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presenteert

L'IMBALSAMATORE



Een speelfilm van Matteo Garrone

L'IMBALSAMATORE - een speelfilm van Matteo Garrone

Synopsis

Peppino (**Ernesto Mahieux**), een dwerg van middelbare leeftijd, leeft in een kleine kustplaats in de buurt van Napels. Als geoefend dierenopzetter heeft hij naast zijn gewone opzetwerk ook schimmige connecties met de locale onderwereld waarvoor hij zo nu en dan mensenlijken volpropt met smokkelwaar.

In de dierentuin ontmoet hij Valerio (**Valerio Foglia Manzillo**), een bijzonder lange, goed uitziende jongeman met een erg vriendelijk voorkomen en een passie voor dieren. Meteen weet de dwerg Peppino de reus Valerio te bespelen. Hij biedt hem een beter betalende, meer uitdagende baan dan het restaurantwerk dat Valerio nu verricht, als assistent in diens werkplaats.

In snel tempo ontstaat er een hechte mentor-pupil relatie en al manipulerend bouwt Peppino een stevige vriendschap op met de wat naïeve en zeker passieve knappe jongen.

Niet bij machte openlijk uit te komen voor zijn seksuele verlangens naar de jongeman, bevredigt Peppino zijn begere naar Valerio door het organiseren van *double dates* met hoertjes. Hoe strakker de band tussen de twee mannen, des te gespannener wordt de leefsituatie bij Valerio's familie thuis. Peppino grijpt zijn kans en laat Valerio bij hem intrekken.

Dan ontmoet Valerio de mooie, onberekenbare Deborah (**Elisabetta Rocchetti**). De bandeloze jonge vrouw werkt zich vanaf de eerste ontmoeting meteen als een wig tussen Peppino en zijn grote liefde en hoewel Peppino in eerste instantie nog probeert te leven met deze vrouw in hun midden groeit de weerstand snel.

De ongrijpbare *ménage-à-trois* verwordt tot een kat en muis spel, een tot een donker einde gedoemd avontuur.

L'Imbalsamatore van **Matteo Garrone** is gebaseerd op een waar verhaal over een dwerg die door zijn mannelijke geliefde en diens zwangere vriendin werd vermoord in de nabijheid van het treinstation van Rome.

"A compelling drama of unfulfilled dreams and frustrated desires, L'IMBALSAMATORE pulls the audience into a dark, mesmerizing world that never loosens its grip." - David Rooney, *Variety*

L'IMBALSAMATORE

101 min. / 35 mm / Italiaanstalig / Kleur / Technicolor widescreen / Digital Dolby / Italië 2002
Distributie: Cinemien

L'IMBALSAMATORE - CREW

Regie	Matteo Garrone
Scenario	Ugo Chiti, Matteo Garrone & Massimo Gaudioso
Producent	Domenico Procacci / Fandango
Camera	Marco Onorato
Geluid	Maricetta Lombardo
Montage	Marco Spoletini
Filmmuziek	Banda Osiris
Art Direction	Paolo Bonfini
Regie-assistentie	Salvatore Sansone
Kleding	Francesca Leoneff



L'IMBALSAMATORE - CAST

Peppino	Ernesto Mahieux
Diego	Valerio Foglia Manzillo
Deborah	Elisabetta Rocchetti
Deborah's moeder	Lina Bernardi
Deborah's vader	Pietro Biondi

Over regisseur **MATTEO GARRONE**

Matteo Garrone (Rome, 1968) won op Nanni Moretti's Sacher Festival met een korte film over immigranten, *Silhouettes* (1996), een aantal hoofdprijzen. Later werkte hij deze korte film uit tot lange film onder de titel *Terra di Mezzo*. Hiermee won hij op het Filmfestival van Turijn de Speciale Jury Prijs en de Cipputi Prijs.

Garrone bleef als onafhankelijk filmer werken met kleine budgetten en maakte films als *Bienvenuto Spirito Santo* en *Ospiti*, die werd geselecteerd voor festivals in Brussel, Rotterdam, Vancouver en Londen.

Zijn derde lange speelfilm, *Estate Romana* (2000) was onderdeel van de officiële selectie op het Festival van Venetië en deed mee op festivals in Londen, Buenos Aires en Rotterdam.

L'Imbalsamatore (2002) is zijn eerste film die is gemaakt met een ruimer budget, en wordt door velen gezien als zijn eerste 'volwassen' film.



FILMOGRAPHY

Silhouette (1996)
korte film, 16mm, 20'

Terra di mezzo (1997)
speelfilm, 35mm, 80'

Benvienido Spirito Santo (1997)
documentaire, 16mm, colour, 50'

Un caso di forza maggiore (1998)
korte film, 35mm, 10'

Oreste Pipolo, fotografo di matrimoni (1998)
documentaire, 16mm, 50'

Ospiti (1998)
speelfilm, 35mm, 82'

Estate Romana (2000)
speelfilm, 35mm, 90'

L'Imbalsamatore (2002)
Speelfilm, 35 mm, 101'

L'IMBALSAMATORE - Over acteur ERNESTO MAHIEUX
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Filmographie

1982	GIURAMENTO	regie Alfonso Brescia
1984	GUAPPARIA	regie Stelvio Massi
	TORNA	regie Stelvio Massi
1985	MACCHERONI	regie Ettore Scola
1986	TERNOSECCO	regie Giancarlo Giannini
	SEPARATI IN CASA	regie Riccardo Pazzaglia
1990	C'E POSTO PER TUTTI	regie Giancarlo Planta
2002	L'IMBALSAMATORE	regie Matteo Garrone

L'IMBALSAMATORE - Over attrice ELISABETTA ROCCHETTI
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Filmographie

1996	COMPAGNA DI VIAGGIO	regie Peter del Monte
1997	I COLORI DEL DIAVOLO	regie Alen Jessua
	LA CLASSE NON E ACQUA	regie Cecilia Calvi
	CUORI PERDUTI	regie Teresio Spalla
1998	LA BALLATA DEI LAVAVETRI	regie Peter del Monte
1999	BESAME MUCHO	regie Maurizio Ponti
	LA PRIMA VOLTA	regie Massimo Martella
2000	TOBIA EL CAFFE	regie Gianfranco Mingozzi
2001	LE TRE MOGLI	regie Marco Rosi
	IL PIACERE DI PIACERE	regie Luca Verdone
	L'ULTIMO BACIO	regie Gabriele Muccino
	IL CHIMICO	regie Matteo Garrone
	NON HO SONNO	regie Dario Argento
2002	L'IMBALSAMATORE	regie Matteo Garrone

A DARK TALE - by *Cristiana Paternò*

The Embalmer is Garrone's fourth film and is the demonstration that he is a mature artist. His films are always highly original but up until *The Embalmer*, Garrone had always gone for a style that combined documentary with fiction with characters on the outer edges of society.

Before, you worked with amateurs or with professionals who were willing to take off their masks.

I do that this time too, in the sense that I try to confuse the character with the individual. The difference lies in the screenplay, that I wrote with Ugo Chiti and Massimo Gaudioso. For the first time in my career I worked with an extremely well-structured script.

To what degree does the film differ from the real story?

I changed it completely but held onto the core of the story. There were lots of elements that could have come across as clichés: heroin, the girl's being a prostitute... and so together with the writers, we decided to turn this into the story of a weak boy who is drawn in by the magnetic personalities of the girl and the taxidermist to the degree that they take over his mind. In the end he is the one who exploits the situation. Both the taxidermist and the girl are looking for beauty and are ready and willing to manipulate anything and anyone to get it. That makes Valerio into a sort of dark lady.

Were you inspired by a classic noir or melodrama of the past?

I thought of films like Fritz Lang's *The Scarlet Road* and Otto Preminger's *Laura*. That is why I added an extra element in the form of the organised crime of Naples, the Camorra. I believe that Lynch would have relished making this film. Basically this is a fairytale, albeit a dark fairytale where the baddie ends up as the victim of his intended victim.

How did you select your locations?

I aimed for a rarefied setting, suspended in time and disconcerting that would remind people of noirs. This is the first time I made a film in specially built sets.

You describe the taxidermist's craft in great detail. How did you research this?

I was helped by a real taxidermist called Enzo Cicala who works in Naples. Taxidermy and embalming is an art form although its creativity requires death. Stuffed animals make one uneasy and nobody is really ever relaxed when in the company of an embalmer



Variety (David Rooney)- Reviewed at Technicolor, Rome, May 13, 2002.

"Drawing inspiration from a Rome tabloid case of several years back to create a compelling drama of unfulfilled dreams and frustrated desires, "The Embalmer" pulls the audience into a dark, mesmerizing world that never loosens its grip. While the story of an unsustainable romantic triangle that disintegrates into violence and tragedy could have slid easily into blackly comic grotesquery, director Matteo Garrone's measured approach and soulfully humane focus combine to dignify the characters, allowing the tale of solitude, longing and sorrow to inch quietly under the viewer's skin.

With "The Embalmer," the director successfully negotiates a leap into complex, mature territory as well as onto a large, more ambitious production canvas. At the same time, he shows a healthy disdain for the sort of increased slickness that transition usually dictates, maintaining some rough edges that give the drama texture.

Fascinatingly drawn central character is Peppino (Ernesto Mahieux), a middle-aged dwarf who's a skilled taxidermist with connections to the local underworld in a small coastal town outside Naples. At the zoo, he meets Valerio (Valerio Foglia Manzillo), an extremely tall, hunky young guy with a friendly disposition and a passion for animals. Offering better wages and a more interesting alternative to waiting tables, Peppino invites Valerio to assist him in his workshop, quickly establishing a rapport of firm friendship and protege-mentor admiration.

Unable to be open about his sexuality, Peppino sublimates his physical desire for Valerio by organizing double dates with hookers. Their bond solidifies further when the younger man's living situation with his family becomes strained, prompting him to move in with Peppino. When Valerio meets Deborah (Elisabetta Rocchetti), a rootless young woman who insinuates herself into his bed and into their lives and home, Peppino initially tries to accept the changes but becomes increasingly resentful of the intrusion.

Without cranking up any kind of artificial thriller mechanism, Garrone and co-scripters Ugo Chiti and Massimo Gaudioso expertly build an underlying sense of dread. This is insinuated initially through images of entrapment and imprisonment, and the disturbing presence of death and mummification shown in animal carcasses. In a far more macabre way, death figures in Peppino's work for the Mob, stitching heroin sachets into human corpses for transportation, a sideline of which Valerio appears ignorant.

The uneasy sense of some ugly development to come also emerges in the well-crafted look of the film, which remains visually dark, shot in grim, murky tones. Backed by a distinctive, melancholy score, the wintry exteriors underline the colorlessness of the environment, with its leaden skies, squat, characterless buildings, fog-bound roads, bleak beachfront and churning gray seas making a moody widescreen stage for the three-character piece.

Garrone skillfully welds together a carefully constructed narrative with natural, seemingly unpolished dialogue and an approach to character development that's deceptively loose and unstudied. In this aspect, he is helped immeasurably by Mahieux's nuanced performance in the pivotal role: sly and slightly sinister but by no means unlikely. The actor walks a fine line between sleazy manipulation and pent-up desperation, with the full extent of his character's aching need becoming etched into his features as Peppino is driven to increasingly rash measures.

A model without previous acting experience, Foglia Manzillo brings sensitivity and openness to a difficult role. Valerio's choices rarely are backed by explicit motivations and the decision to play the uncertain sexual side of his relationship with Peppino mostly off screen adds to this general vagueness. But his behavior remains plausible as the young man wavers in his loyalties, weighing the attraction of an utterly predictable, restrictive future of familial responsibility and unrewarding work against the more stimulating life offered by his odd, intelligent friend.

Rocchetti's role is more unsympathetic, with Deborah no less manipulative than Peppino but far less giving. However, the actress communicates a strong sense of longing that gives her an affinity with the triangle's other elements."