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# European Cinema JOURNAL

MEDIA SALLES

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An initiative on behalf of Italian film-making, with the aim of bringing its latest productions into the limelight, even on markets, such as Russia and China, that have been the almost exclusive prerogative of US films up to now. This, briefly, is **Italian Cinema Worldwide**, which I have the pleasure of introducing in this edition, entirely devoted to it.

In line with MEDIA Salles' vocation, this new initiative, made possible thanks to the support of the Italian Government, again sees cinema exhibitors as its prime interlocutors, and their most important meetings as its venues. For this reason, if its beginning was marked by the presentation, at Cinema Expo International in Amsterdam last June, of the "European Producer of the Year" Award to Elda Ferri - who in recent years has produced some of the most outstanding and successful Italian films and who is here in Venice with the latest work by Roberto Faenza, *The Days of Abandonment*, - it is followed by other, very important appointments, such as Kino Expo, held in Moscow in September, ShowEast, held in Orlando in October, and CineAsia, now in Beijing.

Recently a showman of the stature of Roberto Benigni stated: "in the cinema, two things are important: the screen and the seats. Both have to be filled".

We trust that Italian Cinema Worldwide will succeed in contributing to this undertaking on both fronts.

Domenico Dinoia  
 President of MEDIA Salles



## CULTURE AND THE ECONOMY: THE COMMITMENT OF ITALY AND THE EU TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR FILMS



"I think Italy has to co-operate closely with the other countries to build a European cultural policy on two bases: cultural goods are not a commodity like any other but entitled to special safeguarding, because it is through them that a people's conscience takes shape and is consolidated; the culture industries must work together, so as to build a European common market of culture, able to stand up to the impact of American hegemony. The European Union numbers 450 million citizens and if we succeed in co-ordinating our European policies, we are capable of producing a cultural voice that is just as strong as that of the United States".

Rocco Buttiglione  
 Italian Minister for Cultural Resources  
 and Affairs

"The future of European cinema closely regards all of us. Our imagined world, the emotions, stories and culture that the cinema brings us are a basic part of our continent's wealth. The protection of our common European cinema heritage, its conservation and restoration, the systematic collection of works for the cinema but also of the work of promoting and spreading the knowledge of European cinema is not an abstract matter for fans. It is a sign of care for our shared history and for a highly important industry which, like all of us, daily comes up against the difficulties of globalisation".

Nikolaos Sifunakis  
 Chairman of the Committee  
 on Culture and Education of the  
 European Parliament

## ITALY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC RIM: A NEW SEASON OF FILMS

Countries in the Far East and the Pacific Area will see a healthy selection of Italian films coming to their big screens.

Australia will have the lion's share and can expect titles to satisfy widely varying audience tastes. The films range from those telling the story of dramatic moments in Italy's recent history, such as *Good Morning, Night* and *Come Into The Light* or, again, *Crime Novel*, to fiction in which personal stories are bound up with social issues, as in the case of *Once You're Born*.

Personal relationships and love, expressed in dramatic or light-hearted tones, will be represented both by titles that have experienced wide-ranging circulation in Italy, like *Don't Tell*, *The Consequences of Love*, *Manual of Love*, and by a work addressing a better-prepared audience, such as *Primo Amore*.

This encounter with the different faces of contemporary Italian cinema is made possible thanks to Palace Films, an Australian distributor with a long history in the circulation of films from the Bel Paese.

Thanks to Bitters End, *Good Morning, Night* will also reach Japan, where 2006 also foresees the release of collective works like *All The Invisible Children*, distributed by Gaga Communications, and *Tickets*, distributed by Cine Qua Non, as well as *The Keys to The House*, distributed by Zazie Films.

The releases that have already been planned will be joined by the promising negotiations now going on for *The Days of Abandonment* and *The Tiger and The Snow*, for which the sales agent, Focus Features, is setting up an authentic "grand tour" of the East for 2006.

Elisabetta Brunella  
 Secretary General of MEDIA Salles

## MEDIA SALLES AT CINEASIA 2005

Presentation of a selection of the most recent Italian productions soon coming to Asian theatres.

**13-15 December,**  
 at the China World Hotel and  
 China World Exhibition Center in Beijing.

Visitors to our desk will also receive the first copies of the new "**European Cinema Yearbook - 2005 advance edition**", which this year succeeds in covering the cinema market of as many as 34 European countries, by means of over 40 statistical indicators, with a special section devoted to multiplexes and one on digital cinemas worldwide.

In addition, in the section "Cinema-going worldwide", Ukraine, Argentina and Mexico appear for the first time.

For more information on Italian Cinema Worldwide at CineAsia 2005:  
 infocinema@mediasalles.it

MEDIA Salles presents

**Italian Cinema Worldwide**  
 for promoting Italian films  
 during the most important professional gatherings  
 of cinema exhibitors.

Now at  
**CineAsia,**  
 Beijing, China, 13-15 December 2005

The journey of Italian cinema continues, after its warm reception at **Cinema Expo International** (The Netherlands, June 2005), **Kino Expo** (Russia, September 2005), **ShowEast** (United States, October 2005).

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An initiative supported by the Italian Government.

## ITALIAN PRODUCTION FROM EUROPE TO CHINA Interview with Gianni Amelio

*"Perhaps you never really get to know a country, unless you live in close contact with its inhabitants. So what I've learnt about China didn't come from the landscapes and the monuments, but from the people I had alongside me in my work". This is how the Italian director Gianni Amelio speaks of his latest work, The Missing Star, soon coming to Italian cinemas, which is actually shot and set in China and which promises to be as successful as his other films, which have achieved important recognition in Italy, great attention from the public and international distribution that has made them known in many countries, from the United States to Germany, from The Netherlands to Greece and to the United Kingdom. Amongst his more recent films The Keys to The House: following its European successes, it will be on Japanese screens in April 2006.*

*Mr Amelio, in your opinion what are the elements that have made your films so well loved by Italian audiences and have enabled them to cross national frontiers?*

If there's one thing a director never manages to find out, it's the mysterious reason why a film becomes popular. If we knew the secret of popularity, we'd all be much happier to do this job. Perhaps a spectator can give a better answer than the director to a question like yours. I can only make a guess: the constant attempt to tell stories with strong feelings involved, in a simple, accessible language and never putting stylistic ambitions before the claims of the heart.

*In The Keys to The House the encounter between father and son takes place in Berlin, in The Missing Star China is the stage. What prompted you to set these two stories abroad – unlike the texts that inspire the films – Born Again by Pontiggia and Abandonment by Ermanno Rea?*

I set both my last two films outside Italy, but for very different reasons. In *The Keys to The House*, Berlin was a backdrop, an alien place where the impossibility of communication and solitude of the father and son were able to gain the right prominence. In other words, given the type of story, there was no desire to portray Berlin. In *The Missing Star*, China is the protagonist, even though it is seen through the eyes of an Italian.

*Globalisation changes the structure of work more or less everywhere and, with it, also the human relationships in which it consists. This redefinition often causes fear and raises many questions. Is some sort of answer suggested in The Missing Star?*

Let's just say that I feel I'm in the same position as those who ask themselves the questions and not in that of those who provide the answers. At least not all of them, and perhaps not the right ones.

*Can you tell us about the human and professional experience of shooting in a country like China?*

It would take an entire book to describe this experience. I hope it shows in the film. Shooting in China, I was in an ideal position to understand, step by step, my hero's feelings. We both made the same journey and neither of us as a tourist. Perhaps it's never possible to get to know a country properly, unless you live in close contact with its inhabitants. So that what I learnt about China didn't come from the landscapes and the monuments, but from the people I had near me while I was working.

Maria Vittoria Gatti

## THE PRODUCTION OF FILMS CROSSING NATIONAL BORDERS Interview with Elda Ferri

*"If there's no story, there's nothing doing". The speaker is Elda Ferri, a producer who, in recent years, has come out with some of the most important and successful of Italian films, including the Oscar award winner for Best Foreign Language Film *Life Is Beautiful* by Roberto Benigni, *The Keys to The House* by Gianni Amelio, and almost all of Roberto Faenza's works for the cinema, from *Jona Who Lived in The Whale* to *According to Pereira* and his most recent film, *The Days of Abandonment*, a competitor at this year's Venice Film Festival and a future release in Brazil. The subject and the plot, thus, stand at the centre of the film and its possible fortunes – abroad, too. Because the more universal the film's values are, the more they can be shared outside the home country. To back up her argument, Ferri does not use the words of a cinema expert, but of a psychoanalyst, the Italian Musatti: "Once in the auditorium, it is the spectator's subconscious that enters into relationship with the images on the screen". This is why fear, passion, love, are chords which, once touched, are likely to produce a very similar effect in France, as in China. "A cinema of the sentiments might be Italian or Canadian, it doesn't matter much". This is the case of *The Days of Abandonment*, which centres on "one of the essential themes of our society, self-esteem". It is the case of *The Tiger and The Snow*, where poetry, war, suffering and love hold together and promise to take the spectator far beyond the physical boundaries of the story, between Italy and Iraq.*

*And yet, not all good stories with universal appeal manage to travel the world. Why is this?*

If a lot depends on the plot, on the story, a lot is linked to promotion. American films, for example, are anticipated by massive campaigns. Not by chance, P&A investments for large-budget films in America are almost equal to those of production, whilst here the relationship is around 1 to 20. However, even with a lower budget, it is essential for us to increase our promotional capacity. Partly because, in an increasingly standardised situation, the first to invent something new is the winner. And winning is vital since, in my view, it is difficult to cover a film's production costs today unless it crosses national borders.

*But it takes a lot of energy to cross borders. Who can afford this?*

The great difference lies between having contacts with a foreign distributor or agent guaranteed by the home distributor, and



From left: Andrea Rossi and Kim Rossi Stuart in *The Keys to The House* by Gianni Amelio.

proceeding independently. As far as I'm concerned, for example, *The Keys to The House* was co-produced with Rai Cinema. This made things a lot easier, because Rai has an agreement by which all its films are taken on by Lakeshore Entertainment, and we receive a minimum guaranteed return. This is a great thing, because the films really do travel after that. But for many Italian films, the problem is to have a company that takes care of this work, that believes in the foreign distribution of a film and invests in it, which is why it's very difficult to sell outside national borders. Co-productions are partly an exception. At least they are usually distributed in the countries of the co-producers.

*What role is played by Festivals on this scenario? Do they represent a launching pad for films, or not?*

Yes, without doubt. Merely on hearing that *The Days of Abandonment* was competing in Venice, distributors in Spain, England, Germany and Switzerland thought it would be best if they got there first and asked to view the film. In this sense, the visibility that a festival offers a film cannot be denied. If, as in this case, the film is also taken from a novel, the popularity of the latter makes a big difference to the reception the film can expect. In fact, the fine book by Elena Ferrante, from which the film was taken, has been translated in many European countries. This greatly raises interest in the film's theatrical release.

*If you had to suggest a promotional formula compatible with an "Italian" budget, what would it be?*

If we're talking about films dealing with big themes, I think an interesting formula is one that we have already tried on several occasions: a campaign linked to the central issue in the film. For example, in the case of *Come Into The Light*, the story of Don Puglisi, the Italian priest killed by the mafia, we organised meetings, open to schools, with leading figures in the battle for law and order, who exchanged views with young people on the subject of justice and the relationship with rules and regulations that are perceived as unjust. It was a success: around 400,000 young people took part. For *The Days of Abandonment*, instead, we have planned round tables with famous "abandoned people" on the subject of fidelity, betrayal, self confidence. Because, in our view, a film must arouse emotion, but not only this: it must also ensure that, after seeing it, there is something left to say that is not banal.

M. V. G.

MEDIA Salles presents

### DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas

Kuurne (Belgium), 5-9 April 2006  
at the headquarters of BARCO

Main topics:

- The present state of the European and international market for digital screening
- Overview of technologies
- Exhibition and Distribution
- Digital cinema economics
- Market potential

The course will also offer:

- Visit to a cinema equipped with digital projector
- European case studies



## **AIP-FILMITALIA: THE PROMOTION OF ITALIAN FILMS WORLDWIDE**

### **Interview with Giovanni Galoppi**

*Giovanni Galoppi is President of AIP-Filmitalia, the company resulting from the joint venture between Fiera Milano and Cinecittà Holding, for the promotion of Italian films worldwide. This task is carried out both by supporting Italian participation in the great international festivals and by means of partnerships with local companies or institutions in areas of prime importance, such as Japan and the United States.*

*Mr President, why should spectators from such different geographical areas and cultures choose to go and see an Italian film? Despite its distance in terms of time and style from the great masters, in my opinion Italian cinema has retained its ability to move people by telling day-to-day stories about ordinary people. Ours is not a cinema of super heroes, yet, to take some recent examples, films such as *The Son's Room*, *The Best of Youth* or *Don't Move* have been distributed throughout the world. This ability, this talent for bringing deep and moving sentiments onto the scene, is certainly one of the key aspects that make our cinema universal. And we should not underestimate the importance of the territory, of this country – Italy – which, with its historical and artistic treasures and natural beauty, enchants international audiences.*

*From Europe to Asia, the big market shares are a prerogative of the United States. What strategies are possible for living up a situation that otherwise risks becoming too uniform?*

First of all we must move towards the introduction of obligatory quotas, perhaps envisaging a mutual arrangement with different countries. Obviously, the quota should also cover tv networks, since a film is rarely distributed in movie theatres only. In any case, especially when considering the new markets, the present situation is dramatic. In Russia, for example, no quotas have yet been established (this year the government should define the situation), whilst in China the law foresees the distribution of 40 foreign films a year. If, however, we consider that of these 40 titles around 27 are American, the odds for the rest of the world are 13 films a year. This is a truly negligible figure.

*In many quarters China is considered to be the "market of the future". What steps have you taken to introduce Italian cinema into this complex situation, as well?*

As mentioned previously, at the moment China is one of the markets of the future and one of the most impenetrable of countries, due, in fact, to a quota for foreign movies that does not distinguish between American and European products. However, we and the other European countries are not giving up and, year by year, we are increasing our presence at the Shanghai festival/market, the real eastern gateway for Chinese distributors. Our investment in this event has increased greatly and at last year's edition we managed, together with the Italian Foreign Trade Institute, to develop a particularly interesting and varied programme, which also provided for an Italian pavilion in the market area. As well as organising the Ital-

ian selection for the Director of the Shanghai Festival and putting together a considerable artistic/technical delegation, we set up an Italy/China co-production workshop, bringing together three Italian producers and the most important Chinese producers during the Festival.

*In your view, how were the Italian films presented in Shanghai received?*

It is always very interesting to watch the Chinese audience's reactions to Italian cinema. The film competing, *Now and Forever* by Vincenzo Verdecchi, and the four films presented during the special Focus Italy (13 at a Table by Enrico Oldoini, *The Iguana* by Catherine McGilvray, *My Brother's Summer* by Pietro Reggiani, *Chemical Hunger – The Munchies* by Paolo Vari e Antonio Bocola), were received with special attention to the stories but also, and prevalently, to what lies hidden behind the stories: the historical, social and cultural fabric of contemporary Italy. During the press conference which followed the screening of *Now and Forever*, for example, the film's representatives were literally submerged by endless questions on the history of Italy, its present, the value of memory in Italian culture, our post-war period, which was the background for the film. The success was not limited to the festival and, in fact, *Now and Forever* was sold to Chinese television, whilst in the case of 13 at a Table negotiations on Chinese distribution began.

Maria Vittoria Gatti

## **CHINA: THE DIGITAL ADVANCE**

*They started in June 2002 and, around a year and a half ago, they had 34 digital screens, with the objective of creating a circuit of 300 digital theatres by the end of 2005, in order to cover all the big and medium-sized towns in China. Up to now, China has 196 digital screens in operation, with another 211 sets of equipment ready for installation, covering all the 29 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. And so, in all probability, China Film Group will have achieved even more than it set out to. We talk about this, almost two years after his first contribution to our pages (see "European Cinema Journal" nos. 1/2004 and 2/2004) with Zhou Tiedong, President of China Film Import and Export (LA).*

*At the beginning of 2004 you were still noticing some diffidence, both amongst spectators and amongst some exhibitors, towards the reliability of digital technology. Yet the conversion to digital is continuing. Has anything changed?*

Technically speaking, there is no obvious problem in the exhibition of digital films. What hinders the further development of digital cinema are still the technical specification and standard issues.

China now still has three types of servers. Although we can use the same MPEG-2 compression mode, the packaging method is not unified, which calls for three release master discs, greatly adding to the cost and trouble in distribution.

Another problem is investment. The price for digital projection equipment is high (\$80,000 - \$100,000 per unit, not including custom duties). So with 35mm print still easily available, the theatres are generally reluctant to invest in the installation of digital pro-

jection equipment. So we need a feasible business model. What we now count on is government funding, which is not enough and which, in the long run, is not the right way for a healthy market-oriented economy. Since the Chinese film market has great potential, foreign and private investors are becoming interested in investing in the construction of digital cinemas in China. We are now negotiating with some foreign partners in the hope of finding a business model suitable for China. Along with the advancement of digital technology, the equipment price is also expected to lower down, so we are very confident in the future of digital cinema construction in China.

*China Film Digital Cinema Circuit, a company belonging to China Film Group, solely handles and manages the distribution of digital content. What is your opinion of the present offer of content, both in terms of D- and E-Cinema in the true sense and in terms of electronic cinema?*

The offer of content involves all the aspects of film production, distribution and exhibition. For many of China's domestic productions, digital technology is more and more commonly applied in the production process, especially in the area of digital special effects, as in such films as *House of Flying Daggers* and *On the Taibang Mountain*. As a development trend, total digitalization will finally be realized. The rural film market, instead, uses E-Cinema to project digitalized content as a replacement for the traditional 16mm print projection. The China Film Bureau has now invested in about 300 installations on an experimental basis. By 2010, the total number of E-Cinema installations is planned to expand to 1,000.

*And what about distribution and exhibition of D-Cinema?*

Because of the advantages of digital cinema, the local distributors and exhibitors are now more than willing to include digital titles in their release schedules. Even the time slots in early 2006 are now booked with our digital releases. Up to October 2005, we have distributed a total of 60 films in digital format, among which are 24 imported titles (11 distributed only digitally) and 36 domestic productions (7 digital only), including 7 wholly digitally produced films. In the past three years, the total box office generated from those digital screens has reached 250 million RMB yuan (about \$31 million).

In the year of 2005, the China Film Group Digital Cinema Circuit is planning to distribute a total number of 40 titles in digital format, with an estimated box office of 120 million RMB yuan (about \$15 million), of which the domestic productions will take more than 80%. That is because most blockbuster Hollywood movies are not being distributed in China's digital theaters this year. According to our statistics, for a typical wide release, the digital screen box office takes up to 10%-20% of the total box office.

*What are China Film Group's prospects for the future?*

We believe that with the government support, if we can find an ideal business model and attract investors to enter the digital film realm, China's digital film will achieve even further development. Digital film, as a technology revolution, will boost the prosperity of the film industry and open up a new frontier for Chinese film.

M. V. G.

**ONCE YOU'RE BORN**  
*(Quando Sei Nato Non Puoi Più Nasconderti)*  
Year of production: 2005

**Director:** Marco Tullio Giordana.  
**Country of origin:** Italy/France/UK.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Adventure/Drama.  
**Production:** Cattleya, Rai Cinema, Babe, Aquarius Film.  
**World sales:** TF1 International.  
**Asiatic distributor:** Palace Films, Australia.

**Synopsis:**  
Thirteen year-old Sandro is from Brescia in Northern Italy, only son of a family that in

just two generations has achieved significant wealth. One night, during a sailing trip through the Mediterranean, Sandro falls into the sea, and the others on board notice too late. When they return to look for him, there is no sign of the boy. Although given up for dead, Sandro, instead, has managed to be rescued by a fishing boat carrying illegal aliens to Italian shores. Thus, begins an adventurous return to Italy. Having confronted hitherto unknown expectations, rejections, hopes and disillusionments, Sandro has crossed over that thin line between adolescence and adulthood. And once over that threshold, nothing is like it was before. From the novel by Maria Pace Ottieri, with the same name.

**GOOD MORNING, NIGHT**  
*(Buongiorno, Notte)*  
Year of production: 2003

**Director:** Marco Bellocchio.  
**Country of origin:** Italy.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Drama.  
**Production:** Filmalbatros, Rai Cinema, Sky (co-operation), with the contribution of MiBAC.  
**World sales:** Celluloid Dreams.  
**Asiatic distributors:** Bitters End, Japan (May 2006); Palace Films, Australia.

**Synopsis:**  
Chiara leads a quiet life. She works as a librarian, is recently married and has moved into a new apartment with her husband. And that's how Chiara wants to be seen. What nobody knows, is that she is a member of one of the world's most feared terrorist groups who have kidnapped the Prime Minister of their country and are holding him hostage in their basement. Based on the true story of the kidnapping of Aldo Moro in 1978, a crime which stunned a nation, this sensitive and thoughtful film explores the failure of radical ideology.

**THE KEYS TO THE HOUSE**  
*(Le Chiavi di Casa)*  
Year of Production: 2004

**Director:** Gianni Amelio.  
**Country of origin:** Italy/France/Germany.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Drama/Family.  
**Production:** ACHAB Film, Pola Pandora Film, Arena Films, Arte France Cinéma, 01 Rai Cinema, Bavaria Film, Jean Vigo Italia, Pandora Filmproduktion GmbH, with the contribution of Eurimages.  
**World sales:** Lakeshore Entertainment.

**Asiatic distributor:** Zazie Films, Japan (April 2006).

**Synopsis:**  
Gianni, a young man like many others, after years of denial, meets his son Paolo for the first time, on a train going to Berlin. Paolo is a fifteen year old with serious handicaps but an exuberant, carefree and happy individual. The film is the story of an unexpected and frail happiness: to know and rediscover oneself, far away from home. Their stay in Germany and then sudden trip to Norway turns the relationship between the two of them into one of findings, secrets, confrontations and happiness...

**THE DAYS OF ABANDONMENT**  
*(I Giorni dell'Abbandono)*  
Year of production: 2005

**Director:** Roberto Faenza.  
**Country of origin:** Italy.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Drama.  
**Production:** Jean Vigo Italia, Medusa Film.  
**World sales:** Medusa Film. In negotiation with Asiatic countries.

**Synopsis:**  
Olga, a still young woman, tranquil and satisfied, is all of a sudden abandoned by her husband and falls into a bottomless vortex. The days of abandonment are the endless hours of losses, inflicted and suffered, the times of hard emotions and feelings that devastate her, of the love sickness that suffocates her. Shot mainly from a subjective point of view and accompanied by the narrating first person of the main character, a plot is developed that one could define a "thriller of the soul", loaded with astonishment and fury. Olga's is a disastrous fall that takes your breath away, a trial that captures and drags you to the darkest and most painful end of decline and female experience. From the Elena Ferrante's novel, translated into 12 languages.

**DON'T TELL**  
*(La Bestia Nel Cuore)*  
Year of production: 2005

**Director:** Cristina Comencini.  
**Country of origin:** Italy/UK/France/Spain.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Drama.  
**Production:** Cattleya, Rai Cinema, Aquarius Films, Alquimia Cinema, Babe (Paris).  
**Producers:** Riccardo Tozzi, Marco Chimenz, Giovanni Stabellini.  
**World sales:** TF1 International.  
**Asiatic distributor:** Palace Films, Australia.

**Synopsis:**  
Sabina is beautiful, enjoys her job and loves her boyfriend, but is she truly happy? For some time now strange nightmares have tormented her, and finding herself pregnant forces open a disquieting window onto her own inner life: her memories, her adolescence, her family, bourgeois rituals at once both strict and reassuring. But these are only the surface. From deeper down something much darker and more disturbing is about to be revealed. From the novel by Cristina Comencini, with the same name.

**THE TIGER AND THE SNOW**  
*(La Tigre e La Neve)*  
Year of production: 2005

**Director:** Roberto Benigni.  
**Country of origin:** Italy.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Comedy.  
**Production:** Melampo Cinematografica.  
**Producer:** Jean Vigo Italia.  
**World sales:** Focus Features.  
In negotiation with Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

**Synopsis:**  
The story of a poet, Attilio De Giovanni, madly in

love with lyrics, but even more, with a woman named Vittoria. Unfortunately his love is unrequited, and so Attilio who is an exuberant and extravagant man to try and win over his belle, and not hesitate in getting into the most absurd and hilarious situations. But things will not work out as he had planned, and during these strange sentimental twists, the two of them will find themselves in Iraq, right at the beginning of the conflict. There, Attilio who does not speak a word of Arabic, will find himself forced to fight his own personal battle against the hell of destruction, armed only with his poetry...

**ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN**  
Year of production: 2005

**Directors:** Mehdi Charef, Emir Kusturica, Spike Lee, Kátia Lund, Jordan and Ridley Scott, Stefano Veneruso and John Woo.  
**Country of origin:** Italy.  
**Language spoken:** French/Mandarin/English/Italian/Portuguese/Serbo-Croatian.  
**Genre:** Drama.  
**Production:** MK Film Productions, Rai Cinema.  
**Producers:** Maria Grazia Cucinotta, Chiara Tilesi, Stefano Veneruso.  
**World sales:** Adriana Chiesa Enterprises.  
**Asiatic distributor:** GAGA

Communications, Japan (Autumn/Winter 2006).

**Synopsis:**  
Stolen childhood, according to eight talented directors, from seven different perspectives, in seven different countries, including China, the setting for *Song Song & Little Mao*, directed by John Woo in Beijing. The common denominator is the situation of degradation, incomprehension and hardship in which children are so often obliged to live, even in their own homes. A snapshot of how the young suffer, amidst great social problems and the indifference of the adults who all too often seem not to notice them.

**CRIME NOVEL**  
*(Romanzo Criminale)*  
Year of production: 2005

**Director:** Michele Placido.  
**Country of origin:** Italy/France/UK/USA.  
**Language spoken:** Italian.  
**Genre:** Drama/Crime.  
**Production:** Cattleya, Warner Bros. Italia, Babe, Aquarius Film.  
**Producers:** Riccardo Tozzi, Marco Chimenz, Giovanni Stabellini.  
**World sales:** TF1 International.  
**Asiatic distributor:** Palace Films, Australia.

**Synopsis:**  
A criminal known as The Lebanese has a dream: to conquer the underworld of

Rome. To carry out this feat without precedent he puts together a ruthless and highly organized gang. Their progress and changes in leadership (the Lebanese is followed by his cohorts Freddo and Dandy) take place over twenty-five years, from the 1970's into the '90's, and are inseparably intertwined with the dark history of modern Italy: terrorism, kidnappings and corruption at the highest levels of government. Throughout these years Police Lieutenant Scialoia sticks to the gang's trail, trying both to bring them to justice and to win the heart of Dandy's girlfriend Patrizia. From the novel by the Italian writer Giancarlo De Cataldo, with the same name.

**TICKETS**  
Year of production: 2004

**Directors:** Ermanno Olmi, Abbas Kiarostami, Ken Loach.  
**Country of origin:** Italy/UK/Iran.  
**Language spoken:** English/Albanian/Italian.  
**Genre:** Comedy.  
**Production:** Fandango, Sixteen Films (London), supported by Medusa Film.  
**Producers:** Domenico Procacci, Babak Karimi, Carlo Cresto-Dina, Rebecca O'Brien.  
**World sales:** The Works.  
**Asiatic distributors:** Dongsoong Art Centre, Korea (before the end of June 2006), Cine Qua Non, Japan (2006).

**Synopsis:**  
Three highly acclaimed directors – Erman-

no Olmi, Abbas Kiarostami and Ken Loach – join forces to direct three interwoven stories that take place during a journey from Central Europe to Rome. The characters connect through casual encounters and set forth a story of love, chance and sacrifice. One older businessman finds solace and a new insight into life when he is forced to wait at the train station due to bad weather. A young man is reminded of life's obligations but is also introduced to love. And three Scottish youths on their way to the football match of their dreams are forced to open their eyes and see the bigger picture. One single train journey sparks many changes for many people. This is a film about privilege and exclusion, and the reality of the value of just a ticket.