

LENA
OLIN

ALEXANDER
KOCH

NATHAN
KEYES

JORDAN
GAVARIS

CHRIS
VOSS

AND ROSANNA
ARQUETTE



"LENA OLIN IS RIVETING."
Indiewire

"ONE AWESOME PERFORMANCE."
Hollywood Reporter

MAYA DARDEL

a film by ZACHARY COTLER and MAGDALENA ZYKAK

SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS PRESENTS A GREYSHACK FILMS, MESSAGE FILM AND WINTER FILM COMPANY PRODUCTION "MAYA DARDEL"
LENA OLIN, ALEXANDER KOCH, NATHAN KEYES, JORDAN GAVARIS, CHRIS VOSS AND ROSANNA ARQUETTE
PRODUCED BY MIKE S. RYAN, MORGAN JON FOX, DARIUSZ JABLONSKI, VIOLETTA KAMINSKA, IZABELA WOJCIK EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CRAIG R. JOHNSON
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PATRICK SCOLA SOUND DESIGN TOMASZ DUKSZTA C.A.S. PRODUCTION DESIGNER SARAH COLE EDITOR OSMAN BAYRAKTAROGLU COSTUME DESIGNER SUSAN DOEPNER-SENAC
ORIGINAL POETRY AND MUSIC ZACHARY COTLER CASTING BY SUSAN SHOPMAKER AND MATTHEW LESSALL WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ZACHARY COTLER AND MAGDALENA ZYKAK

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SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS PRESENTS

MAYA DARDEL

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SYNOPSIS

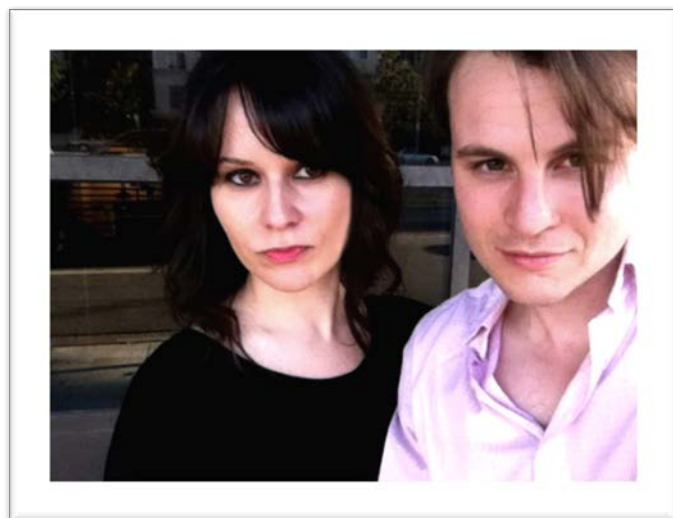
The story of the final weeks leading up to the ambiguous disappearance of Maya Dardel, an internationally respected poet and novelist who lived, until 2016, in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Maya announces on NPR that she intends to end her life and that young male writers may compete to become executors of her estate. The men compete to win and are challenged intellectually, emotionally and erotically. Maya's end game turns out to be subtler and more complicated than it seems.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

MAYA DARDEL explores a category of female power/intelligence undervalued in America. Our protagonist, Maya, is unsentimental, acerbic, unapologetically threatening to the young men she encounters. She is not "soulful" or "motherly." Her kind of intelligence, whether one likes it or not, is probably more valuable than ever, considering our present political chaos.

It's also a film about the tragicomedy of being a writer in the end times of print culture, when creative writing graduate schools have replaced cafes and bars and everybody writes books and nobody reads them. The men who compete to inherit Maya's estate are nods to four kinds of young writers one might encounter in writing programs in the United States today.

At a more personal level, it's about poetic reception of phenomena, about feelings that can't be easily expressed, and so, of course, it's very difficult to explain the motivations that pertain to that layer of the film... maybe easier to try to speak to that in verse than prose.



INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTORS ZACHARY COTLER & MAGDALENA ZYZAK

What was the casting process?

Zachary: Magdalena and I had separately admired Lena Olin's work since long before we met and began making films together. It's difficult to describe the feeling one has for an actor, for the rightness of an actor for a role, the legacy or aura (not in any metaphysical sense) an actor brings from

earlier films, but it's a very definite sensation. *After the Rehearsal* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* had cemented Lena for me as someone who can effortlessly bear the bizarre Möbius-tension of playing an artist. There is a great deal of self-overhearing involved in playing an artist convincingly. Any role requires an actor to let go of self-consciousness, but to play an artist (or psychologist, or philosopher) is a trick of mental contortion: one must unselfconsciously throw oneself into the persona of an endlessly self-conscious human being. This is not unlike being told not to think of an elephant and indeed not thinking of one. Not everyone can do it. Lena can. So, for complex reasons, she was a simple decision. With much of the rest of the cast, the same challenge applied: we had to find and cast actors who cannot think of elephants. Rosanna Arquette's Leonora, however, the only non-writer character in the film, is a different animal. I'll let Leonora speak for herself. We're very pleased with how she turned out.

How did the story and character originate?

Magdalena: The location brought about the story. We'd been spending time at Zachary's family house way up in the Santa Cruz Mountains, working on our novels and Zachary's poetry. It's a very remote location, an hour from the nearest town, reachable only via a pot-holed country road. Knobcones, madrones, vineyards, properties filled with that quintessentially Californian type of junk, dogs roaming the roads... We'd be writing and occasionally hear a gunshot from the neighbor's property—he did (and does) a lot of practice shooting with his wife. There's a hodge-podge of people up

there: pot farmers, a few ex-cons, a lot of Silicon Valley execs playing vigilante-farmer on the weekend, psychotherapists, hippies etc. We thought, what if we placed an older woman there, a writer, living alone? So in a way, Maya grew out of the land. The vineyards, the wrecked speedboat miles from water, the dilapidated junkyard property, and the roads Maya walks with Ansel are all in the close proximity to Zachary's house. It wasn't cinematic manipulation and editing that brought them together. They are all located within a few thousand square feet. We invented Maya and her world by following this local map. A neighbor's junk-hoard became Leonora's house. We gave a psychotherapist's vineyard to Maya. We actually bred/attracted hummingbirds for months leading up to production by putting out perverse amounts of sugared water. After a while, we were no longer exploring a familiar landscape and inventing a fictitious character, but following someone almost-real, in the manner one traces the steps of a dead poet. And Maya is a dead poet, of course, because she doesn't exist, just as the dead don't.



Will you talk about the poetry and music in the film?

Zachary: After we cooked up minds and personalities for the various poets in the film, I started writing poetry in each of their voices. We hear Moses' poetry, see Kevin's on paper, see and hear Ansel's, and finally listen to Maya's over the credits. I had never before written poetry to be *purposefully* imperfect. I was surprised when, writing poems by fictional people, poems inflected by flaws in the characters, the poems helplessly became organic small totalities, the flaws in them became my own, against my will. Not all of the voices dropped anchor, but Maya's did: I continue to write poems in her voice. Maybe they will turn into a book, because only one of them made it into the film.

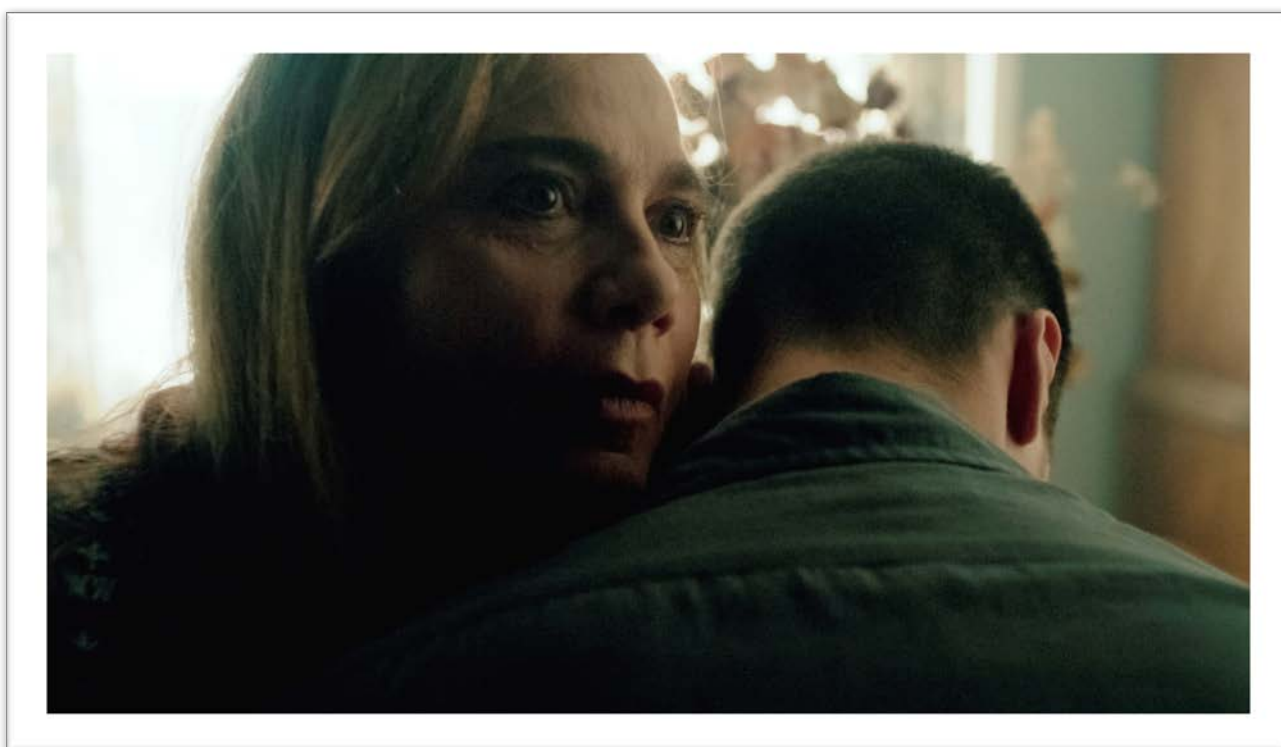
As for the score, I wrote it in the months leading up to production on the piano that appears in the film. I played parts of it for the actors on set, to communicate sometimes a mood that words might fail to find the bottom of... and I should mention, too, it was the hummingbirds in the windows, their speed-

within-stillness and abrupt directional changes, that set in motion the initial elements of the score. I set out to mimic them, to make my hands on the piano move in a human approximation of their wings.

Will you talk about the visual style of the film?

Magdalena: Maya Dardel follows the loose structure of an Artemis myth. Young men who see Maya/Artemis naked, mentally or physically, have to “die.” It was very important for the camera to, at all times, guard Maya’s whimsical authority, protect her dignity. The camera also had to remain loyal to Maya’s way of seeing things: discerning, unsentimental, stately, watching. She isolates men and intimidates them. She never gives up power willingly.

We shot in fog and at dusk, used a lot of diffusion and some desaturation to show the delicacy, the fragility of Maya’s situation, to give proper mournful colors to her farewell. We looked at a wide range



of photographic and filmic references. There’s one particular photo by Bill Brandt: a man’s head on the

beach, with only the ear in frame, seen up close through a very wide-angle lens. The ear, as large as the cliff in the distance, is ridiculous, obscene, but also strangely potent. Maya, through her games, places unfair psychological demands on the boys, abusing their weaknesses and thereby pushing them toward nasty behaviors. Pat Scola (our DP), Zachary, and I decided to predominantly use wide angle lenses to show that kind caricatured extravagance. All ears, even one’s lover’s, when seen up close, are Brandt’s ears.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MAGDALENA ZYZAK (Director, Writer)

Magdalena was born in 1983 in Zabrze, Poland. In 2002, she moved to the US to study film production and literature at the University of Southern California. Magdalena's first feature film, produced and co-written with director Asiel Norton, *Redland*, a wilderness drama, won awards at international festivals, was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award, and was picked as one of the Top Fourteen Films of the Year by Hammer to Nail. After making *Redland*, Magdalena attended Columbia University's graduate program in creative writing and received an MFA. In 2013, she completed her first novel, *The Ballad of Barnabas Pierkiel*, published by Henry Holt in 2014 to widespread critical acclaim. An absurdist picaresque set in a fictitious Slavic nation at the outbreak of World War II, it was called by The New York Times "unexpectedly moving" and by The Los Angeles Times "wickedly good." The novel is currently being translated into Romanian, Turkish and Czech. In 2013, she produced a second feature film directed by Asiel Norton, *Orion*, a post-apocalyptic fable, shot in the ruins of Detroit, starring David Arquette, Lily Cole and Goran Kostic. In 2014, she shifted from producing to directing and teamed up with Zachary Cotler to begin work on Maya Dardel and *When I'm a Moth*. Magdalena has been honored by the national foundation Teraz Polska as an outstanding cultural figure of the Polish community abroad.

ZACHARY COTLER (Director, Writer)

Zachary was born in New Jersey in 1981 and grew up in Mill Valley, California. He received a BA in English from Cornell University in 2003 and an MFA in poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 2008. He is the author of a novel, *Ghost at the Loom* (2014), a critical monograph, *Elegies for Humanism* (2015), and three books of poetry, *Supplice* (2014), *Sonnets to the Humans* (2013), and *House with a Dark Sky Roof* (2011). His poetry awards include the Colorado Prize, the Sawtooth Prize, the Amy Clampitt Residency, and the Ruth Lilly Fellowship, the largest national prize for poets 30 and under in the United States. He's a founding editor of *The Winter Anthology*. Since 2014, he has focused on filmmaking. *Maya Dardel* is his directing debut. His second feature film with Magdalena Zyzak, *When I'm a Moth*, is currently in postproduction.

MIKE S. RYAN (Producer)

Mike S. Ryan is president of Greystack Films and a veteran of the independent film community, who started out in the industry's 1990's heyday with films like Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm* and Todd Hayne's *Far from Heaven*. As a producer and executive producer, he has helped realize many groundbreaking films in the last fifteen years, most made under \$3 million. He was nominated for an Independent Spirit "Producer of the Year" Award, and was one of Variety's 2007 "10 Producers to Watch." His films have

garnered nominations and prizes from the Academy Awards, Independent Spirit Awards, Gotham Awards and many more. *Junebug*, starring Amy Adams, made its international premiere at Cannes in 2005 and went on to be one of the lowest-budgeted feature films ever nominated for an Oscar (Best Supporting Actress, 2005). Most recently he produced Jake Mahaffy's *Free in Deed* which won best film at the Venice Film Festival and was nominated for four Independent Spirit Awards, A.D. Calvo's *Sweet, Sweet Lonely Girl*, which premiered at Fantastic Fest and *The Missing Girl*, which had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, and *Grain*, a Turkish/German coproduction.

Other credits include Todd Solondz's *Palindromes* and *Life During Wartime*; Kelly Reichardt's *Old Joy* (winner, Rotterdam International Film Festival 2006) and her *Meek's Cutoff* starring Michelle Williams; Ira Sach's *40 Shades of Blue* (winner, Sundance Film Festival 06); Hal Hartley's *Fay Grim*, starring Parker Posey and Jeff Goldblum; *Lake City*, starring Sissy Spacek (premiered at Tribeca Film Festival in 2008), Ilya Chaiken's *Liberty Kid* (Winner of HBO's Latino Film Festival in 2007 and in competition at the Los Angeles Film Festival), Bela Tarr's final film, *Turin Horse*, winner at Berlin and in competition at the Toronto, Telluride and New York Film Festivals, *About Sunny* (Toronto '11), nominated for a Spirit Award for Best Actress, *The Comedy*, a drama starring comedian Tim Heidecker (Sundance and Rotterdam 2012), *Between Us*, starring Julia Stiles and Taye Diggs, and *Last Weekend*, starring Patricia Clarkson and Zachary Booth (premiered at San Francisco Film Festival in 2014). Mike is a New York City native and NYU Tisch School of the Arts graduate.

MORGAN JON FOX (Producer)

Named one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film" by Filmmaker Magazine, Morgan Jon Fox is a Memphis-based filmmaker/producer who has won over 20 best of festival awards around the world. As a director, Fox has become known for getting strong, authentic performances from mostly nonprofessional actors, and telling gritty regional southern stories. His latest project, *Feral* is an 8 Episode show he created for the new streaming platform DEKKOO about a close-knit group of 20-something LGBT artists living in Memphis.

Fox associate produced *Memphis* (Tim Sutton, Sundance 2014), and assistant directed *Dark Night* (Tim Sutton, Sundance 2016), and Craig Brewer's MTV Web project *\$5 Cover* (Sundance 2009), a project for which he was also nominated as Best Editor at the Streamy Awards.

MESSAGE FILM (Producers)

Message Film was founded in 1999 and is run by three producers: Izabela Wojcik - CEO, Violetta Kaminska and Dariusz Jablonski. The team produce all films together, jointly deciding about choosing the projects and the way of financing of each film as well as executing the production.

The producers have vast experience in international co-productions, after having produced over 30 features, the same amount of full length documentaries and successful drama series, receiving over 200 International and National awards. They have co-produced films and television series with almost every European country, from Sweden to Israel and from UK to Russia, and also with the U.S. and Canada. They have produced along with UK partners two international drama series that were successfully sold by BBC Worldwide: *Spies of Warsaw* and *The Passing Bells*.

Message Film just completed shooting the feature film *Dovlatov*, directed by Alexey German Jr., a Russian-Polish co-production with the support of Eurimages. The DP of the movie was Polish Oscar-nominated Lukasz Zal (*Ida* by Pawel Pawlikowski). Another co-production, Ukrainian-Polish feature film *When the Trees Fall* was directed by Marysia Nikitiuk recently completed filming.

Message Film has also recently completed the full-length documentary film *The Trail State of Russia vs. Oleg Sentsov* directed by Askold Kurov, which will have recently had its World Premiere as a Berlinale Special at the Berlin Film Festival 2017.

PATRICK SCOLA (Director of Photography)

Patrick Scola graduated from the film school at Emerson College in Boston, and subsequently began his career in the camera department in New York before moving to Los Angeles. His consistent collaborators include Paul Hunter, Sam Pilling, Eliot Rausch, Young Replicant, Philippe Templeman, Ian & Cooper, and Brewer. Scola's work on Joel Compass's *Back to Me* garnered countless awards and nominations including a Best Cinematography Nomination at the prestigious Camerimage Cinematography Festival and a Nomination for Best Music Video at SXSW. His work on *Flying Lotus Coronus*, *The Terminator* music video was nominated for best cinematography at 2015 UKMVA. In addition to shooting high-end commercials, Scola has shot narrative films including: Richard Tanne's *Southside With You*, the Michelle & Barack Obama story, which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival in the US Dramatic Competition and currently has 2 films in post; Daniel DeMarco's *Juggernaut* and Vincent Grashaw's *And Then I Go* starring Melanie Lynskey.

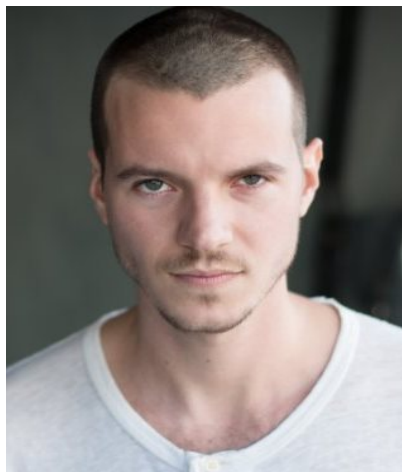
ABOUT THE CAST



LENA OLIN (“Maya Dardel”)

Swedish-born Lena Olin already had a successful career as an actress before she came to Hollywood. She acted at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm and was directed by Ingmar Bergman. She was born in Stockholm, to actors Britta Holmberg and Stig Olin, who appeared in six of Bergman's films. She made her international debut as a movie actress in *After the Rehearsal* directed by Bergman. In western

Europe, she became well-known in the political movie *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. After coming to the US, Sydney Pollack, rewrote the screenplay for *Havana* especially for her. Olin received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Enemies: A Love Story*, and went on to star in *Chocolat*, which received a Best Picture Oscar nomination, and received a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination. She made a move to the smaller screen and played Jennifer Garner's mother in the series *Alias* and received an Emmy nomination for her role. She currently lives in New York with her husband director Lasse Hallström.



NATHAN KEYES (“Ansel”)

Nathan Keyes film credits include *The Kings of Summer*, *Ben 10: Alien Swarm*, *The Good Doctor*, *The Key*, *Blood and Circumstance*, *Anatomy of the Tide* and *Come Back to Me*. He starred in the television pilot *Dr. Del* alongside Chloe Sevigny and John Hawkes and had a recurring role on ABC Family's *Three Moons Over Milford*. His other television appearances include CBS' *Numb3rs*, ABC's *No Ordinary Family*, *Brothers and Sisters* and *Glee*. Keyes was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in York, Pennsylvania.



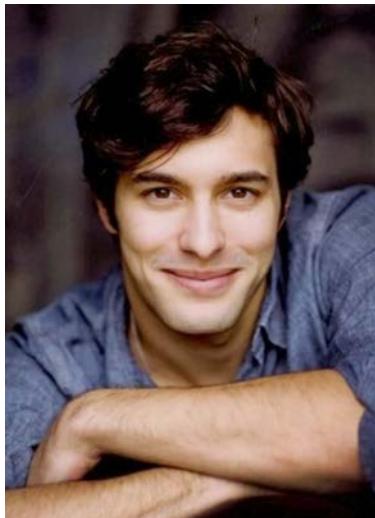
ROSANNA ARQUETTE (“Leonora”)

Rosanna Lisa Arquette was born in New York City to a show business family. She was the first-born child of five in the third generation of the Arquette acting clan. Her siblings Patricia Arquette, David Arquette, Richmond Arquette and the late Alexis Arquette all followed her into the family tradition as accomplished working actors. Roseanna began acting as a child in a bohemian atmosphere of gypsy-like travel and communes. Her mother was a poet, political activist and therapist who deeply influenced Rosanna's compassionate world-view. Rosanna started working professionally as a teenager and has never stopped. Throughout her career she has worked with some of Hollywood and Independent Cinema's most important and influential directors including; Blake Edwards (*S.O.B.*), John Sayles (*Baby It's You*), Lawrence Kasden (*Silverado*), Martin Scorsese (*After Hours*, *New York Stories*), Luc Besson (*The Big Blue*), Quentin Tarantino (*Pulp Fiction*), David Cronenberg (*Crash*), Vincent Gallo (*Buffalo 66*) and Alison Anders (*Sugar Town*).

Rosanna won the British Academy Award for her role opposite Madonna in *Desperately Seeking Susan*, was nominated for an Emmy for Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* and has starred in the television movie adaptations of *Song of the Morning Star* and *Johnny Belinda*. She starred in the ABC

series *What About Brian* from executive producers J.J. Abrams and Dana Stevens as well as many other television roles.

Rosanna expanded into filmmaking as director and producer of the documentaries *Searching for Debra Winger* and *All We Are Saying*. She stars in the upcoming feature film *Lovesong*.



ALEXANDER KOCH (“Paul”)

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Koch was heavily involved in both local community and high-school theater productions. He attended the Theatre School at DePaul University.

Alexander Koch made his acting film debut as "Frank" in Eddie O'Keefe's independent short film *The Ghosts*. The film centers on "Frank", the tough yet thoughtful leader of the 1950's greaser gang, who descends on a modern town and falls in love with the daughter of a preacher. The film premiered at the 2011 Brooklyn Film Festival and went on to receive accolades from the Los Angeles Times, Chicago International Film Festival and Geneva Film Festival. Koch's stellar portrayal of "Frank" landed him in Los Angeles in 2012, where he auditioned for his first television pilot and was cast for the regular role of "Junior Rennie" in the CBS series *Under the Dome*.



JORDAN GAVARIS (“Kevin”)

Gavaris was born in Caledon, Ontario, Canada. Gavaris made his feature film debut in the Canadian independent film, *45 R.P.M* and in 2010, co-starred in the Cartoon Network live-action series *Unnatural History*. Currently, Gavaris is co-starring as “Felix” in the award-winning BBC America drama *Orphan Black*.

In 2010, Gavaris was honoured by Playback Magazine, Panavision Canada, and The Canadian Film and Television Hall of Fame by being named one of 2010's "Top Ten to Watch". In 2014, Gavaris won a Canadian Screen Award for Best Supporting Actor and also won a Constellation Award for best performance in an episode. On August 18, 2014, Gavaris was announced as the winner of the 2014 Entertainment Weekly Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series. He is currently filming alongside Matthew McConaughey in Gus Van Sant's *Sea of Trees*.

CAST

(Cast in Order of Appearance)

Maya Dardel	LENA OLIN
National Public Radio Host	LOIS DRABKIN
Moses	CHRIS VOSS
Kevin	JORDAN GAVARIS
Applicant #1	SETH BAKER
Applicant #2	BRYAN BENNETT
Applicant #3	DUSTIN DAVID
Applicant #4	EDDIE APODACA
Applicant #5	RYAN MASSON
Ansel	NATHAN KEYES
Leonora	ROSANNA ARQUETTE
Paul	ALEXANDER KOCH
Ismail	NAIM SIT
Ansel's Mother	BEATA FIDO

CREW

Written & Directed by	ZACHARY COTLER & MAGDALENA ZYZAK
Produced by	MIKE S. RYAN

Produced by	MORGAN JON FOX
Produced by	DARIUSZ JABŁOŃSKI VIOLETTA KAMIŃSKA IZABELA WÓJCIK
Executive Producer	CRAIG R. JOHNSON
Director of Photography	PATRICK SCOLA
Sound Design	TOMASZ DUKSZTA C.A.S.
Production Sound Mixer	CLINT ALLDAY
Production Designer	SARAH COLE
Editor	OSMAN BAYRAKTAROĞLU
Costume Designer	SUSAN DOEPNER-SENAC
Original Music and Poetry	ZACHARY COTLER
Co-Producer	ADAM HOHENBERG
Associate Producer	LISA DOUGHTY
Casting Directors	SUSAN SHOPMAKER & MATTHEW LESSALL
Line Producer	STEVE COTLER
Production Supervisor	JACQUELINE ARIEL
First Assistant Director	RACOLE FISHER
Art Director	LANGLEY COLEMAN
Prop Master	NICHOLAS BORSELLINO
Prop Design	PRISCILLA HUBER
Script Supervisor	AARON SAUERLAND
Production Accountant	CHESTER PONTELL
1st Assistant Camera	BRYAN HEFFERNAN
2nd Assistant Camera	ERIC ARNDT

Boom Operator	CORRYN DEEGAN
Gaffer	DREW VALENTI
Key Grip	EDDIE APODACA
Swing	MARCUS CHRISTOPHER MURILLO
Assistant Editor	JAMES "DREW" HAMILTON
Assistant Costume Designer	MICHELLE MCHALE
Set Costumer	LINDSEY DEANER
Make-Up & Hair Artist	SONIA PANIAGUA