. In 2013 WTS produced the internationally acclaimed short film *WAY OF THE DANUBE*, which won the grand prize at Oscar qualifying Chicago International Children's Film Festival, a Cinematography award at Capalbio, the Young Public Award at CINEMED – Montpellier and was selected at Palm Springs ShortFest. Between 2013-2019 WTS produced TV documentaries, some of them selected in international film festivals across Europe and the US: *TRANSYLVANIA DRAGON*, *ABSENT*, *ARTUR SCHNABEL: NO PLACE OF EXILE*, *SW!M* and the *BANAT MOUNTAINS* trilogy.



EYRIE ENTERTAINMENT develops and produces arthouse and crossover films for the German and international market. The company was founded by Daniel Ehrenberg in 2018 and is based in Berlin. Alongside Daniel Ehrenberg, Eyrie Entertainment is run by producer Angélique Saad and line producer Christine Rau.

At Eyrie Entertainment we have a great passion for good stories that are entertaining and also have something to say about contemporary society. We seek to establish close collaboration with the most exciting, new screenwriting and directing talent to create outstanding pieces of cinematic art together. Our films are made to attract broad audiences and have the potential to reach far beyond our home territory.

In 2022 Eyrie Entertainment's first production has been released by Warner Bros. in German cinemas: *THE PATH*, a moving WWII adventure/drama starring Julius Weckauf, Volker Bruch and Nonna Cardoner and directed by Tobias Wiemann. The film won the German Film Award for Best Children's Film 2022 as well as several other awards at film festivals around the world. Eyrie's second feature, Sabin Dorohoi's *CLARA*, a Romanian-German co-production in collaboration with ZDF / ARTE is currently in post-production.

CONTACT

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