



COLORADO FILM . MAGDA FILM and RAI CINEMA

present

a film by

GUIDO CHIESA

I AM WITH YOU

produced by

MAGDA FILM and COLORADO FILM

in collaboration with

RAI CINEMA

international distribution

RAI TRADE



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non-contractual credits

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| director | GUIDO CHIESA |
| treatment | NICOLETTA MICHELI |
| screenplay | NICOLETTA MICHELI GUIDO CHIESA FILIPPO KALOMENIDIS |
| costumes | VALENTINA TAVIANI |
| set design | MARTA MAFFUCCI |
| director of photography | GHERARDO GOSSI |
| live sound recording | ANDREA SILEO |
| editing | LUCA GASPARINI (a.m.c.) ALBERTO MASI (a.m.c.) |
| sound editing | MARCO BENEVENTO for RUMORI |
| music | NICOLA TESCARI |
| casting | FRANCESCO VEDOVATI |
| production manager | ANDREA GRAZZANI |
| organisation | ANTONIO TACCHIA |
| produced by | SILVIA INNOCENZI GIOVANNI SAULINI MAURIZIO TOTTI |
| for | MAGDA FILM and COLORADO FILM |
| in collaboration with | RAI CINEMA |
| | Film recognised as a work of cultural interest with the support of the Ministry of Cultural Resources and Activities General Department for the Cinema |
| international distribution | RAI TRADE |
| nationality | ITALIAN |
| year of production | 2010 |
| location | TUNISIA (Matmata, Monastir, Eless, El Kef) |
| running time | 102' |

non-contractual credits

with

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| NADIA KHLIFI | Mary |
| RABEB SRAIRI | Mary as an adult |
| MUSTAPHA BENSTITI | Joseph |
| AHMED HAFIENE | Mordechai |
| MOHAMED IDOUDI | Jesus |
| FADILA BELKEBLA | Elizabeth |
| DJEMEL BAREK | Zachariah |
| CARLO CECCHI | Herod |
| GIORGIO COLANGELI | Wise Man |
| FABRIZIO GIFUNI | Wise Man |
| DENIS LAVANT | Wise Man |
| ROBINSON STEVENIN | Wise Man |
| JERZY STUHR | Wise Man |

Palestine, 2000 years ago. Mary, a young girl hailing from a family of shepherds, is pledged to marry Joseph, a widower with two children who lives in the nearby village of Nazareth. After leaving her home, Mary, who was raised to love and respect children, soon notes the shortcomings of the patriarchal world she lives in, starting with her husband's family. This is dominated by Joseph's older brother, Mordechai. The cheerful but determined attitude of the young woman, always very protective with the children, arouses the indignation of the family chief and of all those who believe that youngsters should be punished, disciplined and taught to obey.

This story is set against the backdrop of a harsh land placed under the yoke of both the Romans and the tyrannical King Herod. Uprisings and rebellions are commonplace, and calls for violence and revenge spread like an infectious disease.

Mary gives birth to her son Jesus and finds herself facing momentous decisions that will end up transforming her, against her will, into a scandalous figure.

I Am with You is a story about motherhood: that of Mary of Nazareth, from the conception of her son Jesus through to his adolescence. It portrays a mother and her relation with her son, supported by the discrete, evolving presence of Joseph, the patriarch who accepts to "step aside", foregoing the dominant male role.

The questions raised by the film address topics such as birth, growth and the upbringing of children, all from a uniquely female point of view. The story has a universal appeal, relating to fundamental moments and deep-rooted expectations that accompany the life of every child. This is what makes the film appealing both to believers and non-believers.

Christianity, amongst the world's major religions, is the only one to single out a woman as a principle of salvation. It's a turning point in the history of humankind, because it identifies for the first time a mother, and thus a woman, as the cornerstone of human history.

But in practical terms, what made this girl so special, so as to become the mother of a God "made man"? Why did God choose her?

Mary, often depicted in traditional accounts as an unattainable icon, and in some cases even as a minor or passive figure, during the course of the film acquires very specific traits: a positive example to learn and be inspired from.

Seen in this light the Nativity can serve as a surprising anthropological and pedagogical model that challenges us all.

We shot the film in the Tunisian countryside to find a cultural and anthropological setting as close as possible to that of the Palestine of Biblical times. For the same reason, we cast local actors, in many cases non-professionals, starting with the female lead throughout most of the film: the young Mary. Simple people: shepherds, peasants and children who brought the film to life by performing

in their mother tongue, the dialect of the Tunisian countryside, a distant descendent of the branch of Semitic languages that produced Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic.

Every effort was made to preserve the spontaneous, genuine nature of their interpretations, through an approach that drew on their real-life experiences.

In contrast, the language chosen for the characters who embodied officialdom was ancient Greek, at the time the most widely-used language in cultural and diplomatic spheres.

Our research for the costumes and set design led us to deliberately recreate a vividly coloured world, quite different from the one that films set in that time and place have used us to.

This archaic, patriarchal backdrop, framed in centuries-old societal and family rites and hierarchies, makes the course of Mary's life, and that of her son Jesus, appear even more astounding, since despite their simple, humble background, they brought light into a world of violence and deceit, showing their fellow human beings the way to salvation.

Guido Chiesa and Nicoletta Micheli

*This film was inspired by the original ideas of Maeve Corbo on the figure of Mary.
The screenwriters offer her their heartfelt gratitude.*

Born in Turin in 1959, he works in the United States from 1983 to 1990 as a directing/production assistant (in films by Jim Jarmusch, Michael Cimino etc.), as well as a reporter for Italian periodicals and the RAI radio network. During these same years he publishes books on music and films. In 1991 his first full-length feature, **Il caso Martello**, is shown at the Venice film Festival, winning the *Grolla d'Oro* award for "Best First-Time Director". In 1994 his film **Babylon** is selected for the competition at the Locarno Festival, in addition to being shown at 18 other festivals and winning the Fipresci International Critics' Award in Turin. In 1999 his documentary **Non mi basta mai** wins the *Cipputi* Award at the Turin Festival. In 2000 his **Il partigiano Johnny** is selected for the competition at the Venice Film Festival, winning the *Young People and Cinema* Award, as well as the jury's award at the Stuttgart Festival. In 2002 the documentary **Alice è in paradiso** is the winner at the Festival of the Peoples in Florence. In 2004 his film **Lavorare con lentezza** is shown at the Venice Film Festival, where it wins the Mastroianni Award for up-and-coming actors. The film is also the winner at the Festival de Cinema Politic in Barcelona, plus the Med Film Festival, in addition to obtaining a *Ciak d'oro*, the Italian Film Fest award for editing, three nominations for Silver ribbons and two for David di Donatello awards. In 2007 the documentary **Le pere di Adamo** is selected for the Extra section of the Rome Film Festival and also obtains a special mention at the Italian Film Fest.

FULL-LENGTH FILMS

- 2007 LE PERE DI ADAMO, documentary, Orione
- 2004 LAVORARE CON LENTEZZA, Fandango
- 2000 IL PARTIGIANO JOHNNY, Fandango
- 1999 NON MI BASTA MAI, (co-directed with D. Vicari), documentary, Brooklyn
- 1995 MATERIALE RESISTENTE, (co-directed with D. Ferrario) documentary, Dinosauria/ Colorado Film
- 1994 BABYLON, Brooklyn/Palomar
- 1991 IL CASO MARTELLO, Brooklyn

TV SERIES

- 2008 QUO VADIS BABY, 6 x 90 mi., Colorado Film, Sky, RTI

SHORT FILMS

- 2006 IL CUORE DEL SOLDATINO, Vivo Film
- 1993 IL TEMPO DEI SOGNI, Brooklyn
- 1992 CIVILTÀ, 5 episodes, RAI-SAT
- 1986 BLACK HARVEST, Tomesha
- 1985 GIVE ME A SPELL, Swampland

DOCUMENTARIES

- 2007 KISHE IONE - LA NOSTRA CHIESA, Palomar
- 2006 STESSA SPIAGGIA, STESSO MARE, Vivo Film/Sky
- 2003 SONO STATI LORO - 48 ORE A NOVI LIGURE, Fandango/Telepiù
- 2002 ALICE È IN PARADISO, Fandango/Telepiù
- IL CONTRATTO, Fandango/Telepiù
- 2001 MA CHE CI FACCIO IO A SANREMO?, Colorado Film/Telepiù
- 2000 PROVINI PER UN MASSACRO, Fandango/Telepiù
- 1998 VOLARE - LA GRANDE TRASFORMAZIONE, VideA /ARTE/RAI
- UN GIORNO DI FUOCO, CPI/Polygram
- UNA QUESTIONE PRIVATA - VITA DI BEPPE FENOGLIO, Palomar/RAI
- 1997 PARTIGIANI, Intel Film
- PETALI DI CANDORE MARLENE KUNTZ '96-'97, CPI/Polygram
- NASCITA DI UNA DEMOCRAZIA, 2 episodes, RAI
- 1996 INDIPENDENTI A NEW YORK, Telepiù
- RANE CULATELLI & LUCCIOLE: LA PIANURA DI BERTOLUCCI, Telepiù
- RITRATTI D'AUTORE: I FRATELLI TAVIANI, Telepiù
- 1995 25 APRILE: LA MEMORIA INQUIETA, RAI 3
- QUEI MOMENTI EROICI (1988-1995), Cross Productions/Brooklyn
- TORINO IN GUERRA: 1940-1945, Institute of Resistance History of Turin
- 1994 MEMORIE DA UNA FABBRICA, Brooklyn

Has directed video clips for Perturbazione, Afterhours, Marlene Kuntz, Mambassa, Assalti Frontali, Yo Yo Mundi and Luci Ferme.