

A Sony Pictures Classics release

# LORNA'S SILENCE

**Directed by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**

Winner of the Best Screenplay Award at the 2008 Cannes Film  
Festival

Official Selection 2008 Toronto International Cannes Film Festival

Starring

Arta Dobroshi  
Jérémie Renier  
Fabrizio Rongione  
Alban Ukaj  
Morgan Marinne

Running time: 105 minutes. Rated R.

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## SYNOPSIS

The destiny of a woman caught between love and the law of the underworld.

Lorna, (Arta Dobroshi), a young Albanian woman living in Belgium, has her sights set on opening a snack bar with her boyfriend, Sokol (Alban Ukaj). In order to do so, she becomes an accomplice in a diabolical plan devised by mobster Fabio (Fabrizio Rongione). Fabio has set up a false marriage between Lorna and Claudy (Jérémie Renier) allowing Lorna to get her Belgian citizenship. However, she is then asked to marry a Russian mafioso who's ready to pay hard cash to also get his hands on those vital Belgian identity papers. Fabio intends to kill Claudy in order to speed up the second marriage. But will Lorna remain silent?

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE

**All your previous movies were set in Seraing, the industrial town where you spent your childhood. This time around, you decided to set your story in Liège, which is a big city.**

It's just a few miles away. We agree that Liège is a bigger city, with plenty of people in the streets during the daytime as well as in the evening. For Lorna, the main character, who comes from Albania, a big European city embodies all sorts of hope. We also wanted to see Lorna in the midst of the crowd, people physically close to her but who knew nothing of her secret.

**Unlike your previous movies, which were shot in super 16 mm, this one is shot in 35 mm with a less mobile camera and wider frames. Why did you go for this?**

We tested 5 digital cameras, a 35 mm and a super 16 mm. The images shot at night with the 35 mm were closest to our project. Plus, we had decided that this time around, the camera would not be constantly moving, would be less descriptive and would be limited to recording images. Because of its weight the 35 mm was best suited for us.

**The main character of your movie, Lorna, is played by an actress from Kosovo. How did you find her?**

One of our assistants went to Pristina, Skopje and Tirana in order to audition about one hundred professional and non-professional young actresses. We selected Arta Dobroshi. We had seen her in two Albanian movies a few weeks before. We went to Sarajevo, where she lives, to meet her and we filmed her with our DV camera for a whole day. We filmed her walking, running, singing and also playing in scenes like those in our movie. Then she came over to Liège and we filmed her acting with Jérémie Renier and Fabrizio Rongione. She was amazingly beautiful and natural. In the evening, before she flew to Sarajevo, we told her that we had selected her for the role of Lorna and that she would have to come back to Belgium a few months before the shooting to rehearse and learn French.

**Despite the dramatic dimension of the story, your movie has a sensual and sweet quality.**

We owe it to Arta, the actress. Her face, her voice, the way she moves, the way she speaks French with her special accent ... and it's probably because of our camera's perception of things, and probably because the movie is also a love story.

Interview by William Sobel

### ABOUT JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE

The internationally acclaimed filmmaking duo Jean-Pierre (born April 1951) and Luc (born March 1954) Dardenne had directed and produced documentary films for over two decades before turning to writing, directing and producing fiction films.

They founded the company *Dérives* in 1975, through which they went on to produce over 60 documentaries, including their own. In 1994, they created *Les Films du Fleuve*, the company that has produced all their fiction films.

1996 marked the Dardenne brothers' feature film breakthrough with the critically acclaimed release of *LA PROMESSE* (*THE PROMISE*) starring Jérémie Renier and Olivier Gourmet, who have both since become regular actors in the Dardenne films. Since then all their films have been selected in the competition of the Cannes International Film Festival. *LA PROMESSE* was followed by the 1999's Cannes Film Festival Palme d'Or and critical smash *ROSETTA*, starring Emilie Dequenne and Olivier Gourmet. In addition to the Palme d'Or *ROSETTA* garnered the Cannes Film Festival Best Actress Award for Ms. Dequenne in her debut performance. *THE SON* (*LE FILS*) won Olivier Gourmet the Best Actor Award at Cannes in 2002. For *L'ENFANT*, (a Sony Pictures Classics release), the Dardennes won their second Palme d'Or in 2005. *LORNA'S SILENCE*, won the Cannes International Film Festival's Best Screenplay Award in 2008. Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne belong to a rare group of filmmakers, including Bille August, Francis Ford Coppola and Emir Kusturica, who have won the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or twice.

### FILMOGRAPHY (Fiction films)

- 2008 *LE SILENCE DE LORNA* (*LORNA'S SILENCE*)  
Starring : Arta Dabroschi, Jérémie Renier and Fabrizio Rongione  
Winner: Cannes International Film Festival 2008's Best Screenplay Award.
- 2005 *L'ENFANT* (*THE CHILD*)  
Starring: Jérémie Renier and Déborah François  
Winner: Cannes International Film Festival 2005's Palme d'Or

- 2002 LE FILS (THE SON)  
Starring: Olivier Gourmet, Morgan Marianne, and Isabella Soupard  
Winner: Cannes International Film Festival 2002's Best Actor Award (Olivier Gourmet)
- 1999 ROSETTA  
Starring: Emilie Dequenne, Fabrizio Rongione, Anne Yernaux and Olivier Gourmet  
Winner: Cannes International Film Festival 1999's Palme d'Or  
Winner: Cannes International Film Festival 1999's Best Actress Award (Emilie Dequenne)
- 1996 LA PROMESSE (THE PROMISE)  
Starring: Jérémie Renier, Olivier Gourmet and Assita Ouédraogo  
Winner: National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Foreign Language Film
- 1992 JE PENSE À VOUS (I THINK OF YOU)  
Starring: Fabienne Babe and Robin Renucci
- 1987 FALSCH  
Starring: Bruno Crémer

An essay about Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

Please refer to the bibliography at the end of the essay

Creators of intensely naturalistic films, brothers Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne have created an extraordinary body of work, which places them among the world's most respected filmmakers. The Dardennes' films are stark portrayals of young people at the fringes of society – among them immigrants, the unemployed, and the homeless.

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne were born and raised in Seraing, near Liege, the “French-speaking region of Belgium that provides the gritty, postindustrial landscape so omnipresent in many of their films” (Emilie Bickerton, *Cinéaste Magazine*). Jean-Pierre studied drama while Luc studied philosophy. In 1975 they established *Dérives*, the production company that produced the roughly sixty documentary films they made before branching into feature films. The tone and subject matter of their documentaries reflect much of the same territory the brothers would revisit with their narrative films: immigration, World War II resistance, a general strike in 1960.

LA PROMESSE (The Promise) is the story of Roger (Olivier Gourmet), who operates a tenement that he rents out to immigrant workers with the help of his fifteen-year old son Igor (Jérémie Renier). When Hamidou, a laborer from Burkina Faso, dies (as a direct result of Roger's unscrupulousness), Igor takes responsibility for Hamidou's wife and baby. The film ... “shows us the birth of a consciousness,”(Gavin Smith, *Film Comment*) and its setting – a Western Europe full of entrepreneurs desperate to grab their share of a quickening economy, and foreign laborers even more desperate to taste a small piece of

that – is both grim and hopeful. The opportunities the film presents may be more spiritual than material, but this is in keeping with the hardscrabble reality of the Dardennes' films. In his review of *LA PROMESSE* Stanley Kauffmann of *The New Republic* noted that, "The Dardenne brothers... have confessed to a burden. They believe in hope. They insist that under the frenzy of our world, physical and moral, there is quiet."

With *ROSETTA*, the Dardennes turned their focus to the burdens – philosophical, spiritual, psychological – of unemployment. Émilie Dequenne, who had never before acted in film and was awarded the Best Actress Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, is the title character, a young woman living with her alcoholic mother in a trailer park. The film is about Rosetta's search for purpose and to her, purpose can only be found through work. She makes her way through Seraing's fringes for the most menial of positions; she catches fish in the muddy, murky stream by her trailer park. Her goal is no greater than to be a cook at a waffle stand but according to Gavin Smith, "she hurtles through [the film] as if she would crash through a brick wall in search of a job." Ultimately it isn't societal forces or a capitalist system that derails Rosetta but her own singular desire. "Rather than personify or dramatize social forces arrayed against her, this Darwinian study suggests that Rosetta's oppression is rooted as much in her internalization of dog-eat-dog capitalism as in her un pitying environment." Rosetta was the first Belgian film ever to win the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes, coming in ahead of films by David Lynch, Pedro Almodovar, Takeshi Kitano, and Raoul Ruiz. The film's impact was not only cinematic: a labor law designed to protect young workers like Rosetta was passed shortly after the film's release. "[I]t was pure chance," Jean-Pierre insists. "There was already a bill going through, and the minister took advantage of our award to call it the Rosetta Law. But we never intended to get laws changed." Luc adds: "Of course, we always hope our films will speak to people, disturb them, but we never hoped to change the world." (Sheila Johnstone, *The Independent*)

The practice of work is also central to *THE SON (LE FILS)*, a deceptively complex movie about revenge and redemption. The film, like all of the Dardennes', seems straightforward enough: Olivier, a carpenter (played by Olivier Gourmet, who, like Duquenne, earned an acting prize at Cannes), takes on a young man named Francis as an apprentice. Francis is newly released from juvenile detention, and Olivier slowly discovers that Francis played a part in the death of his son some years earlier. Francis is unaware of the connection he shares with Olivier, and the Dardennes' use this asymmetrical relationship to investigate the ideas of forgiveness and vindication. "For all its quasi-documentary materialism, *THE SON* is ultimately a Christian allegory of one man's inchoate desire to return good for evil," says J. Hoberman in *The Village Voice*. *THE SON* is something of a departure from the Dardennes' earlier work: it's not the sort of movie that gets labor legislation named after it. Olivier's carpentry is observed with unstinting and careful detail; it is not a means for sustenance but a means for existence. According to A.O. Scott of *The New York Times*, "It is hardly surprising that the Dardennes put together their naturalist fable with such a fanatical, self-effacing sense of craft. They are obsessed with work in the way that some of their European counterparts are obsessed with sex: the textures and rhythms of manual labor are, for them, at once irreducibly physical and saturated with an almost spiritual significance."

Crimes and occupations again figure prominently in the Dardennes' fourth film, *L'ENFANT* (The Child), but this time the two are bound up in ways both expected and surprising. After a young woman named Sonia (Deborah Francois) gives birth, she leaves the hospital and finds her apartment has been sublet. She finds Bruno (Jérémie Renier), her equally young boyfriend, the baby's father and a petty thief with no real understanding of fatherhood. He uses the baby as a prop in panhandling and to get a bed for a night in a shelter; he comes into a bit of money and uses it to buy an expensive jacket for Sonia – to match his own. Bruno then makes a decision that seems ghastly and sensational, but as handled by the Dardennes seems matter-of-fact and calm: he sells the baby. We follow Bruno and the child on an excruciatingly long bus trip to the city's outskirts where he will rendezvous with his traffickers – who or what they are is left mostly unsaid. "Like the Dardennes' close framing and tracking, their use of ambient light and sound, [the slow pacing is] a way of clinging to the character and feeling the moral weight of his actions, even when he does not. That's why it's possible to care about inept, thoughtless Bruno, and care deeply, when at last he, too, feels the gravity" (Stuart Klawans, *The Nation*). Of course it's not possible for Bruno's efforts to get the baby back not to have ramifications – for himself, for Sonia, for a young accomplice (in one classically "Dardenne" scene, we see Bruno's accomplice, barely a teenager, plotting a crime in work overalls at his vocational school). As for Igor in *THE SON*, redemption for Bruno is as much a psychological act as a physical one. The film earned the Dardennes the Palme d'Or from Cannes, their second in seven years.

On their latest film, *LORNA'S SILENCE* (*LE SILENCE DE LORNA*), Luc Dardenne stated, "[It's] about a young woman who has every reason to be desperate and who continues to believe that everything is possible. A religious believer of sorts, even if God is dead [...] How can a woman who doesn't believe in God believe everything is possible? Where does this crazy hope come from? She is strange, out-of-the-ordinary. A fictional character always swims against the tide"(Anne Feuille, *CineEuropa*).

Mirroring the consistency of their setting, the Dardenne brothers maintain a regular stable of collaborators (for all of their films the brothers share writing and directing credits), most notably cinematographer Alain Marcoen and editor Marie-Helene Dozo. Jérémie Renier played both Igor in *LA PROMESSE*, Bruno in *L'ENFANT* and Claudy in *LORNA'S SILENCE*, while Olivier Gourmet, the main character of *THE SON*, has a brief cameo as a detective in *L'ENFANT*. Like Rosetta's Emilie Duquenne, Deborah Francois, the seventeen-year old lead in *L'ENFANT*, was appearing in her first film.

Luc Dardenne has described their process of working with actors as follows: "What we do with the actors is also very physical. The day filming begins we do not feel obliged to do things exactly the way they were rehearsed; we pretend that we are starting over from zero so that we can rediscover things that we did before. The instructions we give the actors are above all physical. We start working without the cameraman--just the actors and my brother and me. We walk them through the blocking, first one then the other, trying several different versions. They say but do not act their lines. We do not tell them what the tone of their lines should be; we just say that we will see once the camera is

rolling. At this point there is no cameraman, no sound engineer, no lighting. Then we set up all the camera movements exactly and the rhythm of the shot, which is usually a long take. Doing it this way allows us the ability to modify the actors' movements or any small details" (Emilie Bickerton, *Cinéaste Magazine*).

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's films have no original musical score or soundtrack.

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Adapted from Wikipedia.

## ABOUT THE CAST

### **Arta DOBROSHI/Lorna**

Arta Dobroshi was born in Pristina (Kosovo) in 1979 and attended the Pristina Academy of Dramatic Art. A theatre and film actress she has appeared in several plays in Pristina and Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) including:

Anton Ndreca's *SEXTET*, William Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, Ekrem Kryeziu's *THE CORRIDORS OF HORROR*, Ismail Kadaré's *THE PALACE OF DREAMS* and *MOULIN ROUGE*, Gjergj Prevazi's *TRANZICIONI*, and Almir Bukvic's *ARISTOTLE IN BAGDAD*.

In 2004, she performed a song written by Timor Dhomi for a documentary on the massacre in Kosovo.

She appeared in a dozen short movies and in several features including Kujtim Cashku's *MAGIC EYE* (2005), which earned her the 2007 Special Award for Best Actress at the Cinedays European Film Festival in Macedonia. In 2005, she played the lead in Artan Minarolli's and Ylljet Alicka's *VERA* and she was seen in Saeed Rana's *NA HOON GEY JUDA*, a Pakistani production. In 2006, she played in Piro and Eno Milkani's *THE SADNESS OF MRS. SNAJDROVA* before meeting Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne who gave her the lead female role in *LORNA'S SILENCE*.

### **Jérémie RENIER / Claudy**

Born in Brussels in 1981, Jérémie took drama and mime lessons as a child and attended the Brussels Circus School and the Annie Fratellini Circus School. He was first noticed at the age of fourteen as Igor, the young lead of the Dardennes' *LA PROMESSE*.

Since then Jérémie has become one of the most sought after young stars of the European film, theatre and television world. In addition to his work with the Dardenne brothers, Jérémie has worked with such notable French directors as Francois Ozon, Christophe Gans, Bertrand Bonello and Olivier Assayas. He will next be seen in *THE VINTNER'S LUCK* by Niki Caro (*WHALE RIDER*).

### **Selected Filmography**

- 2008 *THE VINTNER'S LUCK* (Dir: Niki Caro)
- 2008 *LORNA'S SILENCE* (Dir: Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)
- 2008 *SUMMER HOUR (L'HEURE D'ETE)* (Dir: Olivier Assayas)
- 2008 *IN BRUGES* (Dir: Martin McDonagh)
- 2007 *MAUVAISE PENTE* (Dir: Jeanne Labruno)
- 2006 *PRESIDENT* (Dir: Lionel Delplanque)
- 2005 *L'ENFANT (THE CHILD)* (Dir: Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)



2005 FAIRPLAY (Dir: Lionel Bailliu)  
2004 SAN ANTONIO (Dir: Frederic Auburtin)  
2002 THE SON (LE FILS) (Dir: Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)  
2001 BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF (Dir: Christophe Gans)  
2001 THE PORNOGRAPHER (Dir: Bertrand Bonello)  
2000 MURDEROUS MAIDS (Dir: Jean-Pierre Denis)  
1999 CRIMINAL LOVERS (Dir: Francois Ozon)  
1999 ROSETTA (Dir: Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)  
1996 THE PROMISE (LA PROMESSE) (Dir: Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne)

### **Fabrizio RONGIONE / Fabio**

Fabrizio Rongione was born in Brussels in 1973 and was given his first screen role in Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's ROSETTA. His subsequent performances include Francesca's Comencini's LA PAROLE DI MIO PADRE, Christophe Fraipont's LE TROISIEME OEIL, Luc Bondy's NE FAIS PAS CA!, Robinson Savary's BYE-BYE BLACKBIRD, Stefano Pasetto's TURTLES ON THEIR BACKS) Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's L'ENFANT, Giancarlo Bocchi's NEMA PROBLEMA, Ariel Zeitoun's MASKED MOBSTERS, and Joachim Lafosse's WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY.

Fabrizio Rongione's theatre experience include major roles in such acclaimed plays as Stendhal's THE RED AND THE BLACK, Goethe's EGMONT, Witold Gombrowicz's FERDYDURKE, Dario Fo's COUPLE OUVERT A DEUX BATTANTS and Voltaire's THE PRINCESS OF BABYLON. In 2003, he played Napoleon in Robert Hossein's THUS WAS BONAPARTE. He has also written and directed several shorts, documentaries and the one-man show, A GENOUX, winner of the Belgian Best One-Man-Show Award.

### **Alban UKAJ / Sokol**

Alban Ukaj was born in Pristina (Kosovo) in 1980. He attended the Sarajevo Academy of Dramatic Art for four years and studied music (clarinet, percussion instruments and violin). He has appeared in a dozen shorts and television series. He has also appeared in feature films including Jean-Luc Godard's NOTRE MUSIQUE (2004), Kujtim Cashku's MAGIC EYES (2005), Mathieu Jeufreu's DUB (2006), Antonio Nuic's SVE DZABA (2006) and Namik Kabil's NIGHT GUARDS.

His stage appearances include: Dario Fo's THIEVES WITH GOOD MANNERS, Sarah Kane's CLEANSED William Shakespeare's MEASURE FORMEASURE, Neil Simon's PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE, Bernard-Marie Koltès' LE RETOUR AU DESERT, Hristo Bojcev's HANIBAL PODZEMNIDE, Dimitrije Vojnov's VELIKA BIJELA ZAVJERA, Ljubica Ostojic's NEVJESTA OD KISHE and Tolstoj's ANNA KARENINE.

## **Morgan MARINNE / Spirou**

Morgan Marinne was born in Namur, Belgium, in 1985. As a child he appeared in Jan Bucquoy's *THE SEXUAL LIFE OF THE BELGIANS 1950-1978* (*LA VIE SEXUELLE DES BELGES 1950-1978*). In 2002, he met Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne who gave him the leading role alongside Olivier Gourmet in *THE SON* (*LE FILS*) for which he received a César nomination for Most Promising Actor. His feature films credits include Dominique Cabrera's *FOLLE EMBELLIE*, Olivier Ringer's *POM LE POULAIN*, Micha Wald's *VOLEURS DE CHEVAUX*, and Léon Desclozeaux's *CARGO, THE LOST MEN*.

## CAST LIST

Lorna	Arta Dobroshi
Claudy	Jérémie Renier
Fabio	Fabrizio Rongione
Sokol	Alban Ukaj
Spirou	Morgan Marinne

and special appearance by Olivier Gourmet.

Andrei	Anton Yakovlev
Kostia	Grigori Manoukov
MoniqueSobel	Mireille Bailly
mental health nurse	Stéphanie Gob
detective	Laurent Caron
morgue employee	Baptiste Sornin
doctor	Alexandre Trocky
male bank clerk	Cédric Lenoir
female doctor	Cécile Boland
pharmacist	Serge Larivière
locksmith	Philippe Jeusette
Claudy's mother	Sophia Leboutte
Claudy's brother	François Sauveur
ER paramedic	Christian Lusschentier
drug dealer	Stéphane Marsin
female bank clerk	Laurence Cordonnier
woman at the burial	Anne Gérard
obstetrician nurse	Annette Closset
dry cleaner owner	Isabelle Dumont
policewoman	Patrizia Berti
plainclothespoliceman	Léon Michaux
ER receptionist	Alao Kasongo
Micky	Claudy Delfosse
phone house cashier	Faruk Ahmed
dry cleaner employee	Marie-Ange Pougin

## CREW LIST

Written and Directed by ..... Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne  
First Assistant Directors ..... Caroline Tambour  
Director of Photography ..... Alain Marcoen s.b.c.  
Camera Operator..... Benoit Dervaux  
First assistant camera..... Benoît Rizzotti  
Editor..... Marie-Hélène Dozo  
Sound Engineer ..... Jean-Pierre Duret  
Sound Editor ..... Julie Brenta  
Sound Mixer ..... Thomas Gauder  
Production Designer..... Igor Gabriel  
Costume Designer..... Monic Parelle  
Key Make-Up Artist ..... Natali Tabareau-Vieuille  
Location Manager ..... Philippe Groff  
Production Manager..... Delphine Tomson  
Stills Photographer ..... Christine Plenus  
Produced by..... Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne  
..... Denis Freyd  
Executive Producer ..... Olivier Bronckart  
Co-Producer ..... Andrea Occhipinti  
Associate Producers ..... Arlette Zylberberg (RTBF)  
.....Sabine deMardt (Gemini Film), Christoph Thoke (Mogador Film) and StefanoMassenzi (Lucky Red)

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