

BETA CINEMA

presents

U.S. PALMESE

a film by MANETTI bros.

with

ROCCO PAPALEO, BLAISE AFONSO, GIULIA MAENZA,
LISA DO COUTO TEIXEIRA, MAX MAZZOTTA,
MASSIMO DE LORENZO, GIANFELICE IMPARATO, MASSIMILIANO BRUNO,
GUGLIELMO FAVILLA, AURORA CALABRESI, GIUSEPPE FUTIA,
MARIO RUSSO, LUCA ATTADIA, SALVATORE COSTA,
ANTONIO DI TURI, ADRIANO FEDELE
with GUILLAUME DE TONQUEDEC
and CLAUDIA GERINI as the poet Adele Ferraro

produced by

PIER GIORGIO BELLOCCHIO, MANETTI bros., CARLO MACCHITELLA

a production of

MOMPRACEM with RAI CINEMA

World Sales:

Beta Cinema // beta@betacinema.com //

Phone: +49 | 89 | 673469 – 828 // www.betacinema.com

Cast

Don Vincenzo	ROCCO PAPALEO
Etienne Morville	BLAISE AFONSO
Concetta	GIULIA MAENZA
Sandrine	LISA DO COUTO TEIXEIRA
Mimì Bagalà	MAX MAZZOTTA
Avvocato Tripodi	MASSIMO DE LORENZO
Professore Macrì	GIANFELICE IMPARATO
Rocco Zampogna	MASSIMILIANO BRUNO
Peppi 'Mpaccia	GUGLIELMO FAVILLA
Adriana	AURORA CALABRESI
Melo Fiorino	GIUSEPPE FUTIA
Manuele Surace	MARIO RUSSO
Ninuzzo Cangemi	LUCA ATTADIA
Peppe Reddocili	SALVATORE COSTA
Nicola Malagò	ANTONIO DI TURI
Pietruzzo Saffioti	ADRIANO FEDELE

with GUILLAUME DE TONQUEDEC as Gilbert Desagnat

and with CLAUDIA GERINI as the poet Adele Ferraro

Directed by	MANETTI bros.
Idea by	MANETTI bros. MICHELANGELO LA NEVE
Screenplay by	MANETTI bros. EMILIANO RUBBI LUNA GUALANO
Director of Photography	ANGELO SORRENTINO
Editing	FEDERICO MARIA MANESCHI
Visual Effects Supervisor	SIMONE SILVESTRI
Casting	NICOLE MANETTI
Production Design	NOEMI MARCHICA
Costume Design	GINEVRA DE CAROLIS
Sound Engineer	IACOPO PINESCHI
Composer	PIVIO E ALDO DE SCALZI (EDIZIONI CURCI – CREUZA)
The Song “IMPEGNO” by	OSCAR UAILD feat. SKAAR e BLAISE AFONSO
Sound Editing	GIUSEPPE TRIPODI
Sound Effects	GIANLUCA BASILI, SERGIO BASILI
Re-Recording-Mixer	DAMIANO SILVA
Assistant Editor	MARTA FLORIAN
Assistant Director	CATERINA CRESCINI
Football Consultants	GIULIO ROSATI MICHELANGELO IENCO ARTURO CALABRESI
Line Producer	FRANCESCA FINELLO
Executive Producer	LAURA CONTARINO
Produced by	PIER GIORGIO BELLOCCHIO, MANETTI bros., CARLO MACCHITELLA
A production of	MOMPRACEM with RAI CINEMA
With the contribution of	CALABRIA FILM COMMISSION
In association with	LOKA FILM
Italian Distributor	01 Distribuzione
World Sales	BETA CINEMA
Duration	120'

In Palmi, a small town in Calabria, Don Vincenzo, a brilliant but eccentric retired farmer, comes up with a wild idea to revive the local soccer team: he launches an unconventional community fundraiser, rallying citizens to chip in money to sign Etienne Morville, a Serie A star and one of the best players in the world.

Morville, notorious for his bad temper, leaves Milan for Palmi in an effort to repair his image. There, he's confronted with a world rooted in sincerity and simplicity – one that will lead everyone involved to an unforgettable experience.

How would the fortunes of a provincial amateur soccer team change if an world-class professional from the Serie A league would play in their ranks?

Can the initiative of a playful farmer, fan of the soccer team of a small town, change the outcome of a soccer championship?

Our movie begins with a description of the modern soccer world, more and more business and entertainment and less and less sport until something unexpected happens that breaks the barriers of daily routine.

Don Vincenzo (Rocco Papaleo) is a retired local farmer who convinces an entire village to raise a fortune to make the international soccer idol Etienne Morville (Blaise Afonso) join the regional team. As Etienne is in a crisis of play and popularity he agrees to join the local team. From that moment on the movie becomes something else and we start talking about sports. We've always wanted to face the difficult challenge of the "sports movie", that is a movie where sports aren't just a background or a pretext to talk about something else, but the very soul of the narration. In our opinion, a sports movie is a movie where a dribble, a successful pass or a spectacular overhead kick moves the story forward and produces real emotions. In this soccer fairytale, where sport desperately tries to take the place of business, that's what we tried to do.

All this is told in the natural setting of real sport. Not the big stadiums of the Serie A and international competitions, where soccer, for now, has completely lost its identity, but in the shabby provincial fields where amateur teams play. A soccer game that is a bit improvised but passionate, not perfect but still fun. And through soccer we ended up talking about Palmi, a town in southern Italy that becomes the backdrop, the setting and the soul of this sporting and human story.

Palmi is our mother's town, the town where we spent a lot of time (starting with the very long summers many years ago), the town to which we feel a deep sense of belonging. For better or for worse.

Together with sport, we have chosen to describe the soul and identity of Palmi, which belongs to a region, Calabria, that has always been described in a very different way.

Is Palmi special and unique, or is Calabria itself profoundly different from its clichés? We don't know. We have simply told what we have seen with our own eyes and experienced firsthand. Without ever striving to achieve the impossible "objectivity" that probably doesn't exist. The result is a light comedy, a tender, cheerful and sporty fairy tale that has surprisingly become our most personal film.

Antonio and Marco Manetti are both directors and screenwriters. They made their directorial debut in 1995 with the short film *Consegna a domicilio*, an episode of the movie *DeGenerazione*. Their first feature film, *Torino Boys*, was produced by Marco and Pier Giorgio Bellocchio in 1997. The film was presented at the Locarno Film Festival and later at the Turin Film Festival where it received a Special Mention from the Jury.

In 2000, *Zora the Vampire* (with Carlo Verdone and Micaela Ramazzotti) was released in cinemas, followed by, among others, *Piano 17* (with Giampaolo Morelli) *Fear 3D* (with Francesca Cuttica and Peppe Servillo) and *The Arrival of Wang* (with Francesca Cuttica and Ennio Fantastichini) for which they were selected for the competitive section Controcampo Italiano at the Venice Film Festival. In 2013, with the film *Song of Naples* (with Alessandro Roia, Giampaolo Morelli and Serena Rossi), presented at the Rome International Film Festival, they received unanimous acclaim from critics and audiences.

In 2017 the film *Love and Bullets* (with Giampaolo Morelli, Serena Rossi, Claudia Gerini, Carlo Buccirosso and Raiz) was in competition at the Venice Film Festival and won many awards, including the David di Donatello for Best Film.

In December 2021 their highly anticipated *Diabolik* was released in theaters.

The first chapter of the trilogy, dedicated to the King of Terror is a film adaptation of the adventures of the character created by Angela and Luciana Giussani and starring Luca Marinelli, Miriam Leone and Valerio Mastandrea.

In November 2022, *Diabolik – Ginko Attacks!* starring Giacomo Gianniotti as Diabolik and Monica Bellucci as Altea, were released in cinemas. In November 2023, after being presented at the Rome Film Festival, the last chapter of the *Diabolik – Who Are You?* trilogy was released in cinemas as well.

Also involved in television directing, the two brothers directed, among others, the cult series *Inspector Coliandro*. Active in web production, they have directed over a hundred video clips for some of the most famous faces in Italian music.

In 2016, with producer Carlo Macchitella and the German company Beta Film, joined by producer and actor Pier Giorgio Bellocchio, they founded Mompracem, a dynamic production company that operates outside the box, with the main objective of giving space to young emerging talents and creating projects that combine entertainment and quality, embracing different genres.

Antonio Rocco Papaleo was born in Lauria, Basilicata, in 1958. He moved to Rome as a young student to attend university and began to take his first steps in the world of entertainment as a stand-up comedian, actor, singer and musician.

He has had a long career in both theater and cinema and among his most important films are: *Il Male Oscuro* by Mario Monicelli (1989), *Senza Pelle* by Alessandro D'Alatri, *With Closed Eyes* by Francesca Archibugi (1994), *I Laureati* by Leonardo Pieraccioni, *August Vacation* by Paolo Virzì (1995), *Paradise All of a Sudden* by Leonardo Pieraccioni (2003), *What a Beautiful Day* by Gennaro Nunziante (2011), *A Boss in the Living Room* by Luca Miniero (2014), *La Buca* by Daniele Ciprì, *The Son's Name*, directed by Francesca Archibugi (2015), *So What If It Is*, directed by Edoardo Leo (2016), *Ears*, directed by Alessandro Aronadio (2016), *The Place*, directed by Paolo Genovese (2017), *The Prize*, directed by Alessandro Gassmann (2017), *Moschettieri del re - La penultima missione*, directed by Giovanni Veronesi (2018), *The Great Spirit*, directed by Sergio Rubini (2019), *Pinocchio*, directed by Matteo Garrone (2019), *You Only Live Once*, directed by Carlo Verdone (2020).

In 2010 he made his directorial debut: *Basilicata Coast to Coast*, a surreal choral and musical comedy road trip. Papaleo directed himself, Alessandro Gassman, Paolo Briguglia, Max Gazzè and Giovanna Mezzogiorno, obtaining great success with the public and critics and winning the David di Donatello, Nastro d'Argento and Globo d'Oro awards for 'Best New Director' in 2011. The film also obtained important awards for the soundtrack composed by Rita Marcotulli and Rocco Papaleo (author of all the songs): it won the David di Donatello, the Nastro d'Argento and the Ciak d'Oro for 'Best Soundtrack'.

In 2013 he returned to directing with the movie *A Small Southern Enterprise*, which he wrote with Valter Lupo, starring Riccardo Scamarcio, Barbora Bobulova, Sarah Felberbaum, Claudia Potenza, Giovanni Esposito; the importance of the soundtracks is confirmed in this movie too, with the precious contributions of Rita Marcotulli and Erica Mou.

At the same time as the movie, the novel, written by Rocco Papaleo with the same name as the film was released, again with Valter Lupo.

In the summer of 2015, he worked on his third movie as a director, filming on land and in the waters of Uruguay. The movie, *Onda su Onda*, stars Papaleo himself, Alessandro Gassmann, Luz Cipriota and Massimiliano Gallo.

In the summer of 2022, he filmed his new movie *Forgotten* in which, as always, he is not only the director and screenwriter together with Valter Lupo, but also an actor with Giorgia, Simone Corbisiero and Angela Curri. The movie was released in April 2023.

As a musician and singer, Rocco Papaleo released the album *Che non si sappia in giro* (Let it not be known) in 1997, for which he is the singer and author of the music and lyrics. In 2012 he released the album *La mia parte imperfetta* (Sony Music) which contains 12 songs with music and lyrics by Rocco Papaleo and the collaboration of Valter Lupo and his usual musicians. After winning the Gaber Prize, in memory of the late Mr. G and his theater-song, he became the host of the 2012 and 2013 editions.

For many years he has been touring Italy with theater-song shows including *Buena Onda*, *Piccola impresa meridionale* and on March 30th in 2023, he returned to the stage with the show *Coast to coast* directed by Valter Lupo; with the show *Divertissement* he was on tour throughout the summer of 2023.

He has taken part in many theatrical productions as an actor, including *Un'aria di famiglia*, directed by Michele Placido (1998), *Eduardo al Kursal*, directed by Armando Pugliese (2001/02/03/04), *Eduardo più unico che raro* directed by Giancarlo Sepe (2010/11) and *Peachum* directed by Fausto Paravidino (2021/2022); currently on tour with Gogol's *The Inspector General*.

On television we remember him as the presenter of the Sanremo Festival together with Gianni Morandi in 2012, with Michelle Hunziker presenting *Zelig* in 2014, in a *DopoFestival* with Anna Foglietta and Melissa Greta Marchetto in 2019, with Giovanni Veronesi, Alessandro Haber and Sergio Rubini in 2019 and the series *No Activity* on Prime with Fabio Balsamo, Emanuela Fanelli, Luca Zingaretti, Carla Signoris and Alessandro Tiberi.

Blaise Afonso was born in 1993 in Liège. His career began in 2020 in the movie *Earth and Blood*, directed by J. Leclercq. The following year, Blaise Afonso and J. Leclercq continued to work together in the movie *Sentinelle*. In the same year, we see him in the movie *The Last Mercenary*, directed by David Charbon, and in the short movie *Caligola*, directed by M. Disbeaux.

In 2022 he was busy on the set of various projects. He participated in the series *Mauvaise Pioche*, directed by F. Scotland, and *Uncles* directed by J. Gordyn. He also starred in the movie *Paura profonda*, directed by G. Beghin. In addition, he had his first theater experience with *Lili de la nuit à l'aube*, staged by S. Nicolas. In 2023 he took part in the short film *Le Dodsing*, directed by Claudia Tagbo. In 2023, he directed the short film *Dans le studio*. We see him again on television in *La Tete dans les étoiles*, directed by E. Gillibert.

In the same year, we were able to admire him on the big screen in the movie *Death Will Come* (2024), directed by C. Hochhausler. At the same time, we saw him on stage in *La fille au ventre troué*, directed by M. Pretre.

Born in Palermo in 1999, Giulia Maenza embarked on a successful career as a model at a very young age, working with high fashion brands.

In 2016 Giulia made her television debut in the Rai1 series *The Mafia Only Kills in Summer*, with Anna Foglietta and Alessandro Piavani. In 2019, we see her in the fashion short movie Bulgari: *Glam Rebel*. Her film debut came in 2020, with the movie *La regola d'oro*, directed by Alessandro Lunardelli, with Simone Liberati, Edoardo Pesce and Barbora Bobulova.

In 2021 we see her alongside Francesco Scianna, Filippo Timi and the young actors Francesco Gheghi and Matteo Oscar Giuggioli in the Netflix movie *The Invisible Thread*, for which she wins the 2022 Nike Athena Award for Best New Actress.

In 2022 Giulia is one of the female protagonists of the Amazon Prime Video original series *The Bad Guy*, where she plays alongside Luigi Lo Cascio as Teresa Suro, daughter of the feared boss Mariano Suro.

With her career rapidly ascending, we see her again in 2024 as one of the female protagonists of *The Bad Guy 2*.

Giulia doesn't stop there: she is also the protagonist in the feature film *Alberi erranti e naufraghi*, directed by Salvatore Mereu, which promises to be a work full of depth and poetry. Finally, we will also see her among the protagonists of the feature film *Orfeo* by Virgilio Villoresi, where she will have the opportunity to further explore her artistic abilities.

Interview with MANETTI bros.

"How was the idea for this story born and what is the main message you want to convey to the public?"

"The idea originates from our love of soccer and the frustration of seeing this sport dominated by money and the media frenzy that takes away the pure enjoyment of playing. Our film aims to be a reflection on sporting passion and the complex surroundings of modern soccer, with a particular focus on the tension between authentic sporting values and the corruption of the soul.

We imagined that a champion who has lost his vocation goes to play in a minor league team in a small town in Calabria. The dream of the protagonist Don Vincenzo (Rocco Papaleo) is also our dream. We wanted to tell the story of Palmi, the city where our mother was born, as we know it. Having lived there for a time, without claiming to be the only ones who know the truth, but with a different kind of rhetoric from the usual one, full of negative stereotypes that are used for the South - organized crime, corruption and folklore - which also ends up damaging the southerners themselves.

We want to help the South see itself in a different light and stop underestimating itself. This form of self-punishment has always existed, where people only ever talk about the South's illnesses. Without falling into predictable narratives, we tell the story of a different South that dreams, reacts to difficulties and can be a source of inspiration. We wanted to focus on everything that makes these places unique: the beauty, the culture, the strength of the community".

"So you wanted to talk about the importance of the ability to dream big?"

"There were many topics we wanted to discuss. Our perspective is perhaps different from the usual iconographic story of a provincial village. We wanted to describe the stubborn obstinacy of a pensioner who is still able to dream, as opposed to a successful young man who has stopped doing so because he has already had everything in life.

The story of soccer star Etienne Morville, who can learn something from those less fortunate. Sharing a love of the pure essentials of the sport, is a metaphor for life that dispels the idea that success and money alone can solve all problems. In the movie, soccer is just one aspect among many others. A device to describe a simpler and more genuine world. We love all sports very much - especially

American football - but some great epic movies, such as "Rocky" and "Chariots of Fire", are dedicated to individual disciplines. It is more challenging to make a film about soccer, which has proven to be very difficult to represent on the big screen: the challenge was to make a good film about soccer and as ideal references we obviously had in mind both John Huston's "The Great Escape" and the Japanese cartoon "Holly and Benji".

"What kind of collaboration was born with the city?"

"Palmi is a provincial town different from what one usually imagines, it has special characteristics. It is a city of culture and often culture creates debate. It is considered in neighboring countries as 'the city of the Court'. Therefore characterized by quarrels and litigation. The people of Palmi are rather difficult because they have a very strong character and personality, so the people of Parma welcomed us very well, because they know that we are crazy about them and we really think that they are special human beings, but it must be said that we also encountered some difficulties.

When we screened the movie at the Rome Film Festival a few months ago, some friends from Palmi came to see it, they liked it and were moved, but now we're very anxious about the reactions in town when "U.S. Palmese" is released, because ours is not a hagiographic story: our mother saw a pre-edited version of the movie last summer, before she passed away, and she told us that she liked it, but also that she was terrified of the reaction of the people from Palmi, who are meticulous and touchy and have a difficult character... Ours is a declaration of love without any effort and like all true declarations, made without any effort, it is not necessarily perfect, but it comes from our heart".

"Why did you choose Rocco Papaleo as the protagonist?"

"We didn't write the script with Rocco in mind from the start: during the preparation phase of the film we met several actors who weren't from Palmi, but when it was his turn he completely adhered to the spirit of the film, being a man from the South who likes to tell things in a non-rhetorical way. For the role of a Palmi citizen the ideal choice would have been an actor from that area, but we didn't find one despite the excellent work of the Calabria Film Commission, which lately has been involving various local workers in various productions, but which we think should also invest in actor training. The Calabrian dialect is difficult, not everyone knows it and it is often confused with Sicilian".

"Were there any particular moments on the set that you remember more than others?"

"There were many, starting with the decision to film places that are very dear to us, like the road from the village down to the sea. The opening sequence with Don Vincenzo riding his moped along that tree-lined street, which we love so much, was the first shot that came to mind... and then the sequence set in Via Pitagora, the street of our family home, in which our mother appears at the window while Etienne Morville walks along it through the crowd. And then there are the sequences set at the Lopresti sports field, which we knew well having played there for a long time as children, when it was still a dirt field with stones, before the era of synthetic grass. It was fun to shoot the soccer scenes on "our" playing field: we always like to create a sense of community with the technicians and actors on our sets, and the weeks we worked in Palmi consolidated a strong sense of community. All the people involved in the movie have remained connected to the city, and in many cases returned in the following months, because deep bonds of friendship and love were created. Palmi is special and our crew has also realized this".

Interview with ROCCO PAPALEO

"What kind of relationship did you establish with the Manetti brothers?"

"It was a wonderful encounter. I had never acted for them, but we knew each other and were following our own professional paths: for me it was the discovery of two rather unique people. I liked their idea of cinema that was both fabulous and concrete, that "Manettian" way of working whereby, for example, while they were shooting in a street they didn't ask to block off the town around the set, but let it pulsate normally: at first glance this may seem like a distraction, but paradoxically this decision helped me not to feel like I was in a bubble, in an artificial silence as usually happens. While we were filming, Palmi was all around us, with cars passing through the square. Antonio and Marco were busy in their village, but they had no intention of "colonizing" it as if it were a military occupation, even if a peaceful one."

"What did you like about your character?"

"I liked Don Vincenzo's humanity, the idea of an almost childlike dreamer, like some village characters still are. To dream big you have to move away from realism, from what can really happen, to realize incredible dreams you need a wishful thinking that only a child can have... I liked the idea of being able to tell the story of such a strong passion for soccer, which I played competitively when I was young, and above all the fact that Don Vincenzo was a character who walks a fine line between irony and melancholy, that he wasn't explicitly comical and therefore more unusual than other funny roles I usually play. The aspect of tenderness and a certain underlying romanticism prevailed: he is a man who dreams big and this is a powerful message for everyone because he embodies the idea of a South that does not give up, but needs injections of confidence, that

someone should convince it of its beauty and its ability to dream, even if perhaps these are somewhat unrealistic dreams. At the moment, our imagination lacks the beauty of the countries that continue to empty: in the movie, however, we show that you can live there in a great way, what matters is to try with courage”.

“How did you create your character?”

“I had to speak in Calabrian, a language and accent very different from my own, Lucania: the Manetti wanted precise tones because they are originally from Palmi and have a deep love for their city and their memories of real life. I therefore had to respect their strong feelings and so I arrived at my destination ten days before filming began, to settle in. It wasn't a real “full immersion”, but that period of time was useful for contextualizing everything, I started studying the local dialect, which is both very musical and very difficult. It was quite a challenge. A friend of ours, Cristoforo Bovi, taught me and the other actors every detail of Parmesan dialect, a task in which I was also helped “from the sidelines”, unknowingly, by one of the butchers of Palmi, in whose shop I went every day to have a coffee and listen to him talking to his customers.

I followed my own path through the town and met the real pensioner who inspired Antonio and Marco when they were writing the movie. He's a very different type of man to me, a bit older, but I tried to capture his tone of voice, something that is never just sound, because in the way you speak there's also a character, a language that leads you to assume a psycho/spiritual posture. And then, as always, I relied on my instinct. Sometimes I found some correspondence within myself, something that drew me towards the character or that drew the character towards me. In life I'm very different from Don Vincenzo, I'm less unrealistic, more concrete, I don't have big dreams, my fantasies are very plausible, but in this case I had to try to distance myself from my inner self and it was a beautiful journey in the service of the role. I'm not the kind of actor who hides himself in the character and makes him wonderful, but in this case I took a step forward – or at least to the side – in my *modus operandi*. Palmi has a unique energy and being able to interact with its inhabitants allowed me to get into my role as best as possible. I learned a lot from the way my two directors see life and I believe this is reflected in my Don Vincenzo, who represents the desire for redemption of an entire community.

“Do you remember any moments of the production more than others?”

“I have fond memories of some successful scenes with the actress who plays my daughter, Giulia Maenza, a lovely girl, very beautiful and very talented, with whom I formed a special relationship, characterized by a sort of generational exchange. In real life I have a son, Nicola, who is the same age as her, 26, and Giulia has a very strong personality that resembles his, so I played at being a father to a

daughter even though I didn't know the dynamics of a father/daughter relationship in real life”.

Interview with BLAISE AFONSO

“In the movie you play a character who arrives in Palmi from a very different world. How did you find the experience of acting in a context far from your daily reality?”

“I'm very happy to have played Morville, I fulfilled a dream that I had put aside, football. It's always an incredible opportunity to be able to play a character who is very different from us. Learning Italian was also a great challenge for me, but I completely immersed myself in the local culture and this helped me a lot to get into character. My experience in Palmi was incredibly pleasant: being used to a completely different reality, the atmosphere of this small town in Southern Italy surprised me in a very positive way. I found a warm and human environment, where it's easy to feel part of a community, you get the impression that you end up knowing everyone, that's what I liked most about Southern Italy”.

“What kind of relationship developed on set with Antonio and Marco Manetti both at work and in life?”

“The Manetti brothers and I have established a very good relationship. I respect them a lot. From the very beginning they were very generous and considerate and over time they've become like two parents to me. You can feel their total love for cinema and I think that's why they make such good films. They opened the doors of Italy to me and I'm very grateful to them”.

“How did you get on with Rocco Papaleo and the other actors?”

“All my co-workers turned out to be simple people with a big heart, just like the Manetti bros. In the first days of shooting, the production had me staying in a big house with a garden, but I was afraid because I knew there were lizards there and I couldn't sleep. Rocco Papaleo offered to swap his house with mine without any problem and, after this change of accommodation, I was finally able to sleep without fear. I also got on very well with Giulia Maenza to whom I owe a special thanks, because I am now represented in Italy by an important agency for actors such as Do cinema by Daniele Orazi, and I owe this to her friendly interest. Here are two ways my fellow actors have shown their friendship and generosity”.

“Do you have any particularly emotional memories or memories from the shooting period?”

“I think my strongest memory is linked to the last day of shooting, the last applause, the moment when everything stopped by the sea and everyone shed

a tear of emotion. At that moment, I held back my tears out of modesty, but shortly after hugging everyone, I went to the sea and cried for a long time before calling my wife to tell her that we had finished the movie”.

Interview with GIULIA MAENZA

“What kind of girl is the Concetta you play?”

“I think she's a very strong young woman who doesn't feel any less free just because she lives in a small town. Today in the South there are many women and men who have big dreams and ambitions and also different tastes from those that are now defined as 'normal'. Despite living in a small, old-fashioned town, Concetta doesn't hide - even if she doesn't want to expose herself and shout her homosexuality from the rooftops - she lives her life normally and compares herself both to the generation of her father, Don Vincenzo, and to that of the young soccer star Etienne Morville. In both cases the relationship of encounter/conflict goes through an acute phase at first but then normalizes because an important dialog is born and strengthened, leading to evolution. Concetta is a character with a very beautiful and interesting story arc, so that in the course of the story all shyness and formality are cast aside and her true soul emerges. In the movie it's nice to see how all the characters are a bit helpless with their dreams, their desire to live life and be happy: in the end, just as Don Vincenzo's impossible dream comes true, Concetta's dream also becomes reality, and she finds herself cheering for a team she initially didn't care about. Sport is the epitome of the union between generations”.

“Did you easily get on well with the Manetti brothers?”

“For me it was fortunate to have not one director but two, two different minds to deal with, two more opinions to compare with mine, which meant more advice and more words: all this could only enrich my work. Antonio and Marco are brothers and I also found their inevitable quarrels very funny: on set each of them had his own point of view and, given their extreme familiarity with each other, they were both always free to say whatever they wanted to each other, even harshly, always finding a common solution and always proving to be very good at directing us actors and finding the right way to approach the city. On their set there was a wonderful atmosphere, real and exciting, they worked in harmony with Palmi's energy, without bothering anyone in the town, so that, with time, we actors and technicians also felt like we were part of the town”.

“How did you find yourself getting to grips with your character?”

“I was born in a town smaller than Palmi, Camporeale, in the province of Palermo, and I immediately felt somehow “at home”. I saw a lot of myself in Concetta, like

her I had too big desires for the place where I was born and I am convinced that it is necessary to show how passion pushes you to change. It was a wonderful journey. Initially I was afraid of sounding more Sicilian than Parmesan, but thanks to the help of our dialogue coach Cristoforo, and the immersion in the local reality, I managed to capture the essence of the dialect. I was familiar with certain dynamics typical of a small town where in the end we all greet each other... if you talk and interact with the people where you work, and you know how to listen to them carefully, you'll always find the right intonation. Direct contact with the people of Palmi was fundamental, it allowed me to really understand the spirit of the locals, to better understand the nuances of the dialect and to grasp the local culture in a more authentic way. It's not just a question of language, but of attitudes and ways of living that I tried to bring to my character. The challenge for us actors was to completely detach ourselves from our origins and learn to speak Palermitan with the help of the whole city. During the weeks leading up to filming I lived with headphones on, listening to the vocals to get used to the sound of all the lines I would have to say on stage, and then I studied everything, sequence by sequence, trying to recreate it as best as possible. In the end, when I saw myself in the projection I was the first to be surprised, because I had a different voice and a different tone... now I will add another language in which I can act to my resume”.

“What kind of relationship did you form with Rocco Papaleo?”

“We got on well straight away, we 'clicked'. The first scene we shot was the one that became the first scene of the movie for me, where my character clashes with his father, challenging him on the naivety of cultivating certain utopian ideas. For my part, I never felt embarrassed or in awe of an experienced actor like Rocco, I immediately felt welcomed, I met a wonderful person with whom anyone would enjoy acting. We met before each sequence to practice the Calabrian accent and the right tones together with our dialogue coach, and our rehearsals always proved useful and constructive. In the relationship between our two characters, the roles are reversed over time, it's a bit as if Concetta becomes her father's mother, because she tries to make him behave properly instead of indulging him in the pursuit of his crazy dreams. She seems more determined and practical than he is, but in the end she is satisfied because she sees that he is happy, because a dream that was only his has become, over time, the dream of an entire town and has been realized.

“Was there any moment during the making of the movie that struck you more than others?”

“Perhaps the sequence of Etienne Morville's arrival. All the people of Parma were there, playing themselves, and there was a great collective euphoria in the air that I then found again in the Festa dei Giganti scene, a passionate procession where none of the citizens present were pretending, they were all really proud to

be involved and filmed in the celebrations. And then it was really moving to see how excited Marco and Antonio Manetti were for the unique opportunity to tour the city where they grew up”.