Two brothers.
One has music in his fingers.
The other has a gun in his hand.
Synopsis

Tbilissi, early 1990’s. A few families living in the old part of town must each in their own way confront the changes taking place in their city. Maia witnesses her eldest son, Giorgi, slipping away from her while her youngest son, Datuna, a young and very talented pianist, must cope with the violence that is little by little becoming a part of their daily lives. In the building across the street, another tragedy has struck: young Datuna’s dear old friend, Achil, has lost his grandson in the war. The old man is bedridden, sick with grief.

Directors’ Statement

CHAOS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SELF

I grew up in Georgia in the early 1990’s, an era marked by the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Republic of Georgia, in a time when collective enthusiasm over the new found freedom soon gave way to a long, dark and difficult period defined by economic crisis and chaos. This chaos has scarred our collective memory and burdened us with painful secrets. This is the context that serves as a backdrop to my generation’s story. It took me quite a while to realize how much we had all been marked by this period of “transition”. How could we build a life for ourselves in a world where the rules change every day, dictated by the whims of a corrupt few caught up in a constant battle for power? Our desire to make this film was driven by the will to expose the remaining traces of corruption that are still at work in Georgia today.

GIORGI, EMBLEM OF A LOST GENERATION

The story opens just as the first President of the Independent Georgian state is about to flee the country. We are in Tbilisi, the capital, which has been overtaken by revolutionary turmoil. Giorgi is 17. He is no longer a child and nothing can protect him from the impending chaos. But which role does he wish to play in these confusing and turbulent times? Without taking the time to think, Giorgi seizes every opportunity that comes his way... even if these lead him into a dead end where he must turn his back on his own beliefs, on his own family. I wished to tell the story of my generation through this character. A generation left unto itself, a generation whose parents were so preoccupied with simple survival that they did not see their children slipping away from them.

Datuna is the second essential character in this film. Giorgi’s little brother is all of ten years old and has only one thing on his mind: pursuing his musical training and becoming a great pianist. His passion for music protects him from the harsh realities of the outside world but for how long? Can Giorgi protect Datuna indefinitely from the violence that surrounds them? As a new world order begins to take shape, full of violence and instability, Tbilisi has another side, a brighter side, to offer. On the one side there is death and darkness (war, organized crime, racketeering, executions). On the other, there is life. In Giorgi and Datuna’s neighborhood, the citizens help each other out and hope for a better future. I also wanted this story to be an illustration of this resistance and resilience.

Rather than a complex political chronicle, I preferred to structure the story around my characters’ emotional journeys. I did not wish to recreate the events that shook the history of my country but rather examine how these events affected the lives of certain people, the members of a community, the inhabitants of a same street, their relationships to one another.

FICTION AND REALITY

This story was inspired by true events. Some of these events I experienced myself, others are the fruit of my co-writer, David Chubinislvili’s, experiences. His children were the inspirations behind the characters of Giorgi and Datuna. The screenplay is the result of our combined experiences and points of view. On the one hand, an adolescent who watched her country disappear into the abyss. On the other, a father who watched his own children slip away from him. The film begins bathed in the warm light and earthy colors of an Indian summer only to sink into the cold grey winter. And in the process, time seems to dilate. All that is familiar to us dissipates leaving only the faces, increasingly worn down by hunger and despair. This type of contrast is also heightened by our work with sound. On the one hand, the clamor of the city, the turmoil of the revolution (protests, gunshots, screaming...). On the other, the music performed by Datuna, dream-like sequences thanks to which we escape from the chaos outside, until that moment when all becomes silent....

Toona Mghveldadze was born in the Soviet Republic of Georgia and studied Music and Film in Tbilisi and Paris. Her graduation film “The Lost Score” (2008) was selected in over 40 festivals throughout the world and won 5 awards. Thierry Grenade worked as an assistant director and line producer and has also produced a documentary trilogy shot in China. Toena and Thierry met ten years ago on the set of a short film and collaborated on various projects. DZMA / BROTHER is their first feature film.
CAST
Giorgi: Irakli Basil Ramishvili
Datuna: Zuka Tsirekidze
Maia: Natasha Shengelaia
Archil: Kahi Kavsadze
Nata: Elena Glurjidze

CREW
Directors: Teona Mghvdeladze, Thierry Grenade
Screenplay: Teona Mghvdeladze, David Chubinishvili
Producers: Marie-Pierre Macia, Juliette Lepoutre (MPM Film, France)
Co-producers: Zurab Magalashvili (Cinetech, Georgia), Suliko Tsulukidze (Millimeter Film, Georgia)
Co-produced by Arte France Cinema
Executive Producer: Claire Trinquet
Cinematography: Julie Grunebaum
Sound: Thomas Fourel
Edit: Pauline Rebière
Sound edit: Thomas Fourel, Antoine Bailly
Sound mix: Pierre Bariaud
Art Director: Gogi Mikeladze
Costume Designer: Ketevan Phalavandishvili

France / Georgia - 2014 - 94 minutes - 1:85 - Dolby 5.1 - Color - DCP & 35mm