



Presents

# COLD WAR

**A film by Pawel Pawlikowski**  
89 mins, Poland-UK-France, 2018  
Language: Polish with English subtitles

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## **Synopsis**

*Cold War* is a passionate love story between a man and a woman who meet in the ruins of post-war Poland. With vastly different backgrounds and temperaments, they are fatefully mismatched and yet condemned to each other. Set against the background of the Cold War in 1950s Poland, Berlin, Yugoslavia and Paris, it's the tale of a couple separated by politics, character flaws and unfortunate twists of fate — an impossible love story in impossible times.

*Cold War* earned Pawel Pawlikowski the Best Director award at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival. Pawlikowski's previous film, *Ida*, was a global success, winning the Oscar® and BAFTA foreign-language film awards as well as five European Film Awards including Best European film, Director and Screenplay. His other feature credits include *My Summer of Love* and *Last Resort*.

The film is a Polish/French/U.K. co-production, produced by the writer-director's long-time partners Tanya Seghatchian (*My Summer of Love*) of Apocalypso Pictures and Ewa Puszczyńska (*Ida*) from Piotr Dzięcioł's Opus Film (Poland), along with France's MK Productions.

## **Wiktor and Zula**

*Cold War* is dedicated to Pawel Pawlikowski's parents, whose names the protagonists share.

The real Wiktor and Zula died in 1989, just before the Berlin Wall came down. They had spent the previous 40 years together, on and off, breaking up, chasing and punishing each other on both sides of the Iron Curtain. "They were both strong, wonderful people," Pawlikowski reflects, "but as a couple they were a never-ending disaster."

Pawlikowski had been mulling over ways to tell his parents' story for almost a decade. How to render all the to-ing and fro-ing? What to do about the extended time period? "Their life had no obvious dramatic shape," he says. "And although my parents and I remained very close — I was their only child — the more I thought about them once they were gone, the less I understood them." Still, he continued to try and fathom the mystery of that relationship. "I've lived for a long time and seen a lot, but my parents' story put all the other ones in the shadow," he adds. "They were the most interesting dramatic characters I've ever come across."

Eventually, in order to write the film, he realized he had to make it *not* about his parents. The traits the fictional characters share with the real ones became more general: temperamental incompatibility, not being able to stay together, and yearning to be together when they are apart. The film also stays true to the central themes of their lives, says the director: "The difficulty of life in exile, of staying yourself in a different culture; the difficulty of life under a totalitarian regime, of behaving decently despite the temptations not to." The

result is a powerful, stirring story, broadly inspired, as Pawlikowski puts it, by his parents' "complicated and disrupted love."

Pawlikowski created distinct backstories for the fictional Wiktor and Zula. Unlike his own mother — who did run away to the ballet when she was 17 but was from a traditional upper middle class background — Zula comes from the wrong side of the tracks in a drab provincial town. She pretends to be from the country in order to get into Mazurek, a nascent folk arts ensemble, which she sees as a way out of poverty. She's rumored to have done time for stabbing her abusive father. "He mistook me for my mother so I used a knife to show him the difference," she explains coolly to Wiktor, the group's musical director. She can sing and dance, she has chutzpah and charm and a chip on her shoulder, and by the time she's a star in the ensemble she understands that she's gone as far as she can. "For Zula, Communism is just fine," Pawlikowski says. "She has no interest in escaping to the West."

The fictional Wiktor, on the other hand, is a gifted musician from a much more refined and educated world. "He comes from the urban intelligentsia and is grounded in high culture," Pawlikowski says. "He is calm and stable, and he needs Zula's energy." He imagined that Wiktor had been sent to study music in Paris before the war, under influential teacher Nadia Boulanger. Then, during the German Occupation, he made a living illegally playing the piano in Warsaw cafes — as did, incidentally, the great Polish composers Witold Lutosławski and Andrzej Panufnik. Though a very skilled classically trained pianist, Wiktor didn't have what it took to become a great composer. And anyway, his real passion was jazz.

The clues about Wiktor's past are in the music. In the scene in which Wiktor plays a melody on the piano for Zula to sing back to him, the tune is George Gershwin's "I Loves You Porgy," making it clear that Wiktor has been in the West. "After the war, with the emergence of the Stalinist regime in Poland, he doesn't know what to do with himself," Pawlikowski elaborates. Jazz was banned by the Stalinists, as was "formalist" modern classical music. In Pawlikowski's mind, Wiktor was never particularly interested in Polish folk music, but when he meets Irena with her Mazurek project, he sees it as a useful gig for a man at loose ends.

Wiktor's desire to escape grows after the folk group starts to be used by the regime for political purposes and he discovers that he's being spied on by the state security apparatus. The last straw is when Irena, with whom he has had a fling, gets fired for not toeing the party line. He knows he will never find freedom, musical or otherwise, in the Polish People's Republic, that he will always be regarded with suspicion and that the compromises required to survive will eventually undo him. Escape to the West is the only solution.

### **An Original Creature**

For the role of Zula, the charismatic young singer with a mysterious past and a seemingly limitless future, Pawlikowski cast Joanna Kulig. The actress' energy was exactly what he needed for the tempestuous character — spontaneous,

impatient, frank and utterly alluring. Whether performing traditional folk songs, Soviet-era propaganda anthems, soulful jazz riffs or cheesy Polish pop hits, Kulig's Zula always maintains a hypnotic hold over Wiktor and the audience.

After working with the actress in supporting roles in *Ida* and *The Woman in the Fifth*, the director was eager to showcase her considerable gifts in a more substantial role. "Joanna was there from the start. Her character, her musical possibilities and her charm were always in the back of my head when I was writing Zula's character. Joanna is an original creature and there's a timeless quality to her. She would fit in the '50s and '60s as well as she does today. She's incredibly charming, and the camera loves her. She's also very musical, and Zula is largely about the music, so she was the perfect person for the part."

A small town girl with big aspirations, Zula will be whatever she needs to be to escape her drab origins, and she knows that being a part of Mazurek could be her only way out. Kulig is one of the few actresses the director can think of who has the voice, the beauty and the charisma to play the ambitious, angelic blonde with ice-cold eyes. Even wearing traditionally chaste Polish costumes and singing naïve peasant songs, her naked ambition is clear to everyone but Wiktor. As he helps her push herself to the forefront of the group while they tour Eastern Europe, she becomes an undeniable star.

Kulig says the character reminded her of the late British songstress Amy Winehouse in some ways. "Her talent and dedication are remarkable but at the same time, she is extremely volatile," the actress explains. "She's up and down all the time. Sometimes she is a woman we love, sometimes a woman we hate. It is difficult for her to find balance."

Knowing that the epic story about two lost souls who love each other desperately but cannot find a way to live together was based on the director's parents' lives made the chance to work with him again even more attractive.

Kulig was cast in Pawlikowski's 2011 film *The Woman in the Fifth* at a moment when she was considering leaving acting altogether, but her career has flourished since then. Now a star in her native Poland, Kulig seems poised for worldwide fame after the rapturous critical reception her performance received at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year. By turns exuberant, melancholy, rageful and seductive, her interpretation of Zula is equal parts child and adult.

Zula's complicated upbringing has made it impossible for her to trust anyone fully, even Wiktor, who becomes everything to her — friend, brother, lover, father, husband and mentor. But in the end, as it is for Wiktor, love is Zula's downfall. "The idea that someone like him wants her makes Zula feel special in a way she never has before," says the actress.

But unlike Wiktor, Zula has no compunctions about her complicity in Soviet-era propaganda, enjoying the privilege her fame has brought her. When he hatches a plan to defect by crossing from East to West Berlin, she refuses to join him. Her life in Poland is more than she ever dreamed she could have and to risk her success is unthinkable. When they are eventually reunited in Paris, she finds being together as unbearable as being apart. “She emigrates to a very different world and everything changes for her,” says Kulig. “In Poland, she was somebody,” Kulig says. “In Paris, she has no friends her own age, no one at all really but Wiktor.” Zula has charm, talent and beauty, but she doesn’t believe in herself enough to compete in a world-class creative hub.

Wiktor also becomes different in Zula’s eyes while they are living in France. “In the beginning, he was like a god to her,” Kulig says. “He is someone she learns from. His passivity in France makes her aggressive, even more so when she begins to drink too much. Really, she’s scared. In the end she will understand that Wiktor’s love for her is true love but after all that’s happened, it might be too late.”

A graduate of Krakow’s prestigious Ludwik Solski State Drama School, where she earned a degree in popular music vocals, Kulig says that *Cold War* brought together two disciplines she has had a lifelong love for – singing and acting – and gave her a new skill to add to her portfolio: dancing. Although she had never danced professionally before, after months of work with the choreographers and dancers of Mazowsze, her dedication and energy won their approval. Despite her initial insecurity, she knew she was on the right track when the other dancers accepted her as part of the ensemble. “That helped me understand Zula better as a character. For her, they were the family she never had.”

Kulig applied the skills she already had developed as an actress to communicate her character’s evolution through singing style. The folk music that she knew growing up provided the first clue to Zula’s identity. Later, when Zula is in France, she adapts her performance style to Wiktor’s interest in jazz. Eventually she abandons whatever artistic integrity she has left by becoming a pop star in order to save Wiktor. Since the film was shot in chronological order, Kulig was able to transition naturally through each musical phase, growing into her character step-by-step. “It is rare to be able to work like that, but it is Pawel’s preference,” she says with gratitude.

Kulig and Tomasz Kot, a prominent Polish stage and screen actor, make a striking couple as Zula and Wiktor. Petite and intense, she is a voluptuous object of desire, while he towers over her, dark, lean and introspective. Working with the actor was a defining experience in her career thus far, she says. “We built a relationship that is like sister and brother. It was interesting to have this fiery, destructive relationship on screen and such a strong and stabilizing bond off screen. I think we made each other better actors. Sometimes we had to do 20 or more takes of the same scene and Tomasz was always at his best. He is one of the most dedicated, talented people I have worked with and a great partner to me.”

While Pawlikowski sees a physical resemblance between the actors and his parents, it is coincidental, he says. His mother was a beautiful blonde like Zula and his father was tall and dark-haired like Kot. “But if I’d found actors who didn’t resemble them, I would have been fine. I was more interested in the contrast between them and their temperaments.”

### **Poland’s Grey Period**

Anyone who has seen Pawlikowski’s previous film, *Ida*, may recognize the black-and-white images and nearly square format, and imagine these things to be a conscious directorial signature. In fact, Pawlikowski says he originally intended to make *Cold War* in color.

“I didn’t want to repeat myself,” he says. “But when I looked at all the color options, by elimination, I realized I couldn’t do this film in color because I had no idea what color it would be. Poland wasn’t like the States, which in the ’50s was all saturated color; the color was a nondescript, kind of grey-brown-green. Poland was destroyed. The cities were in ruins, there was no electricity in the countryside. People were wearing dark and grey colors. We could have imitated the early Soviet color stock — which was slightly off, all washed out reds and greens. But nowadays this would have felt very mannered. Black and white felt like a straightforward, honest convention.”

Despite the lack of color, Pawlikowski and his cinematographer Lukasz Zal found numerous ways to visually underscore shifts in the film’s dramatic tone by introducing camera movement and playing with contrast.

The film begins with a handheld, almost documentary look as Wiktor, Irena and Kaczmarek roam the countryside in search of Poland’s folk heritage. The camera then settles briefly into a more static mode — until we meet young Zula. “When she appears, everything changes,” says Zal, who earned an Oscar nomination for *Ida* — his first feature. “Often when she’s in the frame, the camera moves, because she’s so full of energy and music and because she moves ” says Pawlikowski

Focal length and depth of field were used to reflect the protagonists’ emotional state. For a scene where Wiktor and Zula canoodle by a Polish river early in their relationship, Pawlikowski and Zal used wide lenses. “They are happy, it’s a sense of the love between them,” he says. “Then when they are in Paris and things deteriorate, the lenses become longer, and the depth of field is more shallow.” Also, the contrast in Paris is very glamorous and shiny. The blacks are deeper, and it’s often night, so there are a lot of lights.” Wiktor and Zula’s eventual return to Poland is accompanied by a return to wide lenses, long depth of field and somewhat less contrast.

These choices were arrived at organically, according to Pawlikowski. “There was nothing intellectual about them; they just feel like part of this film. There’s this great moment in a shoot when you feel the film starts to direct itself and all you need to do is pay attention. You can fantasize before you shoot, devise all sorts of shots and lines, but when you start shooting you

think: ‘This is too fancy,’ or ‘This feels wrong, or like something from a movie.’”

### **The Politics of Love**

Whether communism expanded or limited the options for Pawlikowski’s protagonists, its pressures are felt by them at all times. When Zula admits that she’s been snitching to the authorities on Wiktor, we realize that her betrayal is, from her point of view, a simple act of survival.

Pawlikowski expects that in Poland, which is obsessively reliving and reinterpreting its past these days, he’ll be attacked for not sufficiently spelling out the horrors of communism, of “not showing more terror and suffering at the hands of the communist regime.” But the sense of threat in the film is all the more palpable for being largely unspoken, and its purpose is always to show the intimate impact of politics on character. Does Wiktor, for instance, become less manly in exile, as Zula claims? It’s certainly something Pawlikowski thought of his own father, a doctor who was brave and outspoken at home, yet in the West he seemed to be afraid when facing a bank manager.

When the Culture Minister asks the troupe to add propagandist songs about agricultural reform and world peace to their repertoire, Irena objects, but the ambitious troupe manager Kaczmarek overrides her, and before long the ensemble is singing odes to Stalin. The effect of this brief, manipulative exchange is to show Wiktor’s behavior under pressure — he says nothing, which seems to mark the beginning of his career in slipperiness and selferasure.

Pawlikowski remembers a general atmosphere of suspicion and fear from his childhood in Warsaw: “At home everyone spoke their minds, but you had to be careful about what you said at school.” His parents briefly had a maid from the country who slept on a fold-up bed in the kitchen of their one-bedroom flat. “She had an affair with a state security guy and snitched on us,” he recalls. What was there to snitch about? “Parcels from the West, listening to the BBC or Radio Free Europe... My father had a copy of *Der Spiegel*, banned as all other Western publications were, which one day disappeared from the flat.”

On one occasion, the whole family went through the dustbins in the middle of the night, in an attempt to retrieve an incriminating letter that Pawlikowski’s father had accidentally thrown away. In 1968, when Pawlikowski was 10, student demonstrations broke out in Warsaw. “The center was full of tear gas,” he recalls. “And in our flat there was a bleeding student of my mother’s, who was then a lecturer at the University of Warsaw, waiting for the situation to calm down.”

The similarities between the Polish government shown in the film and the government currently in power are not lost on many who lived through communism: the anti-Western, nationalistic rhetoric; the primitive propaganda in the state media; the climate of fear, crisis and resentment engineered to shore up the support of healthy, simple folk against decadent

and treacherous elites. The character of Kaczmarek, the resentful provincial careerist spouting useful phrases to get ahead, is also bound to ring a bell for Polish audiences. But *Cold War* is not about politics. History is just the context that helps to dramatize something at once more personal and more universal: two people with drastically different ways of looking at the world unable to find a country where their love feels at home.

### **Swept Away By Music**

Once he had invented his fictional lovers, Pawlikowski needed to find a way to bring them together. Having the couple meet at Mazurek, a folk music and dance group based on Mazowsze, a real ensemble founded after the war and still active today, allowed the institution itself to show what was going on in Polish society at the time without his having to explain it.

“Mazowsze has been around ever since I can remember,” says the director. “When I was a kid, the state radio and TV was full of its music, the official music of the people. You couldn’t get away from that stuff. It was seen as uncool and absurd among my friends, who’d much rather listen to bootlegged recordings of the Small Faces or the Kinks. But when I saw Mazowsze live five years ago, I was totally engrossed. The melodies, the voices, the dances, the arrangements were so beautiful and vital. And so far removed from our virtual world and electronic culture. They swept me away.”

Mazowsze (named after an historical area of in the country’s northeast) was founded in 1948 by the Polish composer Tadeusz Sygietyński and his wife, the actress Mira Zimińska. They went into the Polish countryside to collect folk songs, for which Sygietyński then wrote new arrangements. Zimińska reworked their lyrics and designed costumes inspired by traditional peasant outfits from different regions. The original impetus was a genuine interest in the traditions and the music – a little along the lines of what Woody Guthrie and Alan Lomax were doing in the United States – and Pawlikowski also mixed in details from the work of Marian and Jadwiga Sobieski, another couple of musical ethnographers who traveled the land and made direct recordings similar to the ones made by Wiktor and Irena in the film.

Like the fictional Mazurek ensemble, Mazowsze was co-opted by Poland’s communist government, which saw it as a useful propaganda tool. The songs of the people were pitted against the decadent art of the bourgeoisie – jazz or 12-tone music. “Mazowsze did tour all Warsaw Pact capitals and go to Moscow,” Pawlikowski says, “and they did dance in front of Stalin and sing a number called *The Stalin Cantata*.”

Pawlikowski began his career in documentaries and is rigorous in his nonornamental approach to filmmaking, but he doesn’t feel the need to precisely replicate historical facts. Rather, he makes music stand for much of what the story contains: sex and exile, passion and transposition.

By making Mazurek the framework for the first half of the story the director was able to play with music as a central character in the film. He began with

the folk songs the ensemble performs, and then projected some of the melodies into 1950s Paris and its prolific jazz scene. “It was a way of underlining where we are at the time, because the music is very specific to time and place,” he notes. “Three musical motifs crop up in different guises.”

Pawlikowski, who has played jazz piano himself, listened to all the tunes sung by Mazowsze and chose three he thought could be echoed throughout ***Cold War*** in different forms. He turned the Mazowsze standard “Two Hearts” first into a simple rural tune, sung by a young peasant girl, and then into a haunting jazz number sung in French by Zula, who has become a sultry chanteuse in Paris.

When we first hear Wiktor’s jazz ensemble in a Paris nightclub, the bebop tune played by his quintet is a version of the Polish “oberek” (a lively folkdance tune) heard earlier in the film: first played by a woman on a pedalpowered accordion and then performed by Mazurek as a dance at the ensemble’s Warsaw premiere in 1951. In Paris, when Wiktor loses it at the piano and his solo devolves into a wild improvisation, the jazzed-up oberek segues into “Two Hearts” and then “The Internationale,” the socialist anthem which is also sung by Mazurek at a swearing-in ceremony in the Polish section of the film.

Everything that’s unspoken about love and loss – and about what separates the pair from each other – is carried in the music.

To realize this crucial element of the film, Pawlikowski found a gifted collaborator: the pianist and arranger Marcin Masecki, whom he met while casting the role of Wiktor. “Masecki’s a cool customer,” Pawlikowski says. “Musically speaking, he would have made the perfect Wiktor. He’s an adventurer in music, brave and wildly eclectic. He recorded all of Chopin’s nocturnes from memory, and played Beethoven sonatas with noise-canceling headphones on in order to replicate the composer’s experience of being deaf. He loves playing ragtime, or improvising in bars and restaurants, where he anonymously eavesdrops on people’s conversations and lets them guide his musical meanderings. He also traveled up and down the country arranging music for local fire brigade orchestras.” All of the jazz numbers in the film were arranged – and the piano parts performed – by Masecki.

Before Kot was cast, Pawlikowski used Masecki to help him try out the scene in which Zula (played by Zulig) sings back the Gershwin melody Wiktor plays on the piano. The interaction was so electric – almost erotic – that it confirmed to Pawlikowski how essential music would be in telling the story of Wiktor and Zula.

### **Home and Exile**

***Cold War*** raises questions of home and exile, not only for the characters within it, but for Pawlikowski himself, who has now made two Polish films in a row, after having lived and worked in the West for decades.

The film he made before *Ida*, *The Woman in the Fifth*, based on the novel of the same name, was set in Paris and starred Ethan Hawke and Kristin Scott Thomas. Kulig appeared as a waitress in the film. “It was a strange monster,” Pawlikowski reflects now. “It had no cultural identity: a French film with American, British and French actors, and a Polish director. I have a lot of affection for that film, it reflects where I was at the time, but I have to admit it was a confusing hybrid, neither realist, nor a thriller or a horror film.

“That experience,” he continues, “made me crave some firm ground, which I found with *Ida*.” After completing that film, Pawlikowski began circling autobiographical thoughts – which he had explored in different ways with his earlier films *Last Resort* and *My Summer of Love* – and found he wasn’t finished with Poland yet. “I can’t be precise,” he says, “but it might have something to do with reaching a certain age and looking back more and more. But also, feeling a certain calm. I don’t need to prove anything.”

Pawlikowski moved back to Warsaw in 2013 to make *Ida*, and although he still didn’t know if the move would be permanent, he says he reconnected with his homeland. While preparing the film, he stayed at a friend’s apartment near where he grew up. He found it comfortingly familiar. “The landscape you see when you’re young stays with you for the rest of your life,” he says. “This film is set more in the world of my parents and I got to know it via them in some ways.”

The film’s production design came from a very personal place. Just as some of the shots in *Ida* were inspired by his own family albums, the director mined photos of his parents from the late 1940s and early 1950s – when they first met – to inform the actors’ postures, attitudes, clothing and settings. The simplicity of the backgrounds in that less cluttered, less materialistic era were surprising and seductive, he says. With just a few elements, it was easy to reproduce a bygone era, one in which telephones were rare and Google nonexistent. Likewise, amateur snapshots of Paris and Berlin in the early years after the war helped recreate the louche glamour of the artist’s life in that world.

Historical photographs of the Mazowsze folk ensemble provided evidence of the group’s evolution over the years. The striking costumes worn by the film’s fictional ensemble, based on Mazowsze’s, are drawn from regional cultures throughout Poland. Typically elaborately embroidered, full skirts and wide sashes are common for women, while details on the vests, aprons and head coverings provide clues to the area of origin.

As the film progresses, the costumes become more vivid and theatrical. When the group travels outside of Poland, it develops a more sophisticated look, and the performers begin wearing makeup. “For the film, I went for costumes that had strong contrast,” says the director. “Some of the most authentic outfits would have been murky in black and white and there’s no way of making that photographically interesting. Because I wanted to make a film that was

dynamic and dramatic, I went for costumes that had a lot of contrast, stripes that were really bright and really dark, so when they swirl, it's vivid."

### **1949-1964: The gaps in the story**

*Cold War* takes place over 15 years, and although the scenes are all sequential, years at a time are left out, and the audience, guided by intermittent blackouts and titles noting the time and place, must fill in the blanks.

Pawlikowski says he chose to do this so as not to have to tell the story in "bad scenes with bad dialogue." He notes that films, especially biopics, are often weighed down by the need to feed the audience information, reducing the narrative to causes and effects. "But in life there are so many hidden causes and unpredictable effects — so much ambiguity and mystery that it's hard to convey it as conventional cause-and-effect drama. It's better to just show the strong and significant moments and let the audience fill in the gaps with their own imagination and experience."

The overall effect is that the star-crossed aspect of the lovers' long-running and tempestuous affair — everything that is miscommunicated or left silent — is reflected in the structure of the film itself, leaving the audience to piece things together as much as the characters in it must.

### **The settings: East vs. West**

Poland, 1949: When the film opens, Poland is still struggling with the devastation of World War II. Much of the countryside lacks electricity. Warsaw is in ruins. Wiktor and Irena, like a pair of musical ethnographers, travel the countryside in search of what remains of its original folklore. The resulting project, the Mazurek ensemble, is a success and is quickly co-opted by the apparatchiks.

East Berlin, 1952: Mazurek, now singing an ode to Stalin, as strongly suggested by the Polish Ministry of Culture, is invited to perform at the International Festival of Youth in East Berlin. "Berlin today, Moscow tomorrow," muses Kaczmarek, the troupe's apparatchik manager. But Wiktor sees the situation differently. This is the moment he has been waiting for, his and Zula's chance to escape. East and West Berlin are not yet divided by the Wall, but if you are from the East and get picked up by the Russians, you will go to prison. Wiktor knows the risk of crossing into West Berlin. He also knows he can never go back and his life will change forever. Zula knows this too. She doesn't show up, and Wiktor crosses into the West alone.

Paris, 1954: Wiktor is playing piano in a jazz club. Zula turns up at a late-night bar where he is waiting alone for her. There is no direct explanation for her presence in Paris, but their awkward, halting dialogue implies that Mazurek has traveled there in order to perform, for the first time outside the Eastern Bloc. They are, of course, under close surveillance by the Polish State Security minders, which is why Zula, who has slipped away unnoticed, can only stay for five minutes before her absence is noticed. (This episode was inspired by a real event: During Mazowsze's first Western outing, to Paris in 1954, one of its

members managed to give the minders a slip and defect.) Two years after their separation, the former lovers speak awkwardly, barely addressing the reason she never joined him in Berlin. Then she leaves.

Split, Yugoslavia, 1955: The troupe is performing in the socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The country is technically non-aligned, independent of the Soviet Bloc, so it's relatively safe for Wiktor — now a resident in France traveling on a “Nansen” passport of a stateless person — to come there to see Zula. She is stunned to discover him sitting in the audience during the performance. Before they can meet, though, he gets picked up during the intermission and taken away by Yugoslav state security men. They've been tipped off by Kaczmarek, who has asked for his arrest and extradition to Poland. Fortunately for Wiktor, the local secret police don't want any diplomatic trouble. They put the stateless Pole on the first train out of Yugoslavia.

Paris, 1957: Zula comes to find Wiktor in Paris. She has married a Westerner, an Italian, which allows her to leave Poland legally. It seems she and Wiktor finally have a shot at happiness together. But Wiktor, now a professional musician preoccupied with making social connections to enhance his career, is not the man Zula remembers. After recording an album with Wiktor, she cheats on him and then disappears.

Poland, 1959: After the breakdown of their relationship in Paris, Zula returns home legally to resume her show-business career there. When Wiktor follows her back to Poland, he knows what's going to happen. In this respect, understanding the political risks is key to the romantic drama: If he knows he is going to get arrested and possibly sentenced to hard labor, why does he go back to find her? Because that is exactly how much he needs to be with her.

Poland, 1964: Zula, now washed up and drunk, and the mother of a small boy, has married Kaczmarek, apparently in an unspoken deal to get Wiktor out of prison. Kaczmarek is now a big shot in the Ministry of Culture and has helped his wife with a career as a cheesy socialist pop star. Wiktor, meanwhile, has ended up in a penal colony, working in a quarry. He has had his right hand mutilated and can no longer play the piano. Having agreed to get each other out of their respective situations, Zula and Wiktor return to the ruined Orthodox church where the story began.

### **Love's Love**

***Cold War*** runs on a romantic engine so strong that it brooks no alternative. As Wiktor says to Zula at one point: “Love's love and that's that.”

“This type of relationship is a bit of a war all the time,” Pawlikowski explains. “Two strong, restless individuals, very unlike each other; two extreme poles. Zula and Wiktor have other lovers, relationships, husbands and wives, but for all the historical and geographical comings and goings, they realize with time that nobody will ever be as close to them as each other, because nobody knows who they are as well as each other. At the same time, paradoxically, they are each the one person the other can't be with.”

Pawlikowski leaves open the question of how much their inability to stay together is dictated by politics and circumstance and how much is basic incompatibility. “In the end, the big question is: Is there a possibility of love that lasts? Can it transcend life, history, this world? I think the ending gives their love a transcendence of sorts.”

Is the ending inevitable?

“I have no idea,” he says. “I think so.”

### **About the Cast**

**JOANNA KULIG (Zula)** has made two other films with Pawel Pawlikowski: *The Woman in the Fifth*, starring Ethan Hawke and Kristin Scott Thomas, and *Ida*, winner of dozens of international awards. She is otherwise best known for her work on the acclaimed drama *Janosik: A True Story*, directed by Agnieszka Holland and Katarzyna Adamik. Kulig also co-starred alongside Juliette Binoche in Malgorzata Szumowska’s *Elles* and was seen in the historical drama *The Innocents*, which was nominated for four of France’s coveted César Awards.

**TOMASZ KOT (Wiktor)** has appeared in 30 films and a dozen television series in Poland, where he is also well known for his standout stage performances. Among his notable feature credits are *Gods* (2014), *Skazany na bluesa* (2005) and *Bikini Blue* (2017). He and his wife, cinematographer Agnieszka Kot, have two children.

**BORYS SZYC (Kaczmarek)** is a well-known Polish film and theater actor. In 2005 he received the Zbyszek Cybulski Award for his role in Konrad Niewolski’s *Symmetry* and in 2006 he won the Wiktor Award for Most Popular TV Actor. His performance in *Snow White and the Russian Red* earned him Best Lead Actor honors at the Gdynia Film Festival and the Polish Film Awards. The 2011 Montreal World Film Festival named him Best Actor for his role in *The Mole*.

**AGATA KULESZA (Irena)** is one of Poland’s leading actresses. She works in both film and television as well as on stage. Kulesza played the role of Wanda, the protagonist’s troubled aunt, in Pawel Pawlikowski’s *Ida*. Her other notable credits include *These Daughters of Mine* (2015) and *The Witcher* (2007).

**JEANNE BALIBAR (Juliette)** is a French actress who began her career as a member of the Comédie Française. She has gone on to work with some of the best film directors in the world, including Jacques Rivette, Raúl Ruiz, Olivier Assayas, Michael Winterbottom, Diane Kurys and Mathieu Amalric. Balibar has won a number of awards including, most recently, the César for Best Actress for her performance in Amalric’s highly acclaimed drama *Barbara*.

**CÉDRIC KAHN (Michel)** is an award-winning French film director and screenwriter who sometimes moonlights as an actor. He is best known for *L'ennui*, his masterful 1998 adaptation of Alberto Moravia's acclaimed novel. Starring Charles Berling (*Elle*), the film was nominated for three César Awards including Best Actor.

### **About the Filmmakers**

**PAWEL PAWLIKOWSKI (Director)** is a BAFTA-winning writer and director whose most recent film, *Ida*, won the 2015 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, as well as five European Film Awards and a Goya, among many other prizes. He was born in Warsaw and at age 14 left Poland for the U.K., Germany and Italy before finally settling in the U.K. in 1977. He studied literature and philosophy in London and Oxford.

Pawlikowski began making documentaries for the BBC in the late 1980s. His documentaries, which include "From Moscow to Pietushki," "Dostoevsky's Travels," "Serbian Epics" and "Tripping with Zhirinovsky," have won numerous international awards, including an Emmy and the Prix Italia. In 1998 Pawlikowski moved into fiction with a low-budget television film, "Twoockers," which was followed by two full-length features, *Last Resort* and *My Summer of Love*, both of which he wrote and directed. Both films won British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards, as well as numerous honors at festivals around the world.

In 2011, Pawlikowski directed *The Woman in the Fifth*, which starred Ethan Hawke and Kristin Scott Thomas. He returned to Poland in 2013 while completing *Ida*. The filmmaker now lives in Warsaw and teaches directing and writing at the Wajda School.

**TANYA SEGATCHIAN (Producer)** is an award-winning British film and TV producer who works in both auteur cinema, such as Pawlikowski's BAFTA award winner *My Summer of Love*, and the commercial mainstream, producing the first four installments in the *Harry Potter* film franchise. Between 2007 and 2011 Segatchian ran both the film development and production investment funds at the British Film Institute and the U.K. Film Council. Most recently, she was an executive producer on the Golden Globe and Emmy®-winning Netflix series "*The Crown*."

Segatchian began her career in documentaries at BBC Television, where she met Pawlikowski, and the pair began their long and fruitful collaboration. Apocalypse Pictures is their jointly owned U.K. production company.

**EWA PUSZCZYŃSKA (Producer)** is an award-winning Polish film producer who works mainly in auteur cinema. She produced Pawlikowski's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar winner *Ida*. For more than 20 years Puszczyńska worked exclusively for Opus Film, a Polish independent production company. She now also develops and produces films through her own company, Extreme Emotions. Puszczyńska is a board member of the European Film Academy.

**LUKASZ ZAL (Director of Photography)** is a Polish cinematographer who previously worked with Pawlikowski on *Ida*. Zal was nominated for an Academy Award for his work as director of photography on the film, which won the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. His previous credits include Aneta Kopacz's Oscar-nominated documentary *Joanna* and Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman's Oscar-nominated animated film *Loving Vincent*, on which Zal was one of two cinematographers. His most recent project is the Russian biopic *Dovlatov*, which premiered at the 2018 Berlin International Film Festival, where it won the Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Contribution.

**KATARZYNA SOBAŃSKA and MARCEL SLAWIŃSKI (Production Designers)** have worked together for 10 years. In addition to running their own production design studio within the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, the duo has worked on more than 50 productions in film and theater. Their work has been recognized with numerous international awards. Sobańska and Slawiński were the production designers on Pawlikowski's Oscar winner *Ida*. Other notable directors they have collaborated with include Agnieszka Holland and Lech Majewski.