

Opus Zero

A film by
Daniel Graham

With
Willem Dafoe



84 min / Mexico / Germany / In English and Spanish / 2017 / Cert. TBC
Los Cabos International Film Festival Premiere 2017

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SYNOPSIS:

Paul (Willem Dafoe) is an American composer whose life's work has been dedicated to the completion of an unfinished symphony from the early 20th century by the little-known Alexander Grondahl. When Paul's estranged father dies, he travels to the remote Mexican village of Real de Catorce to settle his affairs. As Paul searches through his father's belongings he comes across a photograph of a young woman who was friends with his father many years earlier.

Paul determines to find this woman, Marianne, to return the photograph and perhaps make some meaningful connection with his father through her. Using a prototype 'real-time' translation device his father invented, Paul ambles through the *pueblo mágico* of Real de Catorce asking bemused locals for the whereabouts of Marianne. What begins as a gesture of kindness to his late father's friend soon becomes an inquiry into the strange nature of memory.

As Paul continues his search, a three-person film crew arrives in town looking to complete a documentary, which they describe as a 'story of opposites'. Daniel (Andrés Almeida) and Fernanda (Cassandra Ciangherotti) piece together seemingly unconnected vignettes of village life, unaware that a miracle is about to be gifted to them.

Paul and Daniel eventually cross paths in the enigmatic village and the result is an intellectual joust staged within an ancient amphitheatre, domineered by Paul whose deliberately enigmatic answers only serve to confuse Daniel further. At a crucial point in the interview, Daniel's camera battery dies and the young filmmaker is left to piece together the answers he so desperately wanted from Paul.

In a coda, Paul possibly imagines a farewell to his father, a farewell without an ending. As he explained to Daniel, though the work stops, it doesn't end.

Further information and downloads [here](#)

Interim photo set can be downloaded [here](#)



CAST

Paul	WILLEM DAFOE
Daniel	ANDRÉS ALMEIDA
Fernanda	CASSANDRA CIANGHEROTTI
Zero	BRONTIS JODOROWSKY
Maia	IRENE AZUELA
Priest	NOÉ HERNÁNDEZ
Marianne	VALENTINA MANZINI
Gilles	LEONARDO ORTIZGRIS
Edward	CARLOS ARAGÓN
Mayor	ANTONIO ZÚÑIGA
Old man	JOSÉ CONCEPCIÓN MACÍAS

CREW

Director	DANIEL GRAHAM
Writer	DANIEL GRAHAM
Producer	JULIO CHAVEZMONTES (PIANO)
Executive Producer	PABLO ZIMBRÓN GERARDO GATICA ALBERTO MUFFELMANN
Associate Producer	CARLOS REYGADAS LAWRENCE DAVIN HERIBERTO MANZANARES JORGE FONG SEBASTIÁN HOFMANN
Coproduced by	INGMAR TROST (SUTOR KOLONKO) JÖRG SCHULZE, PHILIPP KREUZER, ANDREAS ZIELKE (MAZE PICTURES) DANIEL GRAHAM (BALHAZAR FILMS) GABRIEL STAVENHAGEN COLOR SPACE MÉXICO PANORAMA GLOBAL MATÍAS PENACHINO
Director of Photography	YIBRÁN ASUAD
Editor	RAÚL LOCATELLI
Sound Mixer	JAVIER UMPIÉRREZ
Sound Design	COLIN MATTHEWS
Music	CLAUDIO RAMÍREZ CASTELLI
Production Designer	SEBASTIAN ALVAREZ-ICAZA
Set Designer	BRENDA GÓMEZ
Costumes	ADAM ZOLLER
Make-up	

Mexico / Germany / 2017 / 84 min

5.1 Ratio 3:1

DANIEL GRAHAM

Since 1999, Daniel Graham has made several short films in Australia and France, worked in film distribution in the UK and interviewed directors such as Theo Angelopoulos, Bela Tarr, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Alexander Sokurov, Aki Kaurismäki, Claire Denis, Jacques Audiard, Olivier Assayas and Todd Solondz. He has also written a profile of Claire Denis for the International Film Guide, hosted several Q+A events and written about jazz music for www.allaboutjazz.com.

In 2012, Daniel was Line Producer on *Post Tenebras Lux* (Best Director, Cannes Film Festival) for Carlos Reygadas, who would go on to be an Associate Producer on Daniel's debut feature film *Opus Zero* (2017, Mexico/Germany), starring Willem Dafoe and Brontis Jodorowsky. Daniel's next film is *The Obscure Life of the Grand Duke of Corsica*, which is scheduled to shoot late summer 2019.

FILMOGRAPHY

2006 LA FORÊT (short film)

2009 DEADLAKE (short film)

2017 OPUS ZERO



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Opus Zero is the story of a composer looking for answers to an artistic puzzle without first understanding the question that prompted it. When he finally comes to accept this, inadvertently through the death of his estranged father, Paul understands more clearly the nature of his pursuit.

My goal in making *Opus Zero* was to establish a conscious visual language where the sum-total is more important than its individual elements, much like a jigsaw puzzle.

What interests me in cinema is how individuals fit into the overall scheme of things whether they're aware of their positioning or not. *Opus Zero* could be seen as my attempt to place two creative individuals, at vastly different points in their lives, into one small space, foreign yet oddly familiar to both.

Filming in Mexico, a country that has challenged and provoked some extraordinary work from filmmakers over the decades, was an eye-opening experience and one that certainly helped shape and colour the film.

Without doubt, the participation of Willem Dafoe in *Opus Zero* was the single most important factor in its realisation. He told me one day that if you pull a woollen jumper apart too vigorously to see how it's made, you'll eventually end up with nothing but threads of wool. Mystery, storytelling and art is a difficult balance, he seemed to be saying.

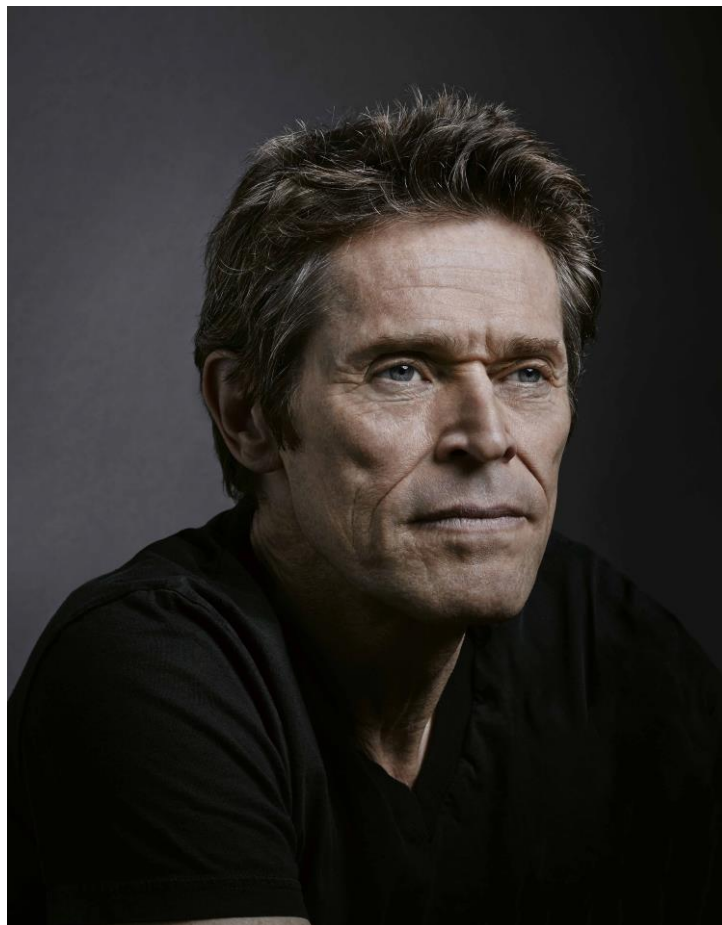
Opus Zero was my first film as writer and director. I only hope that what I learned from making it will inform my next film and the one thereafter.



WILLEM DAFOE

Having made over one hundred films in his legendary career, Willem Dafoe is internationally respected for bringing versatility, boldness, and dare to some of the most iconic films of our time. His artistic curiosity in exploring the human condition leads him to projects all over the world, large and small, Hollywood films as well as Independent cinema.

In 1979, he was given a role in Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, from which he was fired. Since then, he has collaborated with directors who represent a virtual encyclopedia of modern cinema: Kathryn Bigelow, Sam Raimi, Alan Parker, Walter Hill, Mary Harron, Wim Wenders, Anton Corbijn, Zhang Yimou, Wes Anderson, Martin Scorsese, David Lynch, Oliver Stone, William Friedkin, Werner Herzog, Lars Von Trier, Abel Ferrara, Spike Lee, David Cronenberg, Paul Schrader, Anthony Minghella, Scott Cooper, Theo Angelopoulos, Robert Rodriguez, Phillip Noyce, Hector Babenco, Andrew Stanton, Josh Boone, Kenneth Branagh, Sean Baker, and Julian Schnabel. His natural adventurousness is evident in roles as diverse as the elite assassin who is mentor to Keanu Reeves in the neo-noir *John Wick*, as the obsessed FBI agent in the cult classic *The Boondock Saints*, and as Vulko the mentor to *Aquaman* in James Wan's blockbuster. His voice work can be heard in as Gil the Moorish Idol in *Finding Nemo*, as Ryuk the Death God in *Death Note*, and as the narrator of *Vox Lux*.



His most recent films to be seen are Robert Eggers' *The Lighthouse*, Abel Ferrara's *Tommaso* which both showed in Cannes 2019. Upcoming projects include Dee Rees' *The Last Thing He Wanted*, Edward Norton's *Motherless Brooklyn*, and Ericson Core's *Togo*. He recently completed filming Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch* and Abel Ferrara's *Siberia*.

Dafoe has been recognized with four Academy Award nominations: Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *Platoon*, Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *Shadow Of The Vampire*, for which he also received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations, Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *The Florida Project*, for which he also received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations, and most recently, Best Leading Actor for *At Eternity's Gate*, for which he also received a Golden Globe nomination. Among his other nominations and awards, he has received two Los Angeles Film Critics Awards, a New York Film Critics Circle Award, a National Board of Review Award, an Independent Spirit Award, Venice Film Festival Volpi Cup, as well as a Berlinale Honorary Golden Bear for Lifetime Achievement.

He and his wife, director Giada Colagrande, have made four films together: *Padre*, *Bob Wilson's Life and Death of Marina Abramovic*, *A Woman*, and *Before It Had A Name*. A fifth, *Tropico*, is currently in pre-production.

Dafoe is one of the founding members of The Wooster Group, the New York based experimental theatre collective. He created and performed in all of the group's work from 1977 thru 2005, both in the U.S. and internationally. Since then, he worked with Richard Foreman in "Idiot Savant" at The Public Theatre (NYC) and most recently two international productions with Robert Wilson: *The Life & Death of Marina Abramovic* and *The Old Woman* opposite Mikhail Baryshnikov. He most recently performed a new theatre piece, *The Minister's Black Veil*, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story and directed by Romeo Castellucci.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

1980	HEAVEN'S GATE	Michael Cimino
1982	LOVELESS	Kathryn Bigelow
1983	THE HUNGER	Tony Scott
1986	PLATOON	Oliver Stone
1988	THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST	Martin Scorsese
	MISSISSIPPI BURNING	Alan Parker
1989	BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY	Oliver Stone
	CRY BABY	John Waters
1990	WILD AT HEART	David Lynch
1992	BODY OF EVIDENCE	Dino De Laurentiis
1993	FARAWAY, SO CLOSE	Wim Wenders
1994	TOM & VIV	Brian Gilbert
1996	BASQUIAT	Julian Schnabel
	THE ENGLISH PATIENT	Anthony Minghella
1997	AFFLICTION	Paul Schrader
1999	EXISTENZ	David Cronenberg
	AMERICAN PSYCHO	Mary Harron
2000	SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE	E. Elias Merhige
2001	SPIDER-MAN	
2004	THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU	Wes Anderson
2005	MANDERLAY	Lars von Trier
2006	INSIDE MAN	
2008	THE DUST OF TIME	Theo Angelopoulos
2009	ANTICHRIST	Lars von Trier
	MY SON, MY SON, WHAT HAVE YE DONE	Werner Herzog
2011	JOHN CARTER	Andrew Stanton
2014	PASOLINI	Abel Ferrara
	THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL	Wes Anderson
2015	MY HINDU FRIEND	Hector Babenco
2016	THE FLORIDA PROJECT	Sean Baker
2017	MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS	Kenneth Branagh
	OPUS ZERO	Daniel Graham
2018	AT ETERNITY'S GATE	Julian Schnabel
	AQUAMAN	James Wan
2019	THE LIGHTHOUSE	Robert Eggers
	TOMMASO	Abel Ferrara