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Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
**Generation**

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International Film Festival  
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2013

WINNER - JURY PRIZE  
LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL

# MOTHER, I LOVE YOU

Children's Film

Latvia 2013

83 min

Written and directed by  
**Jānis Nords**



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World Sales and Promotion  
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Slowicza 12/2  
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Poland



## LOGLINE

12-year-old Raimonds tries to cover up a bad note at school and starts a spiral of lies, which spins out of control. He has to venture into Riga's thrilling night-life to save his saxophone, his friendship and his face in front of his mother. An exciting story about the healing power of truth.

## SYNOPSIS

12-year-old Raimonds does what he can to make his strict mother proud – he even plays the saxophone in the school band instead of riding his kickboard in a skate park. When he tries to cover up a bad note at school, a spiral of lies is started, which soon spins out of control.

Thanks to his friend Peteris, whose mother is a cleaner, Raimonds gets hold of the keys to a fancy apartment and wants to spend the night there. Unfortunately, the owner comes back home with a girl, who not only robs him but also takes Raimonds' saxophone. The boy has to venture into the night Riga to get the instrument back. When Peteris is accused of robbing the flat, Raimonds has to decide whether to save his friendship or his face in front of the mother. An exciting story about the healing power of truth.



## DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

They say that fear has big eyes when you're a child. When writing *Mother, I Love You* I was often borrowing from my own childhood experiences. However easy and harmless a simple cover-up may feel initially, it mostly ends up as a burden. You're almost always bound to lie more if only to cover the previous lie.

This predicament serves as the basis for the drama of *Mother, I Love You*. Acting to his best intentions not to run into an argument with mother, Raimonds builds one lie on top of another, gradually witnessing how it all turns into an avalanche of terrible events - running away from home, stealing to regain what's been stolen from him, getting at odds with police and, finally, crushing the very expectations of his mother that he was trying to live up to.

Moreover, in order to stay above the water and regain the trust of his mother, Raimonds must betray his best friend Peteris. Thus, the conscience became another important aspect of the film. We, the grown-ups, expect children to act according to norms of morality or what we perceive as a good conscience. But conscience is a complex emotional intelligence that is learned over long periods

of times and, often, through harsh experiences. *Mother, I Love You* features such an experience. One must get his hands dirty to come clean again.

A seemingly minor misdeed can seem like grand offence bound to bring harsh consequences. Though Raimonds is faced with a moral dilemma - to act dishonestly and escape punishment or tell the truth and face backlash - I tried to avoid teaching my protagonist a moral lesson. Instead, I was looking to portray a child, who thrown into the wildest of circumstances and confronted with tough choices, manages to maintain humanity and gain conscience. In other words, a child who "grows up".



## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

After extensively working as 1AD on various Latvian features and TV commercials, Jānis Nords shot his feature debut *Amateur* in 2008. The film won Best Debut at the Latvian National Film Festival. The following year he co-wrote *Return of Sergeant Lapins* (directed by Gatis Smits), which premiered at Busan International Film Festival. He then studied film directing at National Film and Television School in Britain. *Mother, I Love You* is Jānis Nords' second feature.

## FILMOGRAPHY

### FEATURE FILMS

2013

*Mother, I Love you (Mammu, es Tevi mīlu)* – director  
Grand Prix of Berlinale Generation KPlus  
Best Feature Film at L.A. Film Fest

2011

*Return of Sergeant Lapins (Seržanta Lapiņa atgriešanās)* – writer  
Busan IFF / Rome Independent FF

2008

*Amateur (Amatieris)* – director  
Best Debut at Latvian National Film Festival

### SHORT FILMS

2011

*Au Revoir Monkeys* – director

2010

*Freedom Day* – director



## PRODUCTION INFO

*Mother, I Love You* was shot over 20 days on location in Latvia. The cast is predominantly non-professional and, often, filling in the roles they perform in real life – including policemen, teachers, orchestra conductor etc.

The main part of Raimonds is played by 13-year-old Kristofers Konovalovs for whom this was the first acting experience. Kristofers was found during an extensive casting period where over 800 children were considered. Kristofers' obsession with extreme bike riding and the level of control the sport requires proved to be his main advantage in maintaining concentration during the often exhausting filming period.

Raimonds mother is played by Vita Varpina, one of the two professional performers in the entire film. For the last 12 years, Vita Varpina has been an actress at the Latvian theatre Dailes Teatris.

The colourful orchestra conductor – Haralds Barzdins – is a real-life orchestra enthusiast and one of the principal conductors at the Latvian Song and Dance festival.



## PREVIOUS SCREENINGS

World Premiere: Berlinale Generation KPlus 2013 –  
Grand Prix of the International Jury

L.A. Film Festival – Best Feature Film

TIFF Kids, Canada

Vilnius IFF, Lithuania

Zlin Film Festival for Children and Youth, Czech  
Republic – Best European Film

Tel Aviv Children and Youth Film Festival, Israel

Pula IFF, Croatia

Theatrical distribution in Latvia (population 2  
Million) – 32.500 admissions

## PRESS QUOTES

“Nords avoids falling into stereotypes, (...) refuses a moralistic feel-good ending, satisfyingly choosing to emphasize the relief of being up-front. (...) All performances are strong.”

*Variety*

“The film touched us deeply, because it gives us a look in the inner conflict of a boy, who learns to take responsibility for his actions and experiences that friendship needs honesty.”

*2013 Berlinale Generation KPlus jury explanation*

## NEW EUROPE FILM SALES - WORLD SALES & PROMOTION

New Europe Film Sales is a boutique world sales and distribution company based in Warsaw, Poland. The company holds worldwide rights to a number of short and feature films and works with theatrical, TV and VOD buyers as well as museums and galleries.

Until the end of 2011, NEFS specialized in short film sales and worked with award-winning directors, such as Ruben Östlund, Tomek Baginski and Jonas Odell. In the short film industry, NEFS is known for its catalogue of carefully selected high quality shorts (animation, fiction and documentary). Since 2012, NEFS has opened its catalogue to feature films. The company's 2013 slate includes Matt Porterfield's Sundance and Berlinale Forum title *I Used to Be Darker* (USA 2013), Janis Nords' Berlinale Generation winner *Mother, I Love You* (Latvia 2013) and Karlovy Vary competition title *Papusza* by Joanna Kos-Krauze and Krzysztof Krauze.

NEFS also represents Gotham Award-nominated food drama *Now, Forager: A Film About Love and Fungi* by Jason Cortlund and Julia Halperin (USA/ Poland 2012), and Anka and Wilhelm Sasnal's Rotterdam 2012 competition title *It Looks Pretty From a Distance* (Poland 2011).



## CREW

Director: **Jānis Nords**  
Screenplay: **Jānis Nords**  
Cinematography: **Tobias Datum**  
Sound: **Tom Drew**  
Editing: **Tamara Meem**  
Music: **Zoe Keating**  
Production design: **Ieva Kauliņa**  
Costume design: **Katrīna Liepa**  
Make-Up: **Emīlija Eglīte**

Cast: **Kristofers Konovalovs**  
**Vita Vārpiņa**  
**Matīss Livčāns**  
**Indra Briķe**

Producers: **Alise Ģelze, Gatis Šmits**  
Production Company: **Film Studio TANKA (Latvia)**  
In Collaboration with: **ARTBOX (Lithuania)**

Supported by:  
**National Film Centre of Latvia**  
**State Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia**

Production Contact:  
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## FILM INFO

Title: **Mother, I Love You**  
Original Title: **Mammu, es tevi mīlu**  
Category: **Children's Film**  
Language: **Latvian**  
Completion: **February 2013**  
World Premiere: **February 2013 –  
Berlinale Generation**  
Duration: **83 min**  
Picture: **Colour**  
Screen ratio: **1:2,35 Cinemascope**  
Sound system: **5.1 Dolby Surround**  
Available formats: **DCP, BluRay, ProRes files**

## WORLD SALES AND PROMOTION:

**New Europe Film Sales**  
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