

**Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana**

*presents*

*a film by*

**MARCO TULLIO GIORDANA**

# The Best of Youth

(La Meglio Gioventù)

*written by*

**SANDRO PETRAGLIA and STEFANO RULLI**

*produced by*

**ANGELO BARBAGALLO**

*a **Rai Fiction** production*

*realized by **BìBì Film Tv***

*international distribution **Rai Trade***

## Technical Cast

Director	Marco Tullio Giordana
Screenplay	Sandro Petraglia Stefano Rulli
Director of Photography	Roberto Forza
Camera Operator	Vincenzo Carpineta
1st Assistant Director and Casting	Barbara Melega
Production Designer	Franco Ceraolo
Costume Designer	Elisabetta Montaldo
Sound Designer	Fulgenzio Ceccon
Boom Operator	Decio Trani
Film Editor	Roberto Missiroli a.m.c.
General Organizer	Gianfranco Barbagallo
Executive Producer	Alessandro Calosci
RAI Production Managers	Tonino Nieddu Fabrizio Zappi
Produced by a production	Angelo Barbagallo RAI Fiction
International Distribution	RAI Trade Booth n.10 Espace Riviera Palais des Festival +39 06 37498469 +39 335 5994202 <a href="http://www.raitrade.it">www.raitrade.it</a> <a href="mailto:info@raitrade.it">info@raitrade.it</a>
Press Office	Studio PUNTOeVIRGOLA Olivia Alighiero e Flavia Schiavi tel. +39.06.39388909 <a href="mailto:puntoevirgola@iol.it">puntoevirgola@iol.it</a>
35mm. - colour - dolby digital - 1.78 - 366'	
Photographs by	Angelo R. Turetta
Interviews by	Lorenzo Codelli

## Cast

Nicola Carati	Luigi Lo Cascio
Matteo Carati	Alessio Boni
Adriana Carati	Adriana Asti
Giulia Monfalco	Sonia Bergamasco
Carlo Tommasi	Fabrizio Gifuni
Mirella Utano	Maya Sansa
Francesca Carati	Valentina Carnelutti
Giorgia	Jasmine Trinca
Angelo Carati	Andrea Tidona
Giovanna Carati	Lidia Vitale
Sara Carati	Camilla Filippi
Sara Carati 8 years	Greta Cavuoti
Sara Carati 5 years	Sara Pavoncello
Vitale Micavi	Claudio Gioè
Luigino	Paolo Bonanni
Andrea Utano	Riccardo Scamarcio
Berto	Giovanni Scifoni
Medicine Professor	Mario Schiano
Literature Professor	Michele Melega
Therese	Therese Vadem
Pusher	Stefano Abbati
Maghribi	Giovanni Martorana
Don Vito	Paolo De Vita
Saro	Mimmo Mignemi
Agent Enzo	Domenico Centamore
Police Commissioner Sicily	Pippo Montalbano
Sicilian Peasant	Gaspere Cucinella
Butcher	Dario Veca
Nurse	Nicola Vigilante
Second Lieutenant	Marcello Prayer
Agent Mario	Walter Da Pozzo
Brigo	Krum De Nicola
Terrorist	Maurizio Di Carmine
President Court of Turin	Roberto Accornero
Prisoner "Tangentopoli" (Bribesville)	Fabio Camilli
Priest Palermo	Antonello Puglisi
Owner of Art Gallery	Patrizia Punzo
Francesca Carati 8 years	Nila Carnelutti
Andrea Utano 6 years	Francesco La Macchia

## The plot

*La Meglio Gioventù* tells the story of an Italian family from the end of the 60s till nowadays. The lives of two brothers, Nicola and Matteo, are the heart of the story. At first they share the same dreams, the same hopes, the same books and friendships. Meeting Giorgia, a girl with mental disorders, will be determinant for the future of the two brothers: Nicola decides to become a psychiatrist, Matteo abandons his studies and joins the police.

Angelo – the father – is a loving parent and husband. The family experiences his exuberance with tolerant complaisance. Adriana – the mother – is a modern and irreproachable teacher, who loves her pupils like her own children.

Then we have Giovanna, the eldest daughter, who joined the magistracy very young, and Francesca, the last member of the family. She will marry Carlo, Nicola's best friend, who will take up an important role in the Bank of Italy and will – therefore – be in the sights of terrorist groups during the "leaden years" (*'Anni di piombo' known as the "leaden years" is the term given to the 1970s in Italy, as the decade was marked by violent protest and intense terrorist activity*). These are the members of the family.

The last characters are Giulia, Nicola's greatest love, who will give birth to Sara, and Mirella, who will bump, in different moments and different ways, into the lives of Matteo and Nicola.

Through this little group of characters *La Meglio Gioventù* deals with the most crucial events and sites of Italy's history: Florence during the flooding, Sicily and its struggle against the Mafia, the great football matches that saw Italy's national team playing against Korea and Germany, songs that mark an epoch, Turin during the 70s with its blue-collar-workers, Milan during the 80s, the youth movements, terrorism, the crisis during the 90s, the efforts made to rebuild and reinvent a modern nation. Our characters will reluctantly pursue their passions: they will stumble over history, they will grow up,



hurt themselves, nurture new illusions and put themselves at stake again. Like it happens for everyone.

*La Meglio Gioventù* – both the title of a Friulian poetry collection by Pier Paolo Pasolini and an old song, sung by the Alpine troops – is the portrait of a generation, that tried – despite its contradictions, its ingenuous and violent furies, its authoritative voice, sometimes out of tune – not to accept the world as it is, but to make it a little bit better than they found it.



## interview with Marco Tullio Giordana director

... a few years ago Angelo Barbagallo proposed me to direct *La meglio gioventù*. I had already been working with Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli for the screenplay of *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* and I knew it would have been an interesting project. The first pages already captured me. I always thought of it as a single *corpus*, a single movie; dividing it up into episodes for the television was merely accidental. At the same time, such an articulation produces a length that cinema can't afford: six hours time, an infinite lapse of time, almost novelistic: it allows you to follow the life of many characters and many parallel stories, it enables you to dilate what we have to cut out, to synthesise in a movie. Moreover –besides the challenge itself- it had been RAI, the Italian State Television, that had commissioned us to tell an important chapter of our history, of our country, of our time. It would have been wrong not to encourage such an effort. They asked us not to work on stereotypes, but, on the contrary, to develop an original point of view, completely different from all the standards of serial products. It was one of those rare cases in which we had been asked to do a “public service”. The conditions were particularly favourable: a significant productive dimension (guaranteed by the reliability of a producer like Angelo Barbagallo) and a complete freedom in putting together the cast and choosing the crew.

Italian cinema often presented stories of families, like *The Earth trembles* or *Rocco and His Brothers* and *The Damned* by Luchino Visconti, *Fists in the pocket* by Marco Bellocchio, *The Family* by Ettore Scola. More recently also Gianni Amelio dealt with the topic of the family in *The Way we Laughed*, and even *The Hundred Steps*, if we want, talks about a conflict within the family and about the relationship love/hatred that tears it members. In *La meglio gioventù* there's one scene –when Matteo returns to his family on New Year's Eve- that resembles a similar scene of *Rocco and His Brothers*, when Simone (Renato Salvatori) returns back home. I loved Visconti's movies when I was a young man. I was bucking the trend: during the 70s my friends devoted to cinema thought that I was a little bit unorthodox! Rossellini was their idol and compared to him Visconti was just a bulky wreck. To be honest, I loved both and never understood why we had to take side for one of these *parties*. The good thing about cinema is that you can see and love many different things, even antithetic ones: Cinema has no rules – says Godard – that's why people still love it! Therefore: Visconti as well as Rossellini. In *La meglio gioventù* you can discover both influences. Of course it is very different from their movies - it couldn't be otherwise. But it's like the painters of the Trans Avant-garde –Chia, Clemente, Cucchi: they tried to reinvent a relationship with the classical painting. In a very indirect, maybe only virtual way, there is a feeling in this movie that reminds us of *those* movies. I didn't try to recreate the style: there's no evident quotation or if there is one, it's very distorted and hidden.

Lately I realize I identify myself with *all* the protagonists of a movie. At one time it was natural to espouse a point of view, to take part, to back someone. Now I don't elude the charm of characters that are completely different from me, even the most distanced. For example: Nicola and Matteo, the two brothers protagonists of *La meglio gioventù*, come from the same family; presumably they had the same education, did the same studies, had the same friendships (there's just one year difference between the two brothers) and thus, they couldn't have been more different. There's something in them that rhymes: a same sensitivity, a similar love for culture. Matteo's sensitivity is almost pathological and prevents him from growing up, whereas Nicola is capable of defeating, of elaborating his



ghosts. Even though he will have to deal with disillusion, he won't be held hostage, but will try to transform it in experience. With whom do I identify myself more? With both of them. I have been a tormented, negative, almost self-murdering boy, like Matteo. But, at the same time, I've been volitive, idealistic and happy like Nicola. Matteo is very gifted: he loves books and poetry, is curious about people, but doesn't have the courage to exploit these capabilities, to choose them for his life. He even becomes a policeman, because then he won't have to take decisions any more. The others will take decisions for him and he will just follow orders. The barrack, the uniform (just *to be* like the others) are for him the rule and the order in that chaos he doesn't stand any more. On the contrary Nicola is able to transform his university studies which do not interest him very much (at the beginning he's a doctor not really convinced about his vocation), into his *raison d'être*. He takes every chance to know himself better. As soon as fortune favours him, he mounts it, without being afraid of falling down or getting hurt. On the contrary, Matteo's emotions, even the most generous ones, perish, because he's not able to follow them. Matteo is a list of unaccomplished things, a would-be-artist (at the beginning he cultivates the passion for photography) who will end up taking photographs of corpses and scenes of the crimes for the forensic police. He falls in love with Giorgia and loses her because of his shyness, because he's afraid of dealing with a relationship that will be difficult. The same thing happens with Mirella, even though she appears to him as a very sunny and enamoured person. Nicola is not afraid of women, doesn't fear them. He falls in love almost every second, “*he*



*loves the idea of being in love*”, as Jules says about Jim in Truffat’s movie (I used the main theme of *Jule et Jim*’s soundtrack in *La meglio gioventù!*). Nicola falls in love with people, with friends, with intellectual affairs, always ready to pack his bags and set off. Women are for him like the key to knowledge. He competes with them; their emancipation isn’t confusing nor intimidating. He feels them similar, near. A quality he’ll keep even in his later years, and not only for the sake of seducing them: Nicola is deeply, intimately on their side. There is even a feminine element in him.

You need the language to communicate, but also to hide things: it is the first form of alienation. In each and every relationship there is something that is not said, something that lies underwater, when words sound like *intentions*. This happens even more often in family relationships: here we have the greatest affection as well as the biggest disagreements – a sort of hidden aggressiveness. I’m not trying to put up a psychoanalytic thesis, but more a phenomenological one; as a director I’m dealing more with *how* it happens than *why* it happens. The why is more important for the actors, because they have to build up a motivation. A director is more concerned with recreating as precisely and naturally as possible the way people exchange or hold back signs. In every family, where such ways are exasperated, there’s something intimate, embarrassing, something shameful. We protect ourselves from the other members of the family –from our parents, from our brothers, from our children- for we know that this love needs to raise limits, censures. Even more: it needs to become inaccessible because of the big taboo upon which all modern cultures, mainly for patrimonial reasons, are based: incest. The

family is the place of the impossible love-stories and its members try to avoid any kind of Eros. That is why all the feelings that are at stake are so violent, so excessive, so fatal.

You don’t always have to explain everything. For example: you don’t get to know how Giulia –the woman Nicola falls in love with and who will give birth to their daughter – becomes a terrorist. Maybe she acted just like the others who were feeling helpless and inhibited; it was the absolute inhospitality and deafness with which politics was dealing with their illusions at that time. Loneliness, the feeling of not belonging anywhere. I’m not trying to defend them, but I know that they took such decisions out of a deep strong pain, so strong that the only way to free oneself was to inflict it to somebody else. Nowadays we are not interested in knowing all this, because it’s something belonging to the past. It wouldn’t have been so ten or twenty years ago, when we were keen on getting aware of how and why: terrorism was still active at that time; it existed and was not that marginal and fortunately isolated problem of nowadays. I didn’t want to tell a story about terrorism, but the story about a terrorist, *about her*. Giulia. I’m very interested in people with leaks in their lives. Maybe Giulia is, along with Matteo, the most tragic character of the movie. Like Matteo she abandons everything that life could offer her. A farewell from music, from love, from her daughter, from her partner. In a self-injuring way, she keeps on amputating parts of her life, almost like an addict. There are times in which these kinds of implosions don’t produce any social contamination: you find yourself alone, foolish, abandoned and that’s all. In other periods such implosions become collective movements, experiences you do in a group. In that case it is more difficult to understand the pathology and find the cure.

I start understanding a movie during the screen-tests with the actors. That’s why I do many of them. I give them just little hints about their character. I prefer them to show me *their* interpretation, the feeling they got while reading the part. Thanks to these improvisations I often find out new even unpredictable aspects about the characters. Putting together the cast is for me very important. It takes up most of the time of preparation. I need to choose even the last of the extras, to be sure that everyone is tuned the same and will sound like an orchestra. It was easy to choose some actors I had already worked with. For example I was sure that **Luigi Lo Cascio** would have played with extreme fineness the role of Nicola. The role seemed to have been written for him. He is one of the few Italian actors who are able to interpret the role of an intellectual without making it pedantic and unrealistic. He is capable of playing very different characters and psychologies and I had had a display of his talent in *The Hundred Steps*.

With the other actors it was like a placing a bet. I had seen **Alessio Boni** (Matteo) in a TV production and I had felt that he was very talented. Both Boni and Lo Cascio, Fabrizio Gifuni and Claudio Gioè have attended the Accademia d’Arte Drammatica Silvio d’Amico in Rome. They had been studying together. I knew it and I liked the fact that their friendship was *real*, not only a formal one. Alessio Boni truly impressed me during the screen-test. He was able to deliver on scene the full fragility of Matteo, hidden behind his permanent aggressive reactions. Under the rind you could feel the gentleness of a very meek person, seriously doubting about himself.

**Fabrizio Gifuni** was very courageous in accepting a role that was originally confined to just a few scenes but was later expanded during the shooting. He’s a very talented actor and people tend to

underline his dramatic side: in *La meglio gioventù* he could express a *vis comica* that is congenial to him in real life, but he is rarely asked on the screen. I can say the same for **Claudio Gioè**, whose character originally had to disappear in the second episode but then assumed a very important role: it was the persistence of a friendship between different social classes. Such feelings were only possible at that time. Nowadays we are so fully compliant with our social group, with our profession, our income and our consumerist attitude, that such friendships would be impossible.

I had admired **Sonia Bergamasco** in *Probably Love* by Giuseppe Bertolucci. I was impressed by her. She too comes from the theatre scene and has worked with Carmelo Bene for a long time. I knew she had obtained the piano diploma so I decided to confer Giulia, her character, the same talent. That gave me the opportunity to shoot even those scenes in which she’s playing in direct sound. As a former music student, I can’t stand to see actors pretending to play. This love for music –a kind of love that needs great efforts, dedication and self-sacrifice – is an important feature of Giulia. Holding back this passion explains the self-punishing aspect of her character very well.

I had seen **Jasmine Trinca** playing in *The Son’s Room* by Nanni Moretti when she was still a teen-ager. I thought she would have interpreted the role of Giorgia as I was imagining it: a young girl who has all the qualities of a “normal” being at hand, who is still in the balance. If I had to choose one character of the movie to identify with, I would chose her. She would need very little to become like everybody else, maybe just affection or attention. Instead they have drawn her away, locking her up in a clinic where they try to cure her with the shock therapy. This is what marks her as “insane”. We are close to madness with our neurosis, our unease, our loss of control. If only Giorgia hadn’t been locked up in those mental hospitals, that were fortunately closed by Franco Basaglia (even though they are now thinking of restoring them)! Jasmine found her way alone: she invented that key of being torn between absence and anxiety, between aggressiveness and that call for help. I think that “directing” actors is something very delicate. Each actor is different and there’s no golden rule for all of them. You need to back some of them. Others need to be in the hands of the director, almost like hostages. Some others need certainties and some simply need an alternately hot and cold shower. Actors are strange: you constantly have to keep in mind that they are mostly exposed in a movie, they *are* the movie, the ones that risk more than the others, even more than the director or the producer. I choose them by analysing them as human beings, trying to understand if they are familiar to the character they’ll play, if they feel near to it, if they love it or even if they hate it, thus maintaining a strong relationship to the character. I’m not obsessed with an absolute control over the actors: I don’t search for it, I don’t want it. They have to *exist* on the screen, they have to be alive, transmit the emotions they *really* feel – they don’t have to emulate a series of instructions. And in order to obtain this, sometimes I’m even more paranoid than those directors that want everything to be done the way they want. It’s just a different obsession. In my work I can’t be very theoretic: I know it’s a work *with* the actors, not *on* the actors.

I had seen **Maya Sansa** playing in Marco Bellocchio’s *The Nanny* and even though that character was completely different from Mirella I had the feeling that she could have played the role with all her power and her luminosity. It was a difficult role: a young woman that suffers the great violence of a man who loves her but refuses to be involved with her. I was looking for an actress who wouldn’t play the role of the victim. **Andrea Tidona** had worked with me in *The Hundred Steps*. He proposed himself to play the role of the father – I had chosen him for another role. But after the screen-test I

asked myself why hadn’t I thought about it before. Tidona too comes from the theatre scene; I have a particular preference for those who tread the boards: its easier to work with them, even though I only worked in theatre in one occasion. Theatre tempers differently than cinema does, it exposes the actors to the direct contact with the audience. One always has to be on the ball and –once the première is over, with the director being on stage, checking out everything- you can stand on your own two feet. **Adriana Asti** –an actress with lots of experience- has worked with all our greatest directors: from Visconti to De Sica, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Ronconi- I had already met her at the time of *Pasolini, an Italian Crime*. I was sure she would illuminate the character of Adriana, with her surrealist Lombard madness, in other words, the same that we find in Gadda. Moreover she has a great sense of humour, she is a really brilliant and clever person, with an incredible humbleness and patience, if you consider her rank and her talent. I liked the idea of the mother coming from Milan and the father from Rome. I liked to have a mixture of places, mentalities and traditions within a family and to have parents that were permanently at each other’s throats, as if arguing all the time was a paradox way of showing one’s affection for the other.

*La meglio gioventù* ends like a relay race. Nicola passes the baton to the next generation. Others do not succeed in this attempt or maybe they don’t even have a baton to transmit and stop before reaching the end line, exhausted. The movie is all about this. It’s not a topic within ideologies - we are not talking about Italy’s left-wing. It’s a broader discussion about Italy in its entirety, the West, the feeling of being at the end of an entire civilization. We don’t believe in a global salvation but there’s a clear appeal at one’s consciousness, at the decisions each one has to take. I don’t think it is pessimistic to abandon the illusion of “magnificent and progressive destinies”, on the contrary I see this as an improvement in comparison to the general agreement that is always requested, to the unconditional adhesion to present mythologems. The characters of *La meglio gioventù* fascinated me, because they are completely different, not from the Italians, but from *how* the Italians are *depicted*, mainly by television. Television tries to elude all their worries, to anaesthetize their anxiety; it induces them to a sort of bulimic consumerism (and one tends to ask himself: with which money?) and brings them in a permanent state of dizziness, just in case they might be tempted to think.

---

**Marco Tullio Giordana**’s first movie was *To Love the Damned* (1980). In 1981 he realized *La Caduta degli Angeli Ribelli*, and in 1982 the video *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, based on a score by Benjamin Britten. In 1983 he shoots for television *Notti e nebbie*, based on the novel by Carlo Castellana, and in 1988 *Appuntamento a Liverpool*. In 1991 he directs *La neve sul fuoco*, an episodi of the movie *Especially on Sunday* (the other episodes were directed by Giuseppe Bertolucci, Giuseppe Tornatore, Francesco Barilli). In 1994 he participates in the collective movie *L’Unico Paese al Mondo* (other directors: Francesca Archibugi, Antonio Capuano, Daniele Luchetti, Mario Martone, Nanni Moretti, Marco Risi, Stefano Rulli). In 1995 he directs *Pasolini, an Italian Crime*, and in 1996 he produces and directs for RAI and UNICEF the movie *The White Shoes* (together with Gianni Amelio, Marco Risi, Alessandro D’Alatri and Mario Martone). In 1997 he realizes the documentary *La rovina della patria* and in 2000 he directs *The Hundred Steps*. In 1990 at the Teatro Verdi di Trieste he directed the *Elisir of Love* by Gaetano Donizetti and in 1997 the play *Morte di Galeazzo Ciano*, by Enzo Siciliano, for the Carignano Theatre in Turin. He published *Vita segreta del signore delle macchine* (1990) and the essay *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* (1994).

## interview with Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli scriptwriters

STEFANO RULLI – For many years we had been thinking about writing a movie on the 70s, for this had been the most important period in our lives, the one that had branded us. We started collecting stories, personal experiences and by the time we had found the key to tell about all this in *La meglio gioventù*, we also had acquired a higher flexibility, a greater ability of withstanding schematic temptations and a greater love for all the characters. We had a *sense of time* and that helped us to maintain a certain distance from the chronicle. Our purpose was not to write a novel, but to start from the very heart of a story, of *our* story, the story that was hidden in each of us.

SANDRO PETRAGLIA – When we write we are not able to start off with a topic. We have to think about the characters in order to get started. First of all we thought about two friends as the main characters of a story that would have covered such a long lapse of time. Then, while searching for a greater geometry or non-geometry of feelings, we stumbled across the idea of writing about two brothers. At that point – as Stefano has just said – things happened. We looked for a specific social status for the protagonists: we didn't want to talk about extremely adventurous or unrealistic people, that flap their wings like birds locked up in a room. To our minds they had to be characters with their own responsibilities, that would anchor them to something – to some extent they had to be *nailed*, not out of a necessity, but as a result of their own choices. Once we decided that Nicola had to be a psychiatrist working in a public infrastructure like our mental hospitals and Matteo a policeman, we started to see the profiles of the frame in which we would have been working.

SR – A movie that has always been inspiring to us and that re-emerges sometimes is *Rocco and His Brothers*. The same thing had happened for *Stolen Children* by Gianni Amelio where we had been asking ourselves: what would the boy of *Rocco* find once he had gone back to the South as a grown-up? In *Rocco and His Brothers* Luchino Visconti had started out with telling the chronicle of the emigration movement and had taken up topics of the Greek tragedy. We had to understand how cinema could have retrieved a similar dimension *nowadays*; how it could have taken out of the chronicle those values that are equally valid for people born in Gela or in Paris? In *Stolen Children* we had been talking about social rubble. Here in *La meglio gioventù* what has been destroyed is not only the community of origin, but something more: ideal points of reference have disappeared together with life models. The crisis of the characters are caused not by exterior impediments, but mainly by the interior difficulty of matching the behaviours with the conventions. Sooner or later all the protagonists of *La meglio gioventù* will make mistakes – as Don Milani used to say – caused by “too much love”.

SP – Another movie that inspired us is *Imitation of Life* by Douglas Sirk. The sentimental distress, the idea of time passing by with its tears, the idea of the family as a conflict. Melodrama as well as drama. But, while writing the movie, we also tried to use the irony and the lightness. Marco Tullio Giordana's direction has made a great contribution to this style.



SR – We decided to begin our story in the year '66, simply because it foreshadows the more vital, generous and even more innocent side of the year '68. That was the time before politics had entered the scene. Sandro and I went to Florence to save the books from the flooding of '66: it was a period of extreme happiness, the girls, travelling on busses, the tents... Here, for the first time, we had the feeling that “things can be changed”. After that, many complex things happened, like the tragedy of terrorism that brutally interrupted a process.

The year '68 is nonetheless important for the generation that was born after the war, like both of us and Marco Tullio. This period has often been told in an caricatured way, especially by our political class. Young people of that time are often depicted as “Stalinists”, that grew up and were integrated in the society. We prefer to think that there were more people like Nicola, Carlo, or Vitale at that time: no one knew them, they worked as teachers, as factory workers, or physicians travelling around the world. For example: for the character of Carlo, who becomes an economist of the Bank of Italy, we took inspiration from a friend of ours who transformed his ideals into the hard work of planning the Italian economy and making it work, after the troubled year of '68. Even after the big utopia had disappeared, these people continued to work, silently and coherently, in their homes, at their working place, in the voluntary organizations. Even if we can't read about them in the newspapers, even if they don't make “the headlines” any more and

don't dictate the “trends”, they are still giving their personal contribution, to make this nation more liveable. Among the characters of *La meglio gioventù* I do like the youngest sister very much: she could have become a great archaeologist, travel throughout the world, but chooses to have children, to take care about her family. Life, without heroic deeds.

SP - “*La meglio gioventù*” is not only the title of a poem written by Pier Paolo Pasolini in Friulian dialect, but is also a tragic song of the Alpine troops that went to war facing death. In the Roman dialect it is also a mocking way to express “we are the best”; and most of the time, those who claim it are the first ones to doubt themselves... What shatters most of the “baby boomers” born after the war is their desire to keep a young mentality. Jim Morrison always used to say: I hope I'll die before I get old. This generation never affirmed that “everything that is real, is rational”, but: “everything that is real is no good and needs to be changed”. This certainly implies making many mistakes: only those who stand still, never make any mistakes.

SR – In this movie we find a collective protagonist: the family. Matteo is the more complex character and we have been working on it for long. He's the dramatic heart, the “strong” character of the story. We thought of him as the weakest link in the family chain. Maybe he already knows it, even though, especially in the first scenes, he seems more determined, more audacious and volitive, compared to Nicola. Matteo has something hidden inside, that eats him up alive, whereas his brother follows his very strong instinct of feeling free. He respects freedom so firmly that he won't stop Matteo, nor his wife, who leaves him to *sink* in clandestinity. Of course Nicola just thinks that everyone has to be free to make his/her own choices, and does not even imagine nor foresee where such decisions will take his beloved ones (later he will reproach himself for not having had that intuition, for having kept his eyes closed). Matteo's unease, for us, needed no explanations – trying to find rational or social excuses would be reductive for his sorrow. Therefore, as long as we could, we preferred to tell rather than to explain. Out of all the people that had been reading the script, Marco Tullio was the only one who didn't ask: what's wrong with Matteo, why does he kill himself? There was a perfect complicity between the three of us.

SP – Matteo is a contradiction: within his family he almost suffocates but takes risks just to give back a father to Giorgia. Matteo says to himself: I'm not interested in living any more. But nevertheless keeps on living, fights as a policeman, becomes indignant and isn't able to stay neutral. His contradiction lies in his mind, not in his heart. Sometimes his silence is more worrying than his words. Creating Matteo's character we took away what *sounded* too rational, too easy to explain in hindsight. Generally speaking, presenting Matteo in this way is like using the key elements of writing. In order to tell a character in a new way, we don't need just new words, but also and primarily a new relationship between word and gestures.

SR – We had to prune both Matteo as well as other minor characters. As soon as we knew that Marco Tullio would have been the director, we realized that we could have afforded to make cuts. Many years ago, our first work was a documentary film about madness called *Fit to Be*



*Untied*. It had been shot in a mental hospital in Parma after Franco Basaglia had left. One day, he came to visit us on the set: we saw Basaglia – a great intellectual, one of the “fathers” of Anti-psychiatry – walking around in that asylum, where he had been absent for a few years. His communicativeness with the patients was extraordinary. He was happy, made jokes, took them arm in arm, pushed them. It was contagious. We asked him: “Do all psychiatrists behave this way?”. He answered: “You have two kinds: those who are afraid of the insane and those who are not”. Basaglia had a strong sense of life, like Nicola, whereas Matteo is his “negative” counterpart, in the photographic sense of the term. Maybe it's therefore that the two brothers love each other that much.

SP – The loneliness of Matteo is as dramatic as Nicola's frivolity: for example when he starts preparing pizza with his daughter while the television broadcasts the picture of his wife, filed with the terrorists, or the irony of Vitale, after having been dismissed from FIAT. The '80s, with the defeat of FIAT's working class represent a tragic chapter of our history. We decided to portray it without the usual persecution mania, during the wedding party: the dismissed worker wants to dance and says: no one will ever subdue me. Certainly not a consolatory sentence, but a vital one.



SR – We like myths. That’s why we tried, where it was possible, to give such a dimension to the characters of *La meglio gioventù*. For our generation the myth of Cape North was very important. We told ourselves: “Let’s go on top of the world!”. The two brothers try to get there; Matteo won’t succeed: his sorrow is greater than the desire to discover the world. Nicola comes back from Cape North out of too much love: he wants to “save” Florence, the beauty that is disappearing. Matteo’s son –in some ways, he’s the son of both brothers- will find this inner balance to reach the destination, that hadn’t been reached by the generation before: he will arrive at Cape North. Adriana, the mother, and her trip to the Eolie Islands has the same mythical element: a return to life, like what had happened to the character of the father in the novel *Hiob* by Joseph Roth.

**Sandro Petraglia** was born in Rome on April 19th, 1947. He is a philosophy graduate and has been working as film critic, documentarist and finally as playwright. In 1975 together with Silvano Agosti, Marco Bellocchio and Stefano Rulli he worked on the documentary movie *Nessuno o Tutti* (which will be released in movie theatres under the title *Fit to be Untied*) and in 1978 *The Cinema Machine*. He directed *Il Mondo Dentro* (1979) and *Gran Serata Futurista* (1981) as well as, together with Stefano Rulli : *Il pane e le mele* (1980), *Settecamini da Roma* (1981) and *Lunario d’inverno* (1982). For cinema, often together with Stefano Rulli- he wrote: *The*

*Seagull* by Marco Bellocchio (1978), *Sweet body of Bianca* by Nanni Moretti (1984), *Dolce Assenza* by Claudio Sestieri (1985), *Julia e Julia* by Peter Del Monte (1986), *Etoile* by Peter Del Monte (1988), *Forever Mary* by Marco Risi (1991), *It’s Happening Tomorrow* di Daniele Luchetti (1989), *Pummarò* by Michele Placido (1990), *The invisible Wall* by Marco Risi (1991), *The Yes Man* by Daniele Luchetti (1991), *The Stolen Children* by Gianni Amelio (1992), *Ambrogio* by Wilma Labate (1993), *Arriva la Bufera* by Daniele Luchetti (1993), *Wild Flower* by Paolo e Vittorio Taviani (1993), *The Bull* by Carlo Mazzacurati (1994), *Poliziotti* by Giulio Base (1995), *School* by Daniele Luchetti (1995), *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* by Marco Tullio Giordana, *Vesna va veloce* by Carlo Mazzacurati (1996), *My Generation* by Wilma Labate (1996), *Marianna Ucria* by Roberto Faenza (1997), *The Truce* by Francesco Rosi (1997), *Auguri Professore* by Riccardo Milani (1997), *Messaggi Quasi Segreti* by Valerio Ialongo (1998), *Little Teachers* by Daniele Luchetti (1998), *La Guerra degli Antò* by Riccardo Milani (1999), *Lost Lover* by Roberto Faenza (1999), *Domenica* by Wilma Labate (2000).

For TV he wrote: *I Veleni dei Gonzaga* by Vittorio De Sisti (1985), *Attentato al Papa* by Giuseppe Fina (1986), *Mino* (1986) by Gianfranco Albano, *The Mafia 3* (1987) by Luigi Perelli, *Una vittoria* (1988) by Luigi Perelli, *The Mafia 4* (1989) by Luigi Perelli, *The Mafia 5* (1990) by Luigi Perelli, *I Misteri della Giungla Nera* by K.Connor (1990), *Felipe ha gli Occhi Azzurri* by Gianfranco Albano (1992), *The Mafia 6* (1992) by Luigi Perelli, *Felipe ha gli occhi azzurri 2* by Felice Farina (1993), *Michele alla Guerra* by Franco Rossi (1994), *Don Milani* (1998) by Antonio and Andrea Frazzi, *Più Leggero non basta* by Betta Lodoli (1998), *La vita che verrà* (1999) by Pasquale Pozzessere, *Come l’America* (2001) by Antonio and Andrea Frazzi, *Compagni di Scuola* by T.Aristarco and C.Norza (2001), *Perlasca* (2002) by Alberto Negrin.

**Stefano Rulli** was born in Rome in 1949. He achieved the Bachelor of Arts in Literature with a Thesis on Neorealism and film criticism. In 1974 he organizes a conference on Neorealism to be held at the Exhibition of New Cinema in Pesaro. In those years he publishes *Polansky* (Nuova Italia, Castoro, 1975) and writes for magazines like “*Ombre Rosse*”, “*Scena*”, “*Quaderni piacentini*”, “*Essai*”, “*Cinema sessanta*”. 1975 together with Silvano Agosti, Marco Bellocchio and Sandro Petraglia he worked on the documentary movie *Nessuno o Tutti*, which will be released in movie theatres under the title *Fit to be Untied*. With the same group of people he made the documentary film in 5 episodes called *The Cinema Machine*. His first screenplays were written during these years: he works both as playwright and director assistant in *Nel più Alto dei Cieli* by Silvano Agosti and *The Seagull* by Marco Bellocchio.

Together with Sandro Petraglia he works on a sort of trilogy on the suburbs of Rome: *Il pane e le mele* (1980), *Settecamini da Roma* (1981) and *Lunario d’inverno* (1982).

He often wrote his screenplays together with Sandro Petraglia: *La Donna del Traghetto* (1987) by Amedeo Fago, *Forever Mary* (1989) by Marco Risi, *Pummarò* (1990) by Michele Placido, *The Yes Man* (1991) by Daniele Luchetti, *The invisible wall* (1991) by Marco Risi, *The Stolen Children* (1992) by Gianni Amelio, *Arriva la Bufera* (1993) by Daniele Luchetti, *The Bull* (1994) by Carlo Mazzacurati, *School* (1995) by Daniele Luchetti, *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* (1995) by Marco Tullio Giordana, *Vesna va veloce* (1996) by Carlo Mazzacurati, *The Truce* (1997) by Francesco Rosi, *Auguri Professore* (1998) by Riccardo Milani, *Little Teachers* (1999) by Daniele Luchetti.

For TV: *Attentato al Papa* (1985) by Giuseppe Fina, *Mino* (1986) by Gianfranco Albano, *The Mafia 3* (1987) by Luigi Perelli, *Una vittoria* (1988) by Luigi Perelli, *The Mafia 4* (1989) by Luigi Perelli, *The Mafia 5* (1990) by Luigi Perelli, *The Mafia 6* (1992) by Luigi Perelli, *Don Milani* (1998) by Antonio and Andrea Frazzi, *La vita che verrà* (1999) by Pasquale Pozzessere, *Come l’America* (2001) by Antonio and Andrea Frazzi, *Perlasca* (2002) by Alberto Negrin.

## interview with Angelo Barbagallo producer

... *La meglio gioventù* was developed together with Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli, after Rai had asked us to make a production based on different standards than the usual ones. In six hours we wanted to tell a story, that covered a long lapse of time, with the same rhythm, the same situations and characters both as the novel of formation and a folk tale. It was a challenge and the only key to succeed was trying to find a mediation between what we wanted to tell – our lives over the last 40 years of Italy’s history – and the language we wanted to use: simple, but not less involving from an emotional point of view. Without pleasing the bad habits that are often ascribed to the audience, without cunning, without being cynic, without flattening ourselves to the abstract dictates of the audimeter. I think Marco Tullio Giordana found this key. To me, he hit the mark. A “major” story, told using emotions and feelings in which you can identify, in other word: a folk-tale.

What I was missing, as a fairly assiduous viewer, were TV-programs that were different, a little bit more ambitious than the average level. I liked the idea of producing something that went in this direction, something that didn’t consider the viewers merely passive. We started out the project of *La meglio gioventù* with great passion: we used all the creative and economic resources, even though it meant taking some risks and making sacrifices. At the end, these six hours of film cost 6.500.000. Compared to the quantity and quality of work, I think it is an excellent production value.

The budget we had allowed us to shoot 24 weeks, six weeks for each movie, a time that is absolutely unconventional compared to normal TV-productions, that usually allows you to shoot for four weeks in similar projects. During the long making Marco Tullio and the entire crew applied the same care, attention and concentration you need in a movie; we didn’t think it was right to cut out something or to be less demanding, just because we were shooting a television production. Normally, in a TV fiction with more episodes, you tend to shoot 50% of the scenes in a single setting. We used over 240 settings, that needed to be adapted to the 4 decades of history. We had an important crew, equipped with everything that was needed, but without the elephantiasis of the similar productions: it was very important to keep the agility of a “light” crew, even though we were more than 100 people on the set.

*La meglio gioventù* was shot with super16mm negative. The entire work of post-production consisted in transferring the film on a digital support. After having been selected to take part at the Cannes Film Festival, we switched from a digital support to a 35mm negative. The result seems excellent. In my opinion, it could be interesting to release it in movie theatres as an atypical product. I remember that many years ago *1900* by Bernardo Bertolucci –without making any comparisons, of course- came out as two distinct films, released with a weekly interval. To me *La meglio gioventù* could be released following a similar path. I also remember when the 13 episodes of *Heimat* were shown in movie theatres: it was an interesting experience trying to convince the audience to be loyal to the movie; there were groups of spectators that came together to see the episodes. In my opinion, the dilation of time used for *La meglio gioventù* could be an interesting change for the viewers: in fact, there are some stories that simply need a different rhythm in order to be told, something less jammed, more relaxed, even though this doesn’t imply being repetitive or boring.

Nowadays, in Italy, there is a very distinct demarcation between cinema and television; cinema is trying – with more or less success, depending on the year- to renew itself: there are lots of very



interesting young authors. Whereas television didn’t undergo the same process, apart from a few exceptions: the subjection to the audimeter influences negatively the cultural life of this country. Television is a very important mean of culture, its role as a public service deserves all our efforts. I hope that the happiness of showing *La meglio gioventù* at the Cannes Film Festival, the most important and prestigious film festival, will convince everyone to undertake similar projects.

*La meglio gioventù* deals with subjects like terrorism, anti-psychiatry, Bribes Ville and other events that are commonly not addressed by movies. I fully share the extremely balanced look of *La meglio gioventù* over such events that characterized our most recent history. There is a *pietas* towards the characters that is unusual in these days where political manichaeism is triumphant.

**Angelo Barbagallo** was born in Rome on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1958. From the end of the 70s he has been working as Production Director in many movies such as *The Eyes*, *The Mouth* and *Henry IV* by Marco Bellocchio. In 1986 he founded together with Nanni Moretti the SACHER FILM producing the following films: *Notte Italiana* (1987) by Carlo Mazzacurati, *It’s happening tomorrow* (1989) by Daniele Luchetti, *Red Wood Pigeon* (1989) by Nanni Moretti, *The Thing* (1990) by Nanni Moretti, *The Yes Man* (1991) by Daniele Luchetti, *Dear Diary* (1993) by Nanni Moretti, *The Second Time* (1995) by Mimmo Calopresti, *April* (1998) by Nanni Moretti, *The Son’s Room* (2000) by Nanni Moretti and, in 2001 as well as 2002, a series of documentary films by different directors called *I Diari della Sacher*.

Since 1991 SACHER FILM runs the movie theatre Nuovo Sacher in Roma.

In 1999 for RAI he produced with Bibi film tv *La Vita che Verrà* directed by Pasquale Pozzessere

## interview with Roberto Forza director of photography

... I had already worked with Marco Tullio Giordana in *“The Hundred Steps”*. He asked me to join him again on this new adventure: *“La meglio gioventù”*. We wanted to do that kind of “cinema for television” we had seen in the 70s – nothing to do with fiction as it is today: a mere assembly line. In the beginning Marco Tullio thought about shooting it in 35mm. But technology moves very rapidly and in my opinion, the super16mm is the real alternative to the 35mm, instead of the digital technology everybody’s talking about. I tried to convince him that the super16mm is a guarantee for high quality, recording, depth, and furthermore it has the same agility of a small camera and all the implements are much lighter. After several screen tests, conducted in extreme conditions, for example by night with the setting’s lights, Marco Tullio – who has great technical knowledge - was finally convinced of using this system.

When I read a script I “see” the movie immediately, the light of the movie. But I have to think about how to achieve that light: lenses, type of film emulsion, technical means, lighting ways. As I read the script I realized it was talking about my story, the time period in which it takes place, belongs to my era. For example I found myself shooting in Turin, the same demonstration and public incident scenes I was once involved in. Anyone who was 20 years old at that time was influenced by the many years of terrorism. To young people who have never seen such events, I wanted to give a precise idea of how things went during that time period, which I remember as very bare, grey and *decolorized*. There were only two TV channels in black and white, as it was for newspapers. It is unusual for television to assimilate this kind of highly distinguished photographic product, since today all TV channels have overwhelming colours.

Marco Tullio likes to use the settings as one of the keys of the story, always in tight relation with the characters. Objects always fill the settings, that are never shot from the front, but recorded from many prospective angles. Therefore you need to illuminate three or four settings at the same time, while being careful not to put any restrains to the camera movements, because there’s always a changing in point of view. I’m a self-taught man, I grew up in movie theatres, I participated in Turin’s movieclub season, my sources of information are the hundreds – maybe thousands - of movies I’ve seen when I was young. Marco Tullio and I have the same background, we have our own code: it helps us a lot when we work together. Howard Hawks would say: it’s the way you handle your work: “business and pleasure”. We often use the most difficult and exclusive old cinematographic frames of reference, also as a way of joking... We’re in Norway and he says: “Roberto, here I’d like a Conrad Hall cut, here I’d like a Gregg Toland, there I’d prefer a Nykvist”! I could see Bergman’s and Sven Nykvist’s phantoms everywhere I went in Norway, I grew up watching their movies! As you know, in every decade, in every year of *“La meglio gioventù”* – from ’66 till today – there’s been a special trend, fascination, love for a particular director of photography who has imposed his way of illuminating space and everybody has followed in his footsteps: beginning with the harsh 70s and 80s ‘til the glamorous 2000s. All interior and exterior settings for this movie are real, for exception of some “camera cars” which Marco Tullio in order to control the performance, preferred to have mounted in the studio



- “make a good Robert Burks transparent”! (Robert Burks, director of photography in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, NDR). Although *“La meglio gioventù”*’s troupe was as large as an army, we always tried to maintain the agility and liberty of a smaller unit. A significant example: in Norway, as Nicola leaned over the scenery, the camera overhung him with a dolly and recorded that beautiful view. During this transfer we didn’t have a dolly with us, we only had a very small trolley and three meters of tracks. Then Marco Tullio said to Lo Cascio: “When I tell you, you have to start slowly lowering yourself”. The camera moves forward in Lo Cascio’s direction. When the railing is out of sight and Lo Cascio begins lowering himself, it seems as if a 30 meter crane lifts up, but actually the camera is fixed to the trolley!

**Roberto Forza** was born in Rio de Janeiro on September 26, 1957. Main credits: *The Price of Victory* (1993) by Alberto Sironi, *Diary of a Rapist* (1994) by Giacomo Battiato, *Follow Your Heart* (1995) by Cristina Comencini, *Silenzio Si Nasce* (1995) by Giovanni Veronesi, *Esercizi di Stile* (1996) episodes by Dino Risi, Mario Monicelli, Luigi Magni, Sergio Citti, *The Cyclone* (1996) by Leonardo Pieraccioni, *La Piovra 8* (1997) by Giacomo Battiato, *La Piovra 9* (1998) by Giacomo Battiato, *Più Leggero Non Basta* (1998) by Elisabetta Lodoli, *Marriages* (1998) by Cristina Comencini, *Liberate i Pesci* (1999) by Cristina Comencini, *The Hundred Steps* (2000) by Marco Tullio Giordana, *Nati Stanchi* (2001) by Dominick Tambasco, *Liberi* (2002) by Gianluca Maria Tavarelli.

## interview with Elisabetta Montaldo costume designer

... from the point of view of costume design, *La Meglio Gioventù* was an epic film, bringing about the same problems of a military campaign! First of all there was this unbelievable number of people: more than two thousand, counting actors and walk-on performers, with very demanding crowd scenes (in Florence and Turin). And then the necessity of changing our wardrobe continuously, since the film tells the story of four decades characterized by radical social and cultural changes obviously affecting taste and style: revolutionary decades also for fashion, varying greatly according to social classes, geographic areas or generations. If at that time Italy had possibly boasted a single national fashion – the bourgeois elegance of the elites and its counterpart was represented by black dressed peasant women, represented by black dressed women like in the nineteenth century - in the Sixties the country became receptive to the influences spreading from beyond the Channel: the daughters of respectable middle-class families put on the first miniskirts, scandalizing their mothers who still bought their clothes at department stores. But even increasing wealth played a major role in changing Italian fashion, bringing about an abundance wholly unknown before: colourful and sportive garments appeared in the wardrobe, close to dark Sunday clothes, obligatorily white shirts turned light blue paving the way to the multi-coloured explosion of the Seventies, even women’s skirts daringly got shorter and fabrics tighter, almost showing off women figures well and arousing innocent erotic feelings... Yet in *La meglio gioventù* young people are playing the starring role, so you can see them wearing school garments or party clothes, still imitating their parents’ clothes even if a little bit more daring: stand-up collars, tight-fitting jackets, bell-bottomed trousers. But the real fashion revolution took place beginning with the year 1968 and the radical breaking with conventions it brought about. It is untrue that this year introduced only jeans trousers, uniforms, Eskimo or military jackets bought at flea markets. As a consequence of the students’ revolution, every girl and every boy were required to create their *own* style and to imitate their idols, no matter if these were rock singers or preachers promising new worlds... Suggestions became more and more concrete, as if, from then on, fashion wanted to mark belongings or affinities: long hair and Indian shirts to show Oriental leanings, camouflage jackets to exhibit one’s support of whatever Third World revolution, curly hair and a skirt with a floral pattern to prove a woman is proud of her femininity and refuses any straightening and hair-set bondage! But this is not all. *La meglio gioventù* describes further worlds, it tells family stories, presenting the war generation’s obstinacy and sometimes hardness. You will see the lager shirts at the mental home, the faded overalls of the working-class people, who are not going to paradise because they are fired, the grey-green cloth, “smelling of meal rations and barracks” to say it with Pasolini’s words, of the Policemen’s uniforms (the real proletarians). But there is still more; there is Sicily, an eternal, rural piece of land, with its Mafia, which is part of the landscape like a weary habitude, its judges in armoured cars, the town people walking looking at their shoe toes. Parallel to this background, you can see how quickly our children grew up, meanwhile they have to knot a tie around their necks, carry a heavy briefcase, bring their children to school. There were so many variants that one could have felt dizzy thinking of the kaleidoscopic range of possibilities. By dressing two thousand people every morning, I tried to help my director to tell the stories of those crucial four decades, the years during which we grew up, we fell in love and fell out of love to fall in love again, according to the rules of the wheel of life. A more severe problem was represented by ageing (some characters change their age even three or four times during the film), really exhausting for the make-up artists who had to carry out the ageing



process and the actors who had to undergo it. It was difficult even if we decided from the very beginning to choose a delicate make-up so as to adapt the actors’ changing appearance slowly to their age. This required lots of precision and patience, since it had to appear natural, imperceptible. Just a word for my assistants, Alessandra, Pamela, Nadia, for Enrico and Sara, for Samankta and the second Alessandra, for the auxiliary assistants, for how hard and how long they worked, for their affection, accuracy, good spirits. Just a word. Thank you.

**Elisabetta Montaldo** attended an Art School and later the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. She taught painting and showed her works in several art exhibitions. Between 1983 and 1988 she was costume assistant with Nana Cecchi for theatre, film and lyric performances.

In 1988 she made her debut in designing the costumes for *Il delphino azzurro* (by G. Moser). She continued her activity as costume designer in *Oggi ho vinto anch'io* (by L. Gasperini, 1988), Giuliano Montaldo’s *Time to Kill* (1989), K. Mueier’s *Il magistrato* (1989), Marco Modugno’s *Briganti* (1990), Claudio Del Punta’s *Punto di fuga* (1991), Ettore Scola’s *Mario, Maria e Mario* (1993), Marco Tullio Giordana *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* (1995), Alfredo Angeli’s *Con rabbia e con amore* (1996), Franco Bernini’s *Braibanti, un caso senza precedenti* (1996), Luca Barbareschi’s *Ardena* (1997), Gianfranco Cabiddu’s *Il figlio di Bakunin* (1998), Fabrizio Costa’s *Michele Strogoff* (1999), Marco Tullio Giordana *Hundred Steps* (2000), Fabrizio Costa’s *Senza confini* (2001).

In theatre and lyric performances she worked together with Prospero Richelmy, Giuliano Montaldo (*Turandot, La Boheme, Othello, Tosca, Rinaldo, Un ballo in maschera*), Egisto Macchi (*Amatra*), Gianni Quaranta (*Tosca*), Marco Tullio Giordana (*Morte di Galeazzo Ciano*).

In 2001 she wrote the book *The Profession of Costume Designing in Cinema and Entertainment* edited by Dino Audino.

## interview with Franco Ceraolo production designer

... I have to admit that I was a bit surprised when Marco Tullio Giordana asked me to work in *La meglio gioventù*. It was strange that, after the enormous success of *The Hundred Steps* he wanted to shoot four episodes for television. But, after having read the marvellous screenplay at a draught (over 600 pages!) I understood what fascinated him so much and decided to embark, with great joy, on this new adventure. To go back over 40 years of our history, through ages, cities and different social milieus is undoubtedly a very challenging work. Even though the episodes were meant to be for the TV, it was clear from the very start that Marco Tullio wanted to make a real movie out of them, using the same scrupulousness and love for details I had already experienced. Another challenge was given by the incredible number of sets. I remember one day Angelo Barbagallo, our enthusiastic producer, calling me into his office and expressing all his concerns for the risks and responsibilities (even economical ones) that weighted on my unit. He counted more than 240 different types of sets, representing different ages and located everywhere: from Sicily throughout Italy to Norway. Jokingly, I said: "Thanks for counting them all. I hadn't done it yet not to discourage myself!"

Trying to rebuild them in a studio would have been too expensive. And trying to shoot directly on the locations would have meant losing precious time with the transfers. Finding the building in via del Vantaggio was the turning point. Five floors, a stone's throw away from Piazza del Popolo that stood empty awaiting refurbishment. The production succed in renting it also for the the entire period before rennovation. The palace had various garages (that we used for the tooling department and the carpentry), apartments, cellars, terraces, laundry rooms, courtyards, and so on; for more than a year this became our big studio, our production centre, our editing department. Thanks to this solution it was possible to recreate more than 90% of the inner settings of the movie, transforming them, from time to time, like Chinese boxes. Here we had: the Carati's flat, a council house in Turin, overcrowded with immigrants, a top security prison, different "dens" for terrorists, a run-down house of the poorest quarters in Palermo, the shanty of a young prostitute and the cellar of the Uffizi, which was entirely drowned by the flooding that hit Florence in 1966. Maybe this one was the most challenging part of the movie: in the cellar, we had to recreate a real "swimming-pool" of 200 square meters!

The flooding was a nightmare even for the extern setting: Marco Tullio had chosen to shoot the piazza degli Uffizi, with the Palazzo Vecchio, Michelangelo's statue of David and piazza della Signoria in the background, because it was a scenery that everyone would recognize immediately!

We didn't want to use digital effects during post-production: everything had to be like at that time. The problem was putting up and removing the scenes as quickly as possible, bearing in mind that we were dealing with one of the world's most precious artistic and cultural heritage location. We had to lay down a sheet of more than 1000 square meters, in order to protect the pavement. On that sheet we distributed more than 20 lorries of sand and water. Then we needed all the wrecks: plants, cars, furnishings taken away from houses. In hindsight I have to say that both the Municipality and the Superintendecy were really brave! It was amazing to see the faces of tourists and passers-by taking as many pictures as they could. When the scenery was completed I saw two old people crying. I approached and heard them recalling



those terrible days. That emotion was probably the best compliment for my work but it also made me think what a big wound the flooding of 1966 had left in their lives, forever...

---

**Franco Ceraolo**, graduated in Art Direction at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and at the Centro de Capacitaci3n de Estudios Cinematogr3ficos in Mexico City.

In theatre he created the setting for the following plays: *The four seasons* (directed by L.Versari), *Cronache marziane* and *La rivolta degli oggetti* (directed by G.Barberio Corsetti). Together with Dante Ferretti he planned the set for *La Traviata* (1989, La Scala, directed by di L.Cavani) and for Franco Zeffirelli: *Romeo and Juliet* (1991, Taormina), *Pagliacci* (1992, Opera di Roma) and *Don Carlos* (1992, La Scala). He worked as interior designer and assistant art director with Luciano Ricceri, Dante Ferretti, Ferdinando Scarfiotti: *Ballando, ballando* (by E.Scola), *The future is woman* (by M.Ferreri), *The name of the rose* (by J.J.Annaud), *Ginger and Fred* (by F.Fellini), *The Secret of Sahara* (by A.Negrin), *Leviathan* (by G.Pan Cosmatos), *The voice of the moon* (by F.Fellini), *The Sheltering Sky* (by B.Bertolucci), *Hamlet* (by F.Zeffirelli), *Kundun* (by M.Scorsese).

As Art Director he created the set for: *A boy like many others* (by G.Minello), *Cento giorni a Palermo* (by G.Ferrara), *Department Store* (by Castellano e Pipolo), *Gran Casin3* (by C.Vanzina), *Via Paradiso* (by L.Odoriso), *Capitan Cosmo* and *La corsa dell'innocente* (by C.Carlei), *Red Rain* (by J.Kauffman), *The Black Tent* (di L.Manuzzi) , *La strada segreta* (by C.Sestieri), *Lui e lei* (by L.Manuzzi), *The Savior of San Nicola* (by J.Sargent), *The Hundred Steps* (by M. T. Giordana)

## interview with Roberto Missiroli film editor

... like with *The Hundred Steps* Marco Tullio asked me to edit *La meglio gioventù* alone, while he was still shooting. The production had rented a small building located right in the historical centre of Rome, which had already been used for the inner settings of the movie. From the window of our editing room placed in one corner of the big set, we saw four seasons passing by: from winter through spring till summer and then winter again. A lifetime, like the lives of the many characters in the movie. Every now and again I went down to glance at the shooting; sometimes it was Marco Tullio Giordana who came upstairs to take a look at our work.

The editing is the moment of showdown: you check out the running of the entire system, the enormous work that has been done before. From the playwright to the preparation, from choosing the actors till shooting the scenes. Here, for the first time, you can see if the narration flows, if there's a sense in what you are telling. Thus being really huge the movie seemed to maintain a sort of self-control: the screenplay based on a solid frame and the shootings proceeded as expected. I could find in the film the same emotions I had felt while reading the script. So?

So to me editing the movie was travelling through the minds and feelings of the characters. The editing has not to be *shown*, it should not have its own personality; the only thing you have *to see* is the movie. In this case we had to show the characters' feelings, that were often denied or even removed. Weighing each and every pause, moment of silence or glimpse... There are some scenes in the film, that could have been edited in the common sense of the term: the rhythm of the cuts, syncopated or multiplied actions. I'm thinking of the wedding scene, the riots on the square, the flooding in Florence... they're thrilling, but I didn't want to be cheated by the "rentability" of such spectacular scenes. What fascinated me most, were the scenes, where you had to reveal certain states of mind, to stress the emotion of two faces looking at each other, scanning each other, searching for each other. To me, this is what the movie is all about: glances. We had to give way to these glances, to sadden when they were sad, to be happy when they were filled with joy.

Once I read a sentence that sounded more or less like this : "the strength of a movie lies in the eyes; words are just its left hand". That's what editing was all about in *La meglio gioventù*: eyes that trouble you. Matteo is in trouble when Giorgia looks at him during the scene with the juke box. Giulia is uneasy when she catches Nicola's glance while leaving home. There is one scene that I still remember today, because it left me with bated breath one afternoon: the crew was far away, on an outside location. Everything was quiet in the editing room. You could hear nothing but the muffled sound of the computer hard-disks. Even Paolo Petrucci, my irreplaceable "travelling companion" in this long journey, kept quiet that day. It's a sequence made of few frames, few cuts, long moments of silence, but you have the glances - glances that stare into space. It's the scene when Matteo and Giorgia meet each other after so many years. The camera stands still. It's a very simple scene, according to the classical notion of editing. But you have to delve into your soul, let yourself be influenced by the scene, catch a buzz, a breath that blows up your chest, a little blink of the eyelids that touches you in one frame and steels your heart in another. At the end, I was exhausted, as if I had delved into myself instead of delving into the movie.



---

**Roberto Missiroli** was born in Ravenna on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1954. Main Filmography: *L'albero della vita* (1987) by Abdul Kadir Shaid Amed, *Corsa di primavera* (1989) by Giacomo Campiotti, *Towards Evening* (1990) by Francesca Archibugi, *Adelaide* (1991) by Lucio Gaudino, *La conchiglia* (1991) by Abdul Kadir Shaid Amed, *Traditori del tempo* (1991) by Gherardo Fontana, *The Cherry Orchard* (1992) by Antonello Aglioti, *The Great Pumpkin* (1992) by Francesca Archibugi *Per non dimenticare* (1992) by Massimo Martelli, *Barnabo of the mountains* (1993) by Mario Brenta, *Like two crocodiles* (1994) by Giacomo Campiotti, *Carogne - Ciro and Me* (1995) by Enrico Caria, *Making a Film for Me Is to Live* (1995) by Enrica Fico Antonioni (a documentary film on the movie *Beyond the Clouds* by Michelangelo Antonioni) *Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo* (1996) by Enza Negroni, *Vite blindate* (1997) by Alessandro De Robilant, *Il guerriero Camillo* (1998) by Claudio Bigagli, *La ballata del lavavetri* (1998) by Peter Del Monte, *Muzungu* (1998) by Massimo Martelli, *A Time to Love* (199) by G.Campiotti, *The Hundred Steps* (2000) by Marco Tullio Giordana, *The Comeback* (2000) by Franco Angeli, *Pasolini - le ragioni di un sogno* (2001) by Laura Betti, *Angela* (2001) by Roberta Torre.





## interview with Luigi Lo Cascio Nicola Carati

... at the beginning of the film Nicola is a young university student, enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine, who has not yet chosen his specialization. He's a lively young man, who loves to group with others, sharing the beauty of a carefree time. Many experiences lead him to the great love for psychiatry. After meeting Giorgia, Nicola starts dealing with mental disorders and realizes he has a certain capacity in dialoguing with the suffering – he's not afraid of sorrow. On his way to Cape North he gets in contact with a culture, that is far from his own, perhaps still a little provincial. He realizes how important it is to relate with differences. Here he starts to know about Anti-psychiatry, the existential and phenomenological philosophy, along with Jaspers and Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, as well as the entire issue, that was going on between the 60s and the 70s, about rediscovering the body. In Italy one of his professors will be Franco Basaglia. Basaglia's theory will permit him to extend his passion for medicine to human beings in their entirety. Anti-psychiatry also has a political impact in his life, because it influences concrete aspects of social life: the mental hospitals. Both Nicola and Basaglia go back to the novel "Survival In Auschwitz" written by Primo Levi. Nicola's North Star, the compass in his life is his belief that everyone should be allowed to extend the space, in which he/she can experience liberty. During the decades his humanist attitude will have to understand that often you guarantee liberty by saying "no" instead of "yes"; by knowing how to impose limits to the others, while still acting with love.

Compared to the character of *The Hundred Steps* -Peppino Impastato, a person that really existed- in *La meglio gioventù* I didn't have a model to emulate - Nicola is an invented character. His interpretation has been facilitated by the relationship with the other characters, with the persons that interacted with him, while he was growing up (I also had some difficulties in putting myself in the shoes of an "old" man, mainly because it's an age I haven't experienced yet). During the preparations we all read the script together with the director a few times, to take out its dramatic heart and think about the global sense of these 40 years lived out by the characters. It was both an analysis and a synthesis of all the possibilities that were given by such a broad narrative block (6h).

When I work, I prefer to take distance from my characters. The more you resemble them, the more it is difficult to control the output. But I think Giordana noticed some points of contact between me and Nicola, also because for more than 2 years I have been studying medicine in Palermo, before choosing to become an actor and enrolling at the National Drama Academy in Rome. I also wanted to become a psychiatrist, because many members of my family were psychiatrists. Since I was a small kid, I went together with my uncle and his patients to the stadium to see soccer matches. I even played cards with them in the mental hospital. We had lots of fun together and I felt how important it was for them to laugh.

It was also very important that the other actors of *La meglio gioventù* - Alessio Boni, Fabrizio Gifuni, Sonia Bergamasco, Claudio Gioè – were friends of mine: we have shared many things in our lives and that allowed us to "know" automatically how our bodies would have interacted during the shooting. By this, we were able to concentrate on the interaction that came along with each and every scene, taking for granted both the emotional substrate and the affection that really existed. I also think that the fact that we all came from the theatre, that we had already been working together for so many times, built up an "arsenal" of images that was fully used



by Marco Tullio: he spurred us to modify the text, to reinvent it according to our experiences. Very fatiguing but also very amusing. Sometimes he changed our lines just before shooting, replacing them with some taken from the conversations made a few days before. He even managed to change lines between the "ready to go" and "action"!

**Luigi Lo Cascio** graduated in 1992 at the National Drama Academy Silvio D'Amico, playing a role in *Hamlet* directed by Orazio Costa. He recited in many theatre plays like: *Marguerite Gautier* directed by G. Patroni Griffi, *Waiting for Godot* directed by F. Tiezzi, *Romeo and Juliet* directed by G. Patroni Griffi, *Ager Sanguinis* directed by C. Quartucci, *The Bride of Messina* directed by E. De Capitani, *Death of Empedocle* directed by R. Guicciardini, *Gloria del Teatro Immaginario* directed by A. Marinuzzi, *La figlia dell'aria* directed by R. Guicciardini, *Il figlio di Pulcinella* directed by R. Guicciardini, *Hamlet and a Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Carlo Cecchi.

His debut in cinema was with *The Hundred Steps* (awarded with the David di Donatello, the Grolla d'oro, the Sacher d'oro and many other prizes); his interpretation in *Light of my Eyes* by Giuseppe Piccioni was awarded with the Volpi Cup at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. Also starring in *Il più bel giorno della mia vita* by Cristina Comencini. In 2002 he played in *La Meglio Gioventù* by M.T Giordana, *Vito, morte e miracoli* by Alessandro Piva and is now shooting "*Buongiorno, notte*" by Marco Bellocchio.

## interview with Alessio Boni Matteo Carati

... when my long-time friend Luigi Lo Cascio, won the David di Donatello best actor award for “*The Hundred Steps*”, Fabrizio Gifuni, Lo Cascio and I went to celebrate this victory on a long boat on the Tiber. It was there, that I met Giordana for the first time. Later he would tell me that the idea of having us all cast in “*La meglio gioventù*” was inspired that evening when he saw the three of us in high spirits and also a little overexcited for the victory. He realized that Luigi and I are “brothers” in real life, after all these years of school, life, homes and sleeping-bags... Well, let me spare you all the rhetoric about country boys coming or going from Rome hoping to become actors... Later Marco Tullio wanted to meet me. We talked a long time about the Carati brothers, and he summoned me for a casting. He didn’t want me to read the entire script and gave me only the first two parts. I really had no idea how Matteo was going to end up. I played in the hospital scene where Jasmine Trinca and I meet again after many years. It was a long monologue, three or four pages long, I had studied it well, also the commas! When it was time to start reciting, Marco Tullio asked me: “Do you know the part? Good! Now forget everything, and improvise!”

After I had been chosen for the part, I started reading all the books that Matteo would have read: Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Rilke, Mann, Conrad, Camus, Sartre, Ginsberg, Kerouac, the beat generation, my house was full of photos of that age, I tried to get familiar with those images. Marco Tullio told me: we know that Matteo is going to die, but Matteo doesn’t know that. Don’t anticipate anything. So I started studying every look, every gesture, every pitch of the voice and then I immediately tried to conceal them. I felt like someone who tries to portray an image of himself, a mask to protect his frailty, while in reality he’s caught in an identity crisis. Matteo would like to love everybody, and be understanding, but instead he is rough and intolerant. The more he loves, the more he puts people to the test. Maybe only Nicola knows how to handle him. I really like the scenes in which the two brothers argue, whoever has brothers or sisters knows it happens that way.

Matteo has a strong sexual ambiguity, a problem with women, but nonetheless he still feels attracted by them. He falls a little for Giorgia (Jasmine Trinca), but is unable to understand her silent love declaration beside the jukebox. He falls a little for Mirella (Maya Sansa), but is unable to return her generosity. He has a strong – repressed, undisclosed - homosexuality. In the beginning while bringing his brother and friends to a whore, we see him already with changed features. She’s going to be the first one to tell us that Matteo is “weird”. And during the years, prostitutes are going to be a fixed appointment, as substitutes for the real women he doesn’t want or doesn’t know how to deal with. The last one will be a transvestite.

At eighteen I was working already two years in the police. It was compulsory military service in Viale Zara in Milan. I’ve been a policeman, just like Matteo, I went in a Jeep, I participated in military charges, I used the bludgeon; I still remember how afraid we were. I didn’t need any handgun training, I didn’t use any stunt figures for the action scenes. While shooting the 1973 clash scenes in Turin, I remembered well the clash I was involved in in 1985. Everything was so realistic – the jeeps, the uniforms, the shields, the weapons – and for a moment I relived the same terror. Therefore, Matteo’s part had to be played by me! Just like Lo Cascio with Nicola: at university he passed eight exams in medicine, he was Nicola, he had to play the part!

In the last part of the movie the scene in which Nicola takes a walk with Mirella and Matteo suddenly appears, was Marco Tullio’s last minute idea. When he told me I was disconcerted,



we were all disconcerted. While shooting, I realized that the scene worked fine and I couldn’t explain how come. There was a sensation of tenderness, serenity and reconciliation. I liked it, I enjoyed shooting that scene.

---

**Alessio Boni** attended the National Drama Academy Silvio D’Amico and graduated in Taormina playing a role taken from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* directed by Orazio Costa Giovangigli. He then attended a specialization course with Luca Ronconi and a drama course in Los Angeles. His first went on stage with: Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* directed by Peter Stein, *Peer Gynt* directed by Luca Ronconi and Molière’s *The Miser* directed by Giorgio Strehler. His last appearance on stage was with David Auburn’s *Proof* directed by Enrico Maria Laman.

In 2001 he played the leading role in *Titanic*, a radio program directed by Tommaso Sherman and broadcasted by Radiodue Rai. Boni also worked for television starring in *Incantesimo 3* directed by Tommaso Sherman and Alessandro Cane, *La donna del treno* by Carlo Lizzani, *L’altra donna* by Anna Negri. In Massimo Costa’s *Maria figlia di suo figlio* he played the role of Giovanni Battista. In addition to his he also starred in *Un prete fra noi* by Giorgio Capitani, *Alla ricerca di Sherazade* by Franco Giraldi, *Mai con i quadri* by Mario Caiano, *Dracula* by Roger Young, *L’uomo del vento e Vite a perdere* by Paolo Bianchini.

In cinema he started out as the male protagonist of *Diario di Matilde Manzoni* based on the novel by Natalia Ginzburg and directed by Lino Capolicchio.

## interview with Adriana Asti Adriana Carati

... I’ve worked with Marco Tullio in *Pasolini, an Italian Crime*: I played the role of a reformatory teacher reading to her class a long poem written by Pier Paolo. He told me he really wanted me to interpret Adriana in *La meglio gioventù* and I was very happy about it. I thought the script was great. He then changed many things in that beautiful script, creating new aspects of my character. For example: she has become less strict and also a little crazy at times. Since movies are obviously filmed in pieces, an actor needs to mould his character as in a dream. He can’t build it in a logical sequence as in the theatre.

The relationship with the young actors was wonderful. I admire Lo Cascio’s acting very much. We used to joke a lot on the set: Adriana is a cheerful mother – at least this how I think she comes across to the audience. Although Adriana and her husband have constant verbal conflicts, they still have a great relationship. They represent different worlds: I’m from the North, he’s from the South: a rather usual conflict for Italy.

My scenes have been shot almost in perfect chronological order: first the scenes when I’m young in Rome, then those in Turin, and finally those in Stromboli. I really believe that *La meglio gioventù* represents the Italian reality, the one that usually is never told.

In the end Adriana finds comfort and happiness in her little nephew and starts a new life. I think it’s a very realistic as well as poetic story. Probably because Marco Tullio is so poetic... He’s very meticulous and knows what he wants, but he mediates the story’s needs with the feelings that stimulate him. He’s always very curious to know how we would do the scene, he first encourages us to improvise and then he puts everything back in order. Luchino Visconti acted out the part for us, and he was an extraordinary actor, the best of them all! You then had to do things exactly the way he wanted. On the contrary, Marco Tullio taught us without letting us know he was actually teaching.

The make-up sessions have been very laborious, but not as much as the masking of Rambaldi. The make-up, as the costume designs, and the set decorations were very accurate. This has been very helpful for all actors, since every character had to undergo extensive interior and exterior changes.

For television I’ve worked in Italy and France, for example in the soap opera *Les allumettes svedoises*, based on a Sabatier novel. I think it’s important for *La meglio gioventù* to be shown at the Cannes Film Festival so it will have its life in cinemas before it achieves a television status. Adriana and her husband are extraordinary parents - I’d say a rather exceptional example of intelligence. In spite of Matteo’s enigmatic and violent behaviour, there’s still a very strong bond between him and his mother. Certainly *La meglio gioventù* and Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers* (in which I had a small part) have several similarities.

---

**Adriana Asti**’s acting career begins in the 50s. She appeared in many movies, including, *City at Night* by Leopoldo Trieste, *You’re On Your Own* by Mauro Bolognini, *Rocco and His Brothers* by Luchino Visconti, *Accattone* by Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Disorder* by Franco Brusati, *Cronache del 22* by G. Guidi, *Before The Revolution* by Bernardo Bertolucci, *Caprice Italian Style* by Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Love Circe* (also known as *One Night At Dinner*) by G.



Patroni Griffi, *Duet For Cannibals* by S. Sontag, *Man Of The Year* by M. Vicario, *Addaveni quer giorno e quella sera* by Giorgio Ferrara, *The Sensual Man* (also known as *The Sensuous Sicilian*) by M. Vicario, *Ludwig* by Luchino Visconti, *Amore e Ginnastica* by Luigi Filippo D’Amico, *The Slave* by Giorgio Capitani, *A Brief Vacation* by Vittorio De Sica, *Nipoti miei diletta* by F. Rossetti, *The Phantom Of Liberty* (also known as *The Specter Of Freedom*) di Luis Buñuel, *Zorro* by Duccio Tessari, *Weak Spot* by Peter Fleischmann, *Sex Machine* by Pasquale Festa Campanile, *Down the Ancient Staircase* (also known as *Down the Ancient Stairs*) by Mauro Bolognini, *Chi Dice Donna Dice Donna* by Tonino Cervi, *The Inheritance* by Mauro Bolognini, *Caligula* by Tinto Brass, *A Simple Heart* by Giorgio Ferrara, *Black Journal* by Mauro Bolognini, *Action* by Tinto Brass, *Il prete bello* by Carlo Mazzacurati, *Casa Ricordi* by Mauro Bolognini, *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* (also known as *Who Killed Pasolini?*) by Marco Tullio Giordana, *The Seventh Room* by M. Meszaros, *Les allumettes svedoises* by J. Ertaud, *Avvocati* by Giorgio Ferrara, *Mange ta soupe* by M. Amalric, *Una vita non violenta* by Davide Emmer, *How To Make A Martini* by Kiko Stella, *Il Buma* by G. Massa, *Bimba* by Sabina Guzzanti.

Her theatrical career began with Fantasio Piccoli’s Compagnia del Carrozzone. In Milan’s Piccolo Teatro she appeared in several shows directed by Giorgio Strehler: in Goldoni’s *Arlecchino servitore di due padroni*, Bruckner’s *Elisabetta d’Inghilterra*, Gogol’s *Revisore*, Bertolazzi’s *Lulu*, Buzzati’s *Un caso clinico*. She also starred in: Miller’s *Crogiuolo*, Wolfe’s *Veglia la mia casa angelo*, Ginzburg’s *L’inserzione*, Harold Pinter’s *Old Times*, all directed by Luchino Visconti; Pirandello’s *Sei personaggi in cerca d’autore* directed by Vittorio Gassman, Pirandello’s *Vestire gli ignudi*, Goldoni’s *La Locandiera* both directed by Patroni Griffi; Ariosto’s *L’Orlando furioso* and Shaw’s *Santa Giovanna* directed by Ronconi; Pinter’s *Ceneri alle ceneri* directed by Pinter.

In 1996 she wrote her first play *Caro Professore*, starring herself and Cochi Ponzoni and directed by Massimo Navone. In 1998 she wrote, directed and starred in her second play *Alcool*, along with Franca Valeri.

## interview with Sonia Bergamasco Giulia Monfalco

... Marco Tullio Giordana knew me because of the plays and movies I starred in, and also because of my musical activity as a pianist as well as a singer, which I still follow up. Giulia's character has been rewritten in order for her to become a music lover who in the end decides to give it all up.

Therefore it has been easier to identify myself with her. Giulia's character is difficult to accept because of her negative, violent side: a girl who decides to abandon her family, her boyfriend and especially her daughter, in order to pursue political ideals and participate in battles as a minor figure. A tough and rough character. Marco Tullio wanted Giulia to move from a very strong passion, which would be later denied. This happens with all of "La meglio gioventù" 's characters: they all have a strong passion as guide. Some manage to live this passion, to open themselves to the world, others are overwhelmed by it.

When I finished reading the entire script, I really wished to play that role. Giulia does not appear in as many scenes as the other actors do, but she has many "mother scenes". In only one week I played a fifty year old and a twenty year old without any problems, because her essence had become part of a well enlightened course. Marco Tullio placed a lot of confidence in us actors, even for the slightest change in the script, especially in cutting those "too detailed" parts typical of a precise script, but that an actor must be able to express even with only a look.

Giulia and Matteo have both the same tragic outcome. You can somehow relate to Matteo: you participate in his hardships until he decides to end it all, while Giulia can sometimes evoke feelings of hatred, because she's self-contained and an outsider with communication difficulties. The attempt was made to make her sufferance tangible.

I've done a lot of research for Giulia's character. Although we grew up in a different generation, this information belongs to all of us. I've read Adriana Faranda's autobiography (former member of the *Brigate Rosse*), which certainly has been a role model for the script writers Rulli and Petraglia. She too abandoned her daughter, but wanted to maintain a relationship with her, even if this meant her exposure. She was later released and worked as a photographer. Her bright and dark sides inspired me, but it was important for me to capture mainly the family history, the changing relationships and to get the general picture.

Among Marco Tullio's qualities, the one I love most, is his precision. Nonetheless, he's open to any suggestions that actors and technicians might have. His glance is almost mathematic, he's able to reassure and simplify everything.

Marco Tullio was very firm in getting out the message that Giulia didn't kill anybody, otherwise it would have been difficult to feel any compassion for her. This is important for the character as well as for me. I believe it's very significant that the law has forgiven and released her, but *she* still cannot forgive herself for what she's done.



**Sonia Bergamasco**, born in Milan, graduated in 1987 in piano at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan and in recitation at the Piccolo Teatro 's school directed by Giorgio Strehler. She made her debut in 1990 starring in *Arlecchino servitore di due padroni* directed by Strehler. Then she worked with Massimo Castri (*La Disputa, Il Gioco Dell'Amore e Del Caso, Ecuba, La Trilogia della Villeggiatura*), Glauco Mauri (*Riccardo II*), Theodoros Terzopoulos (*Antigone*), Giancarlo Cobelli (*Macbeth*) and with Carmelo Bene (*Pinocchio*). She directs and acts in the monologue *Giorni in Bianco* based on Ingeborg Bachmann's story *Il Trentesimo Anno*. She made her cinematographic debut in 1994 starring in the short film *D'Estate* by Silvio Soldini. She also worked with Andrea Porporati (*Quello che posso permettermi*), Paolo Rosa (*Il Mnemonista*) and Franco Giraldi (*Voci*). She's the leading actress in *Probably Love* by Giuseppe Bertolucci and in *Amorfi* directed by Emanuela Piovano. She was accredited the best actress awards in 2001 at Salerno's International Cinema Festival and in 2002 at Bellaria's Independent Cinema Festival.

Musically speaking, she works with a vast original repertory for her voice interpretations (acts and sings): romantic concert melologues, nineteen hundred or contemporary repertory for orchestra or ensemble. In 1999 she records A. Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* directed by M. Ceccanti (Arts Label). Some of her poems have been published in Nicola Crocetti's magazine *Poesia* (February 1996). In 1997 she won the Marianna Florenzi National Poetry Prize, presided by Cesare Garboli.

## interview with Fabrizio Gifuni Carlo Tommasi

... before being chosen by Marco Tullio Giordana for the role of Carlo, I had been playing rather vexed characters, ranging from the parricide in *Empty Eyes* by Andrea Porporati to the writer suffering from severe depression in *Winter* by Nina Di Majo. For this reason Carlo's character represented, in a way, a comeback to light. Carlo is a middle-class member, a bourgeois in the most positive meaning of the word, a solid and grounded man, though a generous, open-minded person, a firm believer in the values of family and friendship. Above all his character is revealed by his relationships with the others. For this aspect, the friendship and professional relationship already existing between me and some of cast members (Luigi Lo Cascio, Alessio Boni and Sonia Bergamasco) were very precious.

The affection of Nicola and Matteo's parents for Carlo makes him a sort of third son, an equal family member even before marrying the youngest daughter of the Caratis. Being a brilliant economics student, Carlo decides to consolidate his education in England. Back to Italy, he becomes a famous economist at the research office of the Bank of Italy.

Like for the other actors, I had to face the problem of rendering a long period of time, a transition taking lasting 40 years. Before starting with the shooting, I spent time reading the script and collecting background information. It was also very helpful to watch again Sergio Zavoli's long series *La notte della Repubblica*, an extraordinary example of selected television and historical research, in which the phenomenon of terrorism was analysed within a wider scope like in *La meglio gioventù*. In *Un amore* by Gianluca Tavarelli I had already interpreted a role showing a long span of time through twelve crucial life moments of a couple, ranging from university time right up to their 40s. In *La meglio gioventù* Carlo's iter is even wider-ranging and more complex. How can the transition from youth to adulthood be told? How can we render what is lost, what is gained or stays the same? Exploring these themes with the actors' simple devices is very fascinating. It is like watching old family pictures and perceiving something has changed in the body or look. I tried to collect background information about the big changes of the economic and industrial systems of this thirty-year span of time in order to understand how Carlo possibly reacted. These events are not really the focus of attention in *La meglio gioventù*, but they are also not rendered as mere background. History seems to enter the private life of the characters with lots of delicacy. One of the nicest things in the movie is the way friendship between people from very different social classes is told. At his wedding party Carlo does not want to lie to his friend, a temporarily laid off FIAT-worker, even if he is desperately aware of the fact that the latter will soon be the victim of the industrial restructuring taking place. After becoming a target of the Red Brigades, Carlo decides to stay in Italy despite the risks he is exposed to. He simply does not want to root out his family.

It was not easy to interpret a character trusting his work and his country so much being well aware of the present day, a highly dramatic time which the most of us are experiencing with deep anxiety.



**Fabrizio Gifuni** -after graduating from the Silvio D'Amico National Academy of Dramatic Art in 1992- made his stage debut in 1993 as Orestes in Euripides's *Electra*, directed by Massimo Castri. The following years, the latter directed him on the stage in a Goldoni's *Villeggiatura Trilogy* production. In 1994 Gifuni interpreted Malcom's role in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (directed by Gian Carlo Sepe) in Verona's Roman Theatre. In 1995 he joined the Greek theatrical company directed by Theodoros Terzopoulos (with whom he is still cooperating) and interpreted Creonte's role in a production of Sophocle's *Antigone* in Epidaurus (1995). The production then toured China, Japan and Korea (1997).

Gifuni made his film debut in 1996 in Anna Di Francisca's *La bruttina stagionata*. His films include: Marco Turco's *Vite in sospenso*, Gianni Amelio's *The Way we Laughed* (winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice International Film Festival 1998), Gianluca Tavarelli's *Un amore* and *Here is not Paradise*, Guido Chiesa's *Johnny The Partisan*, Ridley Scott's *Hannibal*, Giuseppe Bertolucci's *Probably Love*, Andrea Porporati's *Empty Eyes* and Nina Di Majo's *Winter*.

In 2002 he was awarded as Italy's Shooting Star, a prize intended to launch Europe's most promising young acting talents and an important sidebar to the Berlin Film Festival, and won the Foreign Press Golden Globe for the films *Probably Love*, *Empty Eyes* and *Winter*.

## interview with Maya Sansa Mirella Utano

... Marco Tullio Giordana already knew me from my previous films: we met for a talk more than doing a screen test. He immediately gave me good news: I had been chosen. The role preparation was easier than for other parts. Mirella is not really involved in the political situation or the family's history. She comes from outside: this is why I didn't work a lot with the other actors nor did I meet the rest of the Carati family, with whom Mirella gets in touch just at the end and to whom she does not really belong. She meets Matteo in 1977, when she is only eighteen, whereas Matteo and his brother are already thirty years old. She comes from Sicily and is still a student, she just adores taking photographs without knowing what photography really is. Without being aware of it, Matteo helps her to find her own way, he gives her advice, and this is probably the reason why she falls in love with him. In the end she moves to Rome where she finds a job in a library.

It was a wonderful experience, not tiring at all, requiring no distressing concentration. During the work on set there was a cheerful and relaxed atmosphere, even if we were working hard, and this intimacy greatly contributed to make this experience so positive. For Mirella's ageing I looked for inspiration among my mother's friends who are between 45 and 48, but I could not really find any radical changing in their attitude or fading of their vital energies. So we had to work with nuances, giving subtle differences with the help of make-up. I thought of rendering ageing by making everything slower, not because of weariness but rather because of the lack of the eighteen-year-old vigor, the age in which one says too much or does not know how to steer energies. Mirella's tenderness, her sensuality then develops into a sort of motherly attitude.

I discovered Alessio Boni as an actor little by little, and this helped, as I think, the development of our two characters. We met during the rehearsals and from the very first moment we had the feeling of getting along very well. Marco Tullio allows improvisation, so that as an actor you feel justified to act and react according to the real situation and never as related to something abstract. Our first meeting, for instance, (our stroll alongside the Colosseum) was almost completely improvised. I think that even Rulli and Petraglia wrote their script bearing this in mind, because they elaborated the text with such an accuracy and precision as if they wanted to give the actors as many information as possible. They suggested the dialogues but were not shocked if something within the main frame was changed.

I like Mirella because her enthusiasm is not exhausted hastily, she lets the stream of life carry her even if she is not passive at all. She is an old-fashioned woman. It is interesting that a character like hers does not allow the political and social situation of these 40 years of Italian history to weigh down on her. Maybe because of her job as a photographer she does not want to change the course of the events, she just wants to be an honest and rigorous witness of them. This is the same attitude she reveals towards Matteo and Nicola; she does not want to change them, she accepts them as they are, she knows she is a strong woman. Even when she is disappointed by Matteo and she feels betrayed, she is never revengeful or self-pitying. She always maintains her positive and pure attitude towards life.



---

In 1989 **Maya Sansa** started taking drama classes, first in Italy under the artistic direction of Alessandro Fabrizi and the Teatro dei Cocci and later in London, at the Covent Garden and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She made her film debut in 1998 when she was offered the title role in Marco Bellocchio's *The Nanny*. In 1999 she also played the lead in Gianfranco Giagni's *No Man's Land*. In 2001 she interpreted a role in Monica Stambrini's *Benzina*. She is now playing a role in Marco Bellocchio's *Buongiorno, notte* (in production).

She also played the lead in a television film, Antonio Tibaldi's *Werewolf*. As a promising young acting talent she won the Golden Globe Award – Italy 1999, the Grolla D'oro Award – St. Vincent 1999 and the Italian Shooting Star Award – 50 Berlin Film Festival 2000.

## interview with Jasmine Trinca Giorgia

... Giorgia is a problematic character: she doesn't talk much and her silence obliges the actress to express herself with other means, to search for different signs. Of course, these signs need to be assessed over and over again, because there is nothing more dangerous than playing the role of an "insane" risking of being excessive, unbelievable or even grotesque. I didn't do any special preparation for playing this role, I didn't follow a "diet" of video cassettes about insane people! Marco Tullio didn't even want her "insanity" to be that evident; he told me to make her appear as normal as possible. I tried to interpret this illness in a non conventional way. I am not a professional actress, I didn't get any training and I don't think to have any particular technical means. Thus, it wouldn't be right to say that I act in an instinctive way: there is always a sort of logic, but everything happens in an almost "savage" way: a formless substance that needs to find its balance. Marco Tullio asked me to help him with the film-tests: I read out the lines for the young man that he had chosen to play the role of Matteo. I think that those film-tests have been mutually useful: they gave us the possibility of trying out many possibilities and, mainly, to cut out what was not convincing at all. Maybe those film-tests weren't meant for Matteo but for me! I was looking for the way Giorgia moved, a certain obsessiveness in repeating some lines, a state of absence, of strangeness... from what I created, and I don't want to tell where I got the inspiration from, Marco Tullio took out what he needed; together, we fixed some points. We never talked about it, but I think that Giorgia reminded him of someone...

At the beginning it was very difficult to approach the character. Then I gained more confidence and I wasn't afraid any more. I didn't identify myself, it has always been a fiction – I can distinguish both spheres very well. We didn't shoot in a sequence. My hair cut is not representative, because it was made from the very beginning. In the first part of the movie I'm wearing a wig. It's wasn't easy to jump from one day to the other to different periods. As the movie went on I tried to concentrate on the changes of the periods and the developments in psychiatry, even though it wasn't meant to underline the life of Giorgia with the developments in psychiatry. She is almost alien to the changes in time – this is a brave decision taken by the director: as if for Giorgia time passes by at a different speed, much slower, dilated, hypnotic; this, in some way, keeps her youth. On the other hand Giorgia spent much time in a hospital, and, therefore, her perceptions of the reality are completely altered.

Besides *The Son's room* by Nanni Moretti and *La meglio gioventù* I didn't shoot any other movie. Before shooting with Moretti I was still in school. After that I started studying ancient literature and now I switched over to modern literature: from archaeology to history of art! To be honest, I never meant to shoot movies: it happened to act in *The Son's room*, which was a very successful and beautiful experience, mainly because of Nanni and Angelo Barbagallo: it was them who believed in my skills. I do not exclude of making other movies. I liked to act in *La meglio gioventù*, but I don't know, it depends from so many things...



---

**Jasmine Trinca** played the role of Irene in *The Son's Room* by Nanni Moretti (Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival 2001) for which she was awarded the Globo d'oro for best debutant actress

## Valentina Carnelutti Francesca Carati

She starred in the following movies *L'amore imperfetto* by Giovanni Maderna, *Hannibal* by Ridley Scott, *E Allora Mambo* by Lucio Pellegrini, *Il mio West* by Giovanni Veronesi, *Mi sei entrata nel cuore come un colpo di coltello* by Cecilia Calvi, *La Manzanara que no era de la Discordia* by Belen Lemaitre, *L'officina dei miracoli* by Vincenzo Attingenti, *Artemisia* by Agnes Merlet, *Nella mischia* by Gianni Zanasi.

She also played in many tv-series and fictions like *La squadra* (as Rosa Cafasso), *Un posto al sole*, *Una donna per amico* (protagonist of one episode in the 3rd series) by Alberto Manni, *Don Luca* (protagonist of one episode) by Marco Marcaferri, *Non lasciamoci più* (protagonist of one episode in the 2nd series) by Vittorio Sindoni, *I ragazzi del muretto* (2nd series) by Gianluigi Calderone.

She performed in numerous theatre plays like Corrado Alvaro's *The long night of Medea* directed by Geppi Gleijeses, Igor Stravinskij's *The Story of a Soldier* directed by Peter Sellars, Margherite Duras' *The Malady of Death* by Francesco Carnelutti, Natalia Ginzburg's *Sea Resort* directed by Gianfranco Calligaris, August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* directed by Gianni Leonetti, *La Confessione* directed by Walter Manfrè.

She also works for the radio in *Futbol* directed by Guido Piccoli, *Radio City Caffè* by Paolo Modugno, *Eros per tre* by Gianfranco Giagni, *Un naso in salita* and *Aldo Moro* by Massimo Guglielmi.

## Andrea Tidona Angelo Carati

Andrea Tidona graduated from the Academy of the Filodrammatici in Milan, and recited in the following theatre plays: *Tre quarti di luna* directed by di E. D'Amato, *King Lear* directed by G. Strehler, *The school for wives* directed by E. D'Amato, *El nost Milan* directed by Strehler, *La vita è sogno* directed by E. D'Amato, *The she wolf* directed by L. Puggelli, *Oedipus* directed by G. Mauri, *Filottete-Philoctet* directed by G. Mauri, *King Lear* directed by G. Mauri, *The twelfth night* directed by M. Sciacaluga, *Play it again, Sam* directed by A. Salines, *Hamlet* directed by C. Cecchi, *The importance of being Ernest* directed by E. Fenoglio, *Bagno finale* directed by C. Cassola, *Mrs Warren's profession* directed by E. Fenoglio, *Sole* regia by W. Manfrè, *La confessione* directed by W. Manfrè, *The Tempest* directed by G. Mauri, *Ammesso e non concesso* directed by C. Cassola, *L'ultima notte di Giordano Bruno* directed by R. Sicco and L. Spadaro, *Inspector Maigret* directed by S. Scandurra.

He worked for the television playing in *Adua* directed by D. Guardamagna, *Una casa a Roma* directed by B. Cortini, *Un bambino in fuga* directed by M. Caiano, *Una donna d'oggi* directed by F. Giraldi, *The Mafia 9* directed by G. Battiato, *Amico mio 2* directed by P. Poeti, *Il colore della vittoria* directed by V. De Sisti, *Più leggero non basta* directed by E. Lodoli, *Le ali della giovinezza* directed by S. Reali, *Padre Pio* directed by C. Carlei. He also starred in movies like: *L'amico di Wang* by K. Hebert, *Life's beautiful* by R. Benigni, *Quinta generazione* by T. Spalla, *Film* by Lucia Belli, *I cento passi* by M.T. Giordana.

## Lidia Vitale Giovanna Carati

She recited in different theatre plays like *Time*, *American allegories*, *Social madness*, *A particular class of women* directed by di Gaby Ford, *L'ascensore* directed by Evelise Ghione, *Cinque giorni molto caldi* directed by Alessandro Mistichelli, *Uomini oltre* directed by Beppe Bosone, *Tuo e della madre che ho ucciso* directed by Andrea Monti.

She writes and directs the show *Troppo da capire*, that won the second prize at the First national competition for unpublished monologues, and she is also responsible for the adaptation, the direction and the interpretation of *Donne di una certa classe*.

She starred in some movies and played in some TV-series like *Il Commissario Raimondi* by Paolo Costella, *Incantesimo 2* by Tomaso Sherman, *Crociere* by Roberto Quagliano, *Il furto del tesoro di San Pietro* by Alberto Sironi, *Una donna per amico 3*.

## Claudio Gioè Vitale Micavi

Graduated from the National Drama Academy Silvio D'Amico in Rome and attended the seminars of Marise Flesh, Nikos Karalambus, Luca Ronconi. He put on scene and recited in the following theatre plays: *Ifigenia*, *Edipo e contro-Edipo*, *Historia von Doctor Iohannes Faustus* (als starring S.Piro). He starred in: *Il gioco delle*, (directed by G. Lavia), *Nobelissimo* (directed by M. Ferrero), *Sogno di un mattino di primavera* (directed by F. Covatta), *Per gioco e per amore* (directed by di P.Passalacqua), *Il burbero di buon cuore* (directed by M. Manna, Best actor in a leading role), *Amore senza amore* (directed by M. Ferrero), *Marat-Sade* (directed by P.Passalacqua).

He played in the short *Qui* and in the movie *The protagonists*, both by Luca Guadagnino; *The Hunderd Steps* by Marco Tullio Giordana; *State zitti per favore* by Livia Giampalmo; *Quando si chiudono gli occhi* by Beniamino Catena; *Passato prossimo* by Maria Sole Tognazzi.

He starred in tv movies like *Operazione Odissea* (directed by C. Fragasso), *Bradipo*; *Francesco* by Michele Soavi

## Paolo Bonanni Luigino

He recited in many theatre plays like: *108 Fm -parlami d'amore*, directed by Marco Bresciani; *Phantasm*, *Telecomando e Telecomando 2*, *Tifortri* all directed by Claudio Insegno; *Stasera mi butto*, *Il fratello maggiore*, directed by Giovanni Lombardo Radice; *Splatter! - Gli psychopatici*, directed by Claudio Insegno; *Sogno di una mezza donna alla soglia della mezza età*, directed by Claudio Insegno; *Tempo zero* directed by Roberto Gandini, *Babbo è uno stronzo* directed by Claudio Insegno; *C'è un fantasma nel mio letto* by Claudio Insegno.

In television : *I ragazzi del muretto* by Paolo Poeti; *Ein haus in der Toscana* by Gabi Kubach; *I ragazzi del muretto III* by F. Lazotti; *Il mostro non fa più paura* by Calderone; *Dio vede e provvede* by E. Oldoini; *Amo Costanza* by R. Mertes; *Il diavolo e l'acqua santa* by Enrico Oldoini; *Le*

*ali della vita* by Stefano Reali; *L'attentatuni* by Bonivento; *La Meglio Gioventù* by Marco Tullio Giordana.

Also starring in: *Quelli del casco* by Luciano Salce; *Pugni di rabbia* by Claudio Risi; *The Venus of Willendorf* by B. Lodoli, *Più leggero non basta* by E. Lodoli; *Tobia al caffè* di Mingozzi; *Modena Modena* by D. Malavolta.

## Giovanni Scifoni Berto

Graduated in 1998 at the National Drama Academy Silvio D'Amico. He made his debut at theatre in 1997 playin in *Inferno*, directed by Lorenzo Salvati. Afterwards he recited in: *La sposa persiana* by C. Goldoni, directed by Lorenzo Salvati (1998); *Jesus Christ Superstar* by A. L. Webber e T. Rice, directed by Claudio Segatori and Giovanni Scifoni (1998/99/2000); *Graal* based on a novel by C. de Troyes, seminar directed by Giorgio Barberio Corsetti (2000); *Antony and Cleopatra* by W. Shakespeare directed by Ninni Bruschetta (2000); *Ronde bis* by E. Bentley, directed by Patrick Rossi Gastaldi (2001); *Henry IV* directed by Roberto Guicciardini, (2001-02); *Alleluia, Brava Gente!* by G&G, directed by Giovanni Scifoni (2002). *La Meglio Gioventù* will be his debut on the screen.