



MID-AUGUST LUNCH Pranzo di ferragosto

Italy | 2008 | 75m | U

Director: Gianni Di Gregorio

Screenplay: Gianni Di Gregorio, Simone Riccardini (story)

Cinematography: Gian Enrico Bianchi

Original Music: Ratchev & Carratello

Leading Players: Alfonso Santagata, Gianni di Gregorio, Grazia Cesarini Sforza, Maria Cali

filmnote

Italian director Gianni Di Gregorio's 2008 release, *Mid-August Lunch*, is a perceptive comedy that takes place over the course of two mid-August days for the holiday season of Ferragosto, whereby typically everybody in Italy wishes to be out of town in the cool air with loved ones. However, this is not the case for the film's protagonist Gianni, a middle-aged single man who finds himself stuck inside his apartment with his demanding, yet gentle and spirited mother.

Although it becomes clear that Gianni hails from a middleclass, impoverished family, it is apparent from an aesthetic viewpoint that at this time Gianni is currently struggling for money. This is why he graciously agrees to provide hospitality for his landlord's aunt Marina over this holiday season in return for the manager to cut off all of Gianni's current debts. However, Gianni finds himself not only having to look after his own demanding mother and his landlord's aunt, but also for a few hundred euros, his doctor's mother, Grazia.

What follows are many heart-warming humorous moments as Gianni finds himself waiting on all of the elderly women, all the while trying to make sure each of the women get along and remain happy.

This is director Gianni Di Gregorio's directorial debut, which he has also written and performs in, clearly showing that he is a passionate film-maker with a diverse range of skills. He uses a non-professional cast and cleverly takes advantage of their simple yet spontaneous acting style, which gives the film a social-realistic quality that makes the film feel more honest and raw. It also goes to show how strong a low-budget independent film can be if the film-maker has enough ability and passion, proven by the vast amount of awards and critical acclaim the film has gained since screenings at various film festivals all over the world.

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All in all, *Mid-August Lunch* is a film to be enjoyed by everyone and truly outlines the spirited nature of older people, juxtaposed with their real sense of loneliness. It also draws attention to the inability or lack of care that these women's children apparently have for them, especially since the film is set over a holiday season that ought to be celebrated by all loved ones. These sombre, sentimental points raised by the film go some way in reflecting society's attitude to the elderly in contemporary life today. However, the director reminds the audience with humour and warmth of the wonderful relationships and camaraderie that exist between the elderly and the respect they ought to have from younger generations.

In summary, Di Gregorio serves up an entertaining film that informs with great poignancy, making it a very worthwhile film to watch.

BFF Film Note by Thomas Adamson

Tomorrow at Bath Film Festival 2009...

Friday 20 November, 7.00pm | Chapel Arts | £6 / £4

Afghan Star

Havana Marking | UK, Afghanistan | 87m | 12A tbc | sub-titles

After decades of war and Taliban rule a new TV talent show is taking Afghanistan by storm. Two thousand contestants are competing to be the next Afghan pop idol while over a third of the population are tuning in and voting for their favourite singers by mobile phone. Winner of Best Director and the Audience Award at Sundance 2009, this timely and moving documentary follows four contestants (including two women) from the regional auditions to the final. Events take a frightening turn as one female contestant dances on stage and risks her own life.

Director Havana Marking will be at the screening to take questions from the audience.

Friday 20 November, 9.00pm | Little Theatre | £7 / £5

Birdwatchers / La terra degli uomini rossi

Marco Bechis | Italy, Brazil | 108m | 15 | sub-titles

Pared down to the point of feeling like a documentary (perhaps by Herzog), this strikingly photographed film presents the bald injustice of the plight of Brazil's Guanari people, and the story of one group's bid to reclaim their land, without dwelling on the subtleties. The title refers to the rich tourists who ply the river, satisfied only if they spot, as well as the birdlife, typical examples of indigenous people on the riverbank. A haunting film of forceful eloquence.

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