



VISCERAL EXPERIENCE
Matyas Erdely makes sure
lead actor Geza Rohrig is
in the frame's center.

ARTISANS

Son of Saul

Matyas Erdely, cinematographer

Matthieu Taponier, editor

Tamas Zanyi, sound

Eva Zabezsinszkij, casting director

Laszlo Rajk, production designer

Laszlo Melis, composer

Laszlo Nemes filmed "Son of Saul" in Hungary in 28 days, for €1.5 million (\$1.6 million). The lead, Geza Rohrig, is always in focus, while many key events are on the edges of the frame or even off-camera. "I wanted the visceral experience of the camp, so you have to be matter of fact," he says. He talked about some key contributors.

ERDELY

"He was cinematographer, lighting cameraman and operator. Matyas said he and the actor, Geza Rohrig, had to perform a well-choreographed dance, since they were so connected to each other. Matyas didn't try to make it beautiful. He didn't go for cheap emotions, but tried to create an image as raw as possible."

TAPONIER

"The film is very immersive and organic, with the viewer sharing time and space with the main character. Because of the overall visual strategy, we had to establish the grammar of the film beforehand; we knew we wouldn't have a lot of coverage, and we had very limited options. Matthieu was on the set because so many editing questions came into the foreground while we were shooting, questions that had to be answered. If you follow the main character, where do you cut? Those kind of questions. Then we had to find the right rhythm and the cutting points, which had to be invented during shooting."

ZANYI

"He was the sound designer who also did sound mixing and editing, of course assisted by other people. I warned him at least 50% of the film would be sound. We spent almost five months in post-production on the sound. We kept adding layers, because the sound is suggesting that there is much more than the audience can see. So we added human voices, and the sound spectrum of the crematorium, which is always there, always making noise. At some point, we had to take away some sound, because it was overwhelming. I think the most difficult part was the human voices, the cries and shouts in the gas chambers."

ZABEZSINSZKI

"She is a screenwriter and I was the first one to offer her a job as a casting director. We went through a lengthy e-casting process, people sending us videos. We wanted people from several backgrounds, several countries, a lot of languages. So we had people from Poland, Germany, Israel, Romania and, of course, Hungary."

RAJK

"For him, our collaboration was to determine how to re-create specific buildings within the concentration camp. We couldn't re-create the crematorium inch by inch. Our challenge was to create the logic of a crematorium, the spaces, how the rooms were interconnected in their logic, rather than re-create it exactly — how to give it an organic believability."

MELIS

"I didn't want a 'score,' it wouldn't have been right. We wanted something where you cannot trace the music, you cannot put your finger on it. It's very hidden; that was one of his achievements. The second achievement was to find the final song at the end. He helped us get access to lost music from Transylvania, very folkloric and Hasidic. This civilization has vanished, so this is a song from a lost world. That was an important contribution."



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LASZLO NEMES