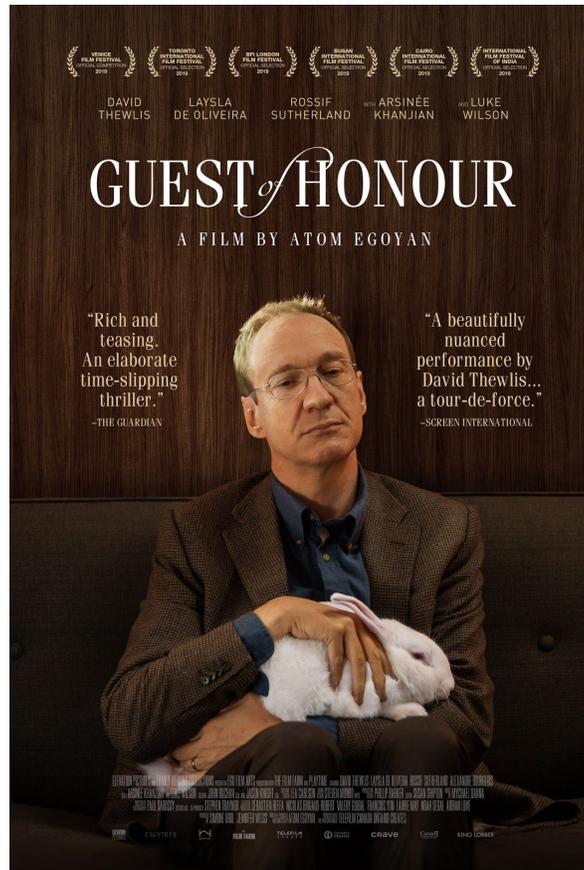


**KINO LORBER**

# Guest of Honour

A FILM BY ATOM EGOYAN



**Starring David Thewlis, Laysla De Oliveira, Rossif Sutherland,  
Luke Wilson, Arsinee Khanjian**

Official Selection – Venice Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, Vancouver Film Festival

CANADA/1:85:1/English/120 min/Color

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## Synopsis

Jim (David Thewlis) and his daughter Veronica (Laysla De Oliveira), a young high-school music teacher, attempt to unravel their complicated histories and intertwined secrets in *Guest of Honour*, a film that weaves through time exploring perception and penance, memory and forgiveness.

A hoax instigated by an aggressive school bus driver (Rossif Sutherland) goes very wrong. Accused of abusing her position of authority with 17-year-old Clive (Alexandre Bourgeois) and another student, Veronica is imprisoned. Convinced that she deserves to be punished for crimes she committed at an earlier age, Veronica rebuffs her father's attempts to secure her early release. Confused and frustrated by Veronica's intransigence, Jim's anguish begins to impinge on his job. As a food inspector, he wields great power over small, family-owned restaurants. It's a power he doesn't hesitate to use.

While preparing Jim's funeral, Veronica confides the secrets of her past to Father Greg (Luke Wilson) who may hold the final piece of this father-daughter puzzle.

## Director's Statement

*Guest of Honour* is an emotional investigation of the bond between a father and a daughter. Their history has been rocked by events that neither fully understands. They're both in a suspended state for much of the film, trying to understand the nature of their connection to one another.

There's a very clear sense of time passing in this film. While we understand from the beginning that their physical relationship has ended with the father's death, the details of their past are revealed in a form of psychological autopsy. The film ends with an unexpected reconciliation.

As a food inspector, Jim – played by David Thewlis – has the power to close a restaurant down, and while he uses this authority to determine other people's destinies, he desperately tries to understand his own place in the world. His daughter, played by Laysla de Oliveira, believes that she has found a way to a strange sort of peace in her life, until that is challenged by revelations of a past she never fully understood. The character who holds the key to this past seems to be a priest, played by Luke Wilson. The biggest mystery in the film is whether the food inspector, Jim Davis, in asking for his eulogy to be performed by this particular priest, has somehow planned an emotional reconciliation he could never have achieved with his daughter in life.

As in most of my films, I'm trying to find a cinematic way of allowing the viewer to inhabit the particular world my characters are trying to navigate. What I'm interested in exploring is what might be called the 'emotional chronology' of Jim and his daughter, Veronica, a way of measuring their complex feelings. While the structure of the film is non-linear, it is actually based on a simple recounting of the scenes as they flow into the characters' minds.

While the situations specific to Jim and Veronica are extreme, the parent/child bond will be very familiar to audiences. I think every child feels their parents made mistakes – certain ways in which the parent did not express love, or pay the right sort of attention. Those moments reverberate through our lives in sometimes painful ways.

There are at least five timelines woven through *Guest of Honour*, yet I wanted to create a sense that for Jim and Veronica the scenes all play in a continuous and sometimes shocking sense of the ‘eternal present’. The film itself becomes a sort of machine through which the characters come to an understanding of what they mean to each other.

*Guest of Honour* is a story told through glass. Apart from the actual glass of the camera lens, which displays the way in which images of the past can be refracted and refigured, there is a literal use of a glass musical instrument woven through the film. The use of glass as a distorting lens, as well as a material which allows the process of creative expression, was an important motif in *Guest of Honour*. It is woven into Mychael Danna’s beautiful soundtrack in unexpected ways, as the characters come to terms with the complexity of their lives and the exoticism of their relationship to their own pasts.

## **Atom Egoyan (Director/Writer/Producer)**



With 18 feature films and related projects, Atom Egoyan has won numerous awards including 5 prizes at the Cannes Film Festival – the Grand Prix, International Critics Awards and Ecumenical Jury Prizes – two Academy Award® nominations, 25 Genie Awards – now Canadian Screen Awards – including three Best Film Awards – prizes from the Egoyan’s latest film *Remember* won Best Film at the Hanoi International Film Festival including Best Actor for its star, Christopher Plummer, and was selected one of the top films of 2016 by the Huffington Post. Egoyan was knighted by the French government and is a Companion of the Order of Canada, the country’s highest honour. He’s a recipient of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement.

## **Simone Urdl & Jennifer Wess (Producers)**

Over the company’s 20-year history, founding partners Simone Urdl and Jennifer Weiss have built a reputation for nurturing creativity and supporting the unique and diverse visions of writers and filmmakers. The company has built an impressive catalogue of films which have received Oscar®, Golden Globe®, Gotham, Genie and CSA nominations and wins, and which have been screened in Competition in Cannes, Venice and Berlin as well as at TIFF, Sundance, New York, Telluride and San Sebastian. Their latest film, Darlene Naponse’s *Falls Around Her*, had its world premiere at TIFF 2018.

## **Paul Sarossy (Cinematography)**

Celebrated Canadian Cinematographer, six of Sarossy's films have been in Official Selection (Palme d'Or nomination) at the Cannes Film Festival. He has worked with Denys Arcand, Norman Jewison, Paul Schrader, Neil LaBute and Neil Jordan among others. Stars he has photographed include: Penelope Cruz, Charlize Theron, Julianne Moore, Liam Neeson, Reese Witherspoon, Jeremy Irons, Nick Cage, Colin Firth, Robert Downey Jr., Jennifer Aniston and many more. A member of the American Society of Cinematographers, the British Society of Cinematographers and the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, he has filmed all over the world, including Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, South Africa, Hungary, Germany and Tajikistan.

## **Mychael Danna (Film Composer)**

Mychael Danna is an Academy Award®-winning film composer recognized for his evocative blending of non-western traditions with orchestral and electronic music. His body of work includes his Oscar®-winning score for Ang Lee's *Life of Pi* following his collaborations with Lee on *The Ice Storm* (1997) and *Ride with the Devil* (1999). Danna also received the 2013 Golden Globe® Award for *Life of Pi*.

His other celebrated collaborations include those with Bennett Miller on his multiple Oscar®-nominee *Moneyball*, in 2011 and his Oscar®-winning drama *Capote*, in 2005; with Terry Gilliam on his Oscar®-nominated *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. Danna's credits also include the 2006 Oscar®-winning *Little Miss Sunshine*, for which he shared a Grammy® Award nomination for Best Compilation Soundtrack Album; Marc Webb's acclaimed romantic comedy (*500*) *Days of Summer* in 2009; and James Mangold's 1999 Oscar®-winning film *Girl, Interrupted*.

## **Susan Shipton (Editor)**

Susan is best known for her work with Atom Egoyan, having edited all his films from the *Adjuster to Chloe*, for which she won a Directors Guild of Canada Award for Best Achievement in Editing. Susan received a Genie Award for her work on Atom's *The Sweet Hereafter*, *Exotica* and for Robert LePage's *Possible Worlds*.

## CREDITS

**Written, Directed and Produced by**  
Atom Egoyan

**Produced by**  
Simone Urdl, Jennifer Weiss

**Cinematography by**  
Paul Sarossy

**Music by**  
Mychaeo Danna

**Edited by**  
Susan Shipton

## Cast

### David Thewlis - Jim



David Thewlis is one of the UK's finest and most reputable actors. With a career spanning over 30 years, David has worked with some of the world's leading writers and directors.

David's recent credits include: Terrence Malick's *New World*, Roland Emmerick's *Anonymous*, Steven Spielberg's *War Horse*, Luc Besson's *The Lady*, Dean Parisot's *Red 2*, Terry Gilliam's *Zero Theorem*, John Boorman's final feature film of his career *Queen And Country*, *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*, Ridley Scott's *Kingdom Of Heaven*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Besieged* opposite Thandie Newton and of course the Oscar®, BAFTA, SAG and Golden Globe®-winning Stephen Hawking biopic *The Theory Of Everything*.

### Laysla De Oliveira - Veronica



Laysla De Oliveira has completed filming the female lead in the Netflix film *In the Tall Grass* for director Vincenzo Natali..

De Oliveira's other recent films include: the indie *Acquainted*, the sci-fi/action film *Code 8*, and *Needle in a Timestack* for director John Ridley. On television, De Oliveira was seen in Fox's *Gone Baby Gone* pilot directed by Phillip Noyce and on the ABC comedy pilot *Jalen Vs. Everybody* created by Nahnatchka Kahn. Other television credits include a recurring role on *The Gifted for Fox*.

### **Luke Wilson - Father Greg**



Luke Wilson has established himself as one of the most versatile actors of his generation with his indelible performances in broad comedies, thoughtful dramas and provocative independent features.

In 1996, Luke Wilson made his film debut in the acclaimed short *Bottle Rocket*, directed by Wes Anderson. From that moment, Wilson went on to star in more than 50 film and television projects.

### **Rossif Sutherland - Mike**



Rossif Sutherland, an established performer in music, film and television, has developed a very impressive resume.

His recent film credits include *Liberte: A Time to Spy* directed by Lydia Dean Pilcher. He stars in the cult hit *Trench 11* directed by Leo Scherman, which won several awards on the festival circuit. Other films include Paul Gross's wartime feature *Hyena Road* as well as *River*. He also had lead and supporting roles in films such as *Hellions* directed by Bruce McDonald (Sundance 2015), *Big Muddy* directed by Jefferson Moneo, *High Life* and *Joe Anderson* for which he was nominated for a Genie Award.

### **KINO LORBER**

With a library of over 2,800 titles, Kino Lorber Inc. has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Repertory and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years. Recent theatrical releases include Cannes-winners Kantemir Balagov's *Beanpole*, Jean-Pierre Dardenne & Luc Dardenne's *Young Ahmed*, and Kleber Mendonça Filho & Juliano Dornelles's *Bacurau*. In addition, the company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles releases in ancillary media for Zeitgeist Films, Carlotta USA, Adopt Films, Greenwich Entertainment, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and SVOD platforms. In 2019, the company launched its new art house digital channel Kino Now which features over 1000 titles from the acclaimed Kino Lorber library.