

UCM, YETI FILMS, ULYSSES FILMS present  
A Film by Evgeny Ruman

tiff. toronto  
international  
film festival®  
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2012



# IGOR & the Cranes' Journey

*some journeys change you forever*

Starring: ITAI SHCHERBACK, TOMASZ SOBCZAK, OLA SCHÜR SELEKTAR, CLIL ARBEL, MENASHE NOY, GERA SANDLER, ILJA ZMIEJEW  
AN ISRAELI-POLISH-GERMAN CO-PRODUCTION PRODUCED BY UCM, YETI FILMS AND ULYSSES FILMS

Director of Photography ADAM SIKORA Editor ERNEST ARANOV Music ANTONI KOMASA-LAZARKIEWICZ Sound Design ROLF MANZEI  
Production Design WOJCIECH ŻOGAŁA Costume Design ANETTE SCHRODER Casting ESTER KLING, LIMOR SHMILA, PIOTR BARTUSZEK  
Producers CHILIK MICHAELI, AVRAHAM PIRCHI, PIOTR MULARUK, MAGDALENA NAPIERACZ, EMELY CHRISTIANS

Executive Producers JULIA SCHIFTER, TAMI LEON

Based on the book "Igor and the Cranes' Journey" by Aki Shavit

Script DITA QUERY AND EITAN LONDNER Director EVGENY RUMAN



ULYSSES  
FILMPRODUKTION





Toronto Film Festival  
Official Selection



Chicago Children's Film  
Festival Official Selection



Cinekid International Film  
Festival Official Selection



Some journeys change you forever...

Sales & Distribution Contact Details:

Sales Agent: Sola Media GmbH, Filderhauptstraße 49, D-70599 Stuttgart, [www.sola-media.com](http://www.sola-media.com)

Sales: Solveig Langeland Mobile: +49 177 278 1625

Sales: Tania Pinto Da Cunha, Phone: +34 91 633 4974, Mobile: +34 618 064 613, Email: [tania@sola-media.com](mailto:tania@sola-media.com)

Festivals: Johannes Busse, Phone: + 49 711 220 3645, Fax: + 49 711 479 2658, Email: [johannes@sola-media.com](mailto:johannes@sola-media.com)



## Synopsis

Since his parents' divorce, 11-year old **Igor** cherishes the yearly visits to his dad, a dedicated ornithologist, who lives in the Russian countryside at a crane observation centre. On an especially rewarding trip, Igor gets to watch the impressive sight of a baby crane hatching. He names the baby "Karl".

Back at his mother's house in the city, Igor is shocked to learn that she has decided to move them both to Israel and start a new life there. Igor wants to stay home in Russia with his dad and gets very upset when he realizes that he can't because his dad needs to travel to complete his research mission. He is tracking the cranes on their migration to Africa and updating a website with regular blogs about the birds' progress, with special reports about baby Karl and his parents. Migration turns out to be a very challenging experience for both Igor and Karl. Igor is lonely and unable to communicate with the other children in Israel, and Karl's parents become early victims of the hazardous migration route, leaving the baby crane alone with little chance of survival. Igor slowly befriends **Vered**, a smart girl who inspires him to come up with an amazing plan: building a winter home for Karl in Israel and spare him from the last dangerous leg of the journey! Fighting for this plan with courage and imagination, Igor evolves from an outsider to a leader while his classmates start to form a close-knit team around him - but will Karl be able to make it all the way to his new home in the face of danger and adversity?





## Director's Statement

---

I believe that **Igor and the Cranes' Journey** touches the core of the migration experience: dealing with new surroundings and a new language but above all coming to terms with oneself. It is a test of personality and character - some pass it, others fail, but no one stays the same as before. This is a charming and moving story about the way a young boy deals with problems that even grownups fail to solve and actually succeeds in a very unconventional way in our modernized world - by connecting to the world of nature. I hope that Igor's adventure will appeal not only to children, but also to their parents.



## Director Evgeny Ruman

---

### Biography



Evgeny Ruman was born in 1979 in the Soviet Union and immigrated to Israel at the age of 11. Evgeny is a director and editor, a graduate of Film & Television Dept. at Tel Aviv University. He has directed a number of short films which have participated and won at festivals in Israel and abroad. He is the creator, head scriptwriter and director of **In Between the Lines** (YES) - the first Russian language series to be aired in Israel. He edited **Five Hours from Paris** which won Best Film at the Haifa Film Festival 2009.

### Filmography

Nes - 2006  
A Piece of News - 2007  
Between the Lines (TV Series) - 2009  
Lenin in October - 2010  
Igor & the Cranes' Journey - 2012



## Actors' Biographies

---

### Itai Shcherback - Igor



11 year-old Itai Shcherback was born in the southern Israeli city of Beer Sheva where he currently lives with his family. Itai has been studying drama for the past 4 years at the Beer Sheva Theatre Company. **Igor and the Cranes' Journey** is his debut feature film.

Since starring in **Igor and the Cranes' Journey**, Itai has had roles in the films **Traffic Warden**, **A Plan to your Liking** and the TV series **Asfur**. He also secured a role in UCM's latest feature film **Big Bad Wolves**.

### Tomasz Sobczak - Peter



Tomasz was born in Poland in 1973. He is an accomplished theatre director and actor, with many significant television and film roles to his resume. In 1994 he made his debut at the Theatre Legnica in Hans Christian Anderson's **Snow White**. Between 1994 and 2000 Sobczak performed in Poland's top theatres: Helena Modjeska in Legnica, Cultural Center Theater, the Wojciech Boguslawski, Group Ad Spectatores Art and Bath New.

After a guest appearance on the TVP1 soap opera **Presbytery** (2001), he hit the big screen with a role in the black comedy, Mark Koterski's **The Day of the Freak** (2002) and the independent thriller Konrad Niewolskiego's **D.I.L** (2002).

Recent films include **1920 War and Love** (Maciej Migas, 2010), **Rock'n'Ball** (Dmytro Prykhod'ko, 2011) and the television series **39 and a Half** (TVN), **Examination of the Life**, **Pitball** and **The Witcher**.



## Actors' Biographies

---

### Ola Schur Selektar - Tanya



Ola was born in Kishniev, Moldova in 1977. She immigrated to Israel with her family at the age of 13. After completing her military service as a singer in the Northern Command Unit she studied drama at the Beit Zvi School of Performing Arts.

Ola has been a lead actress at the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv since 2002 and in the same year won the most Promising Actress Award at the Israeli Theatre Academy Awards for her role in **Mother Courage and Her Children**. Since 2002 Ola has played many lead roles including Sally Bowles in **Cabaret** and title roles in **Yentel** and **Anitgone**, the latter for which she won the actress of the year award at the Israeli Theatre Academy Awards in 2006.

Television credits include roles in **In Between the Lines** directed by Evgeny Ruman and **The Yard**. In 2003 Ola made her film debut in Dror Shaul's **Sima Vaknin the Witch** and recently completed **A Funny World** (Shemi Zarhim, 2012).

Ola resides in Tel Aviv with her husband, Micha Selektar and their daughter Maayan.

### Clil Arbel - Vered



Clil is 11 years old and resides with her family in Tel Aviv. She is a drama student at the Tel Aviv School of Arts.

She has featured in numerous commercials and acted in the 2010 feature film **Bein Hashamoshot** (Alon Zingman) and had a guest role in the children's television series **Kofiko**.



## An interview with Evgeny Ruman

---

### What were the main challenges you faced with this production?

Well you know what they say about working with animals and children, and this film had plenty of both! But seriously, the biggest challenge for me was to ensure I told the story through the eyes of the boy, at his eye level and not from a grown-up's perspective. This is something that often bothers me in films where children are the heroes.

### What is the inspiration for the film?

My inspiration was the old Soviet films I grew up on. There was something magical about them; they were full of good heartedness and compassion. It was important for me to try to convey this in the film. I have strong memories about the very natural quality these films had. You would immediately identify with the child hero and they gave you the feeling that even though the main characters were children, they were important and could influence the world which was run by grownups. They definitely had naivety about them, but also a kind of truth and honesty.

### So how did you go about creating the same feel in Igor?

It was important for me to treat Igor, the main character, as a person, as someone with an opinion and independent wants and needs, and with strong feelings that he doesn't always choose to show outwardly. I think Itai is able to capture this combination really well in the character.



Evgeny and Itai congratulate the other children on their wrap



## An interview with Evgeny Ruman

---

### **Do you see any similarities between yourself as a boy and Igor?**

I have to say not really - despite the fact that I too immigrated with my family to Israel at the age of 11. I don't really remember my first year in Israel, just some fragmented memories, so I'm not really sure what I felt. It took me many years to settle down here in Israel, and I'm not convinced that I'm totally acclimated now. On the other hand, I don't think I want to totally acclimate. I like feeling a bit like an outsider!

I would have liked to have been more like Igor as a kid. He is very brave and certainly knows how to hold his own. Even with all the difficulties and the language barrier, he is still able to make himself understood and to achieve exactly what he sets out to do. I admire that.

### **How did you manage to integrate nature and specifically the cranes, into the film?**

Filming any animal is difficult, especially birds and even more so with birds like cranes who are extremely shy. It's very difficult to get close to them. Much of the crane content in the film comes from archival footage which has been integrated into the footage we shot. Dani Cohen, our very talented visual effects artist did a great job of seamlessly implanting the cranes. We were shooting in the Hula Valley in Israel during the crane season and were able to catch some really impressive footage. It's quite a remarkable scene, a noisy one at that, to see thousands and thousands of birds covering the valley.

The "Russian marsh" scenes are also beautiful and give a nice contrast to the more arid Israel setting. We actually shot on location in Poland in an area that looks really similar to the crane breeding areas in Russia.

### **Tell us a bit about the casting process - especially about Itai Shcherback. How and why did you choose him?**

Obviously casting the children's roles was the tricky part of this film. With only a few weeks to go before shooting began, I still wasn't decided on who would play Igor. We had a few good options but I insisted we carry on searching and that decision paid off - Itai came to audition. He was younger than we had originally planned Igor to be, but even so, Itai was able to convince us all that he was Igor. Itai was able to convey a great mix of mischievousness and melancholy which I felt the character of Igor had been carrying around with him ever since his parents divorced. After choosing a younger Igor, we then had to go back and recast all the other children to suit his age group. I think that at the end of the day, this paid off. We found Clil Arbel, who plays Vered, and in my opinion, she is the perfect partner for Igor and the story of first love which develops between them.



## An interview with Evgeny Ruman

---

**You've worked with several of the actors in the past, correct?**

Yes, I've worked with Ola Shcur Selktar, Alex Senderovich and Gera Sandler.

In my opinion, Ola is an outstanding actress. I can watch her for hours and hours whether on the big screen or in the theatre. She has incredible emotional power and can breathe life into any character she plays, turning them into real people. She also has a unique combination of childishness and maturity which I felt was well suited to the character of Tanya.

In truth, there was a project I was working on which didn't pan out in the end but I had envisaged Ola and Gera Sandler as a couple in it. When I had to cast someone for the role of Tanya's suitor, it seemed pretty obvious to me that this time it had to happen!

Alex Senderovich is one of the funniest people on screen. He is an effortless comic. I really wanted him for the role of the sports teacher, even though it's a small role, because it's a comic role in which the comedy doesn't really need to be played... I also thought that Alex paired with Menashe Noy, who plays the school principal, would be very amusing.



Evgeny, DOP Adam Sikora and camera operator Ziv Berkovich discuss the next shot



Setting up one of the Hula Valley scenes



## An interview with Evgeny Ruman

---

Tell us why you decided to work with Adam Sikora. What did he bring to the film?

Adam is a really experienced DOP with a unique visual style. He brought a lot of softness and finesse to the film and always knows how to capture the atmosphere of an event, the tone of any given moment, without the need for too much highly stylized or artificial lighting or aggressive camera movements.



Evgeny and Tomasz planning mise-en-scène

Israel doesn't produce too many family films. How did this affect your approach to the project?

It affected it in that I really want the film to be a success and that audiences will come to see it and in doing so, encourage more genre films to be made. Genre films are seldom done in Israel and I see this as big disadvantage. As many genres as possible; family, comedies, crime and horror etc, would encourage a lot of growth and development in the Israeli film industry and would be more relevant for viewers.



Clil and Itai share a joke between takes



## Cast & Crew Credits

<b>Main cast</b>	
Igor	Itai Shcherback
Peter	Tomasz Sobczak
Tanya	Ola Schur Selektar
Vered	Clil Arbel
Eli	Gera Sandler
Professor Garin	Ilja Zmiejew
Principal Jackie	Menashe Noy
Uncle Misha	Vitali Voskoboinikov
Leonid the Gym Teacher	Alexander Senderovich
The Math Teacher	Avinoam Mor Chaim
Librarian	Dorin Caspi
Businessman	Avi Golomb
Katya	Svetlana Pasternek
KKL worker	Mordi Gershon
Nadia	Ellizaveta Gritseva
Sasha	Georgiy Kuznetsov
<b>Crew</b>	
Director	Evgeny Ruman
Producers	Chilik Michaeli, Avraham Pirchi, Piotr Mularuk, Magdalena Napieracz, Emely Christians
Executive Producers	Tami Leon Julia Schifter
Writers	Dita Guery Eitan Londner
Based on an adaption of the book "Igor and the Cranes' Journey"	Aki Shavit
Director of Photography	Adam Sikora
Editor	Ernest Aranov
Original Music	Antoni Komasa-Łazarkiewicz
Production Design	Wojciech Żogała
Casting	Ester Kling Limor Shmila Piotr Bartuszek
Costume Design	Anette Schroeder
Recording & Sound Design	Rolf Manzei
VFX	Dani Cohen



## Tech & Production Information

---

Length: 90 mins

Aspect Ratio: 1:1.85

Exhibition formats: 35mm, DCP, HDCAM, DIGIBETA, DVD

Languages: Russian / Hebrew

Subtitling: Hebrew / English / German / Polish

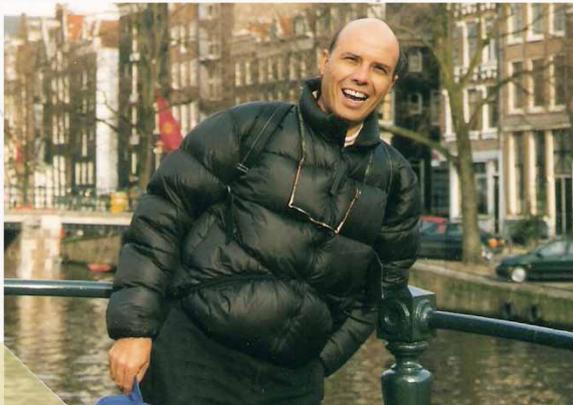
An Israel-Poland-German Coproduction

Production: United Channels Movies (UCM), Yeti Films, Ulysses Films

Supported By: The Israel Film Fund, The Polish Film Institute, The Hamburg Film Fund

## In memory Gideon Gadi (1947-2010)

---



Gideon Gadi was one of Israel's most legendary line producers.

A week before shooting for Igor began, Gideon was suddenly taken ill and passed away in hospital a few weeks later.

**Igor and the Cranes' Journey** is dedicated to the memory of our line producer and our dear friend. He is greatly missed by us all.



ULYSSES  
FILMPRODUKTION



Society for the  
Protection of Nature in Israel  
מרכז המחקר והחינוך לישראל  
Israel Ornithological Center

