



presents

MIA MADRE

107 min | Italy/France | 2016 | Rated R
In English and Italian, with English subtitles



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SYNOPSIS

Acclaimed Italian auteur Nanni Moretti finds comedy and pathos in the story of Margherita, a harried film director (Margherita Buy, *A Five Star Life*) trying to juggle the demands of her latest movie and a personal life in crisis. The star of her film, a charming but hammy American actor (John Turturro) imported for the production, initially presents nothing but headaches and her crew is close to mutiny. Away from the shoot, Margherita tries to hold her life together as her beloved mother's illness progresses, and her teenage daughter grows ever more distant.

Mia Madre premiered in the Main Competition of the 2015 Cannes Film Festival where it won Ecumenical Jury prize while Margherita Buy received the Best Actress prize at Italy's 2015 Donatello Awards. Characteristically self-reflexive and autobiographical, Moretti's latest speaks to the poignancy of human transience, how we process loss and how we gain strength through humor.

LOGLINE

A movie director in the midst of shooting her latest film tries to stave off a nervous breakdown as she simultaneously contends with a difficult actor, a romantic break up, a non-communicative teenage daughter and her beloved mother's progressive illness.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR NANNI MORETTI

Is the character played by Margherita Buy in *Mia Madre* your alter ego?

I never considered playing the main role in this movie myself. I stopped doing that quite a while back, and I'm glad I did. I used to enjoy it, but today I am no longer driven by the fixed idea of wanting to compose my character film after film. I always thought this character would be a woman and a director, and that this woman would be played by Margherita Buy for a very simple reason: a film with Margherita Buy in the leading role would be much better than one with me in the leading role! She's a much better actor than I am. Margherita carried much of the film's workload on her shoulders. Out of seventy days of shooting, she was only away one day, and that was for a scene I ended up cutting!

Still, one has the impression that there is a lot of you in this film...

In the scene in front of the Capranichetta movie theater in Rome, during which Margherita's brother, played by me, asks his sister to break at least one of her two hundred psychological patterns, it was as if I was talking to myself. I always thought that with time I would get used to drawing from the deepest part of me... But on the contrary, the more I move on and continue this way, the more this feeling of malaise arises. This said, the movie is not a personal confession. There are shots and frames, choices, performances - it's not real life.

How would you define your work? As an autobiography? Autofiction?

Autofiction is a term I really don't understand. And as for autobiography... All stories are somewhat autobiographical. I was talking about myself when I spoke about the Pope in *Habemus Papam (We Have a Pope)*, played by Michel Piccoli, who felt he was unfit and likewise when I depicted Silvio Orlando's work and personal stories in *Il caimano (The Caiman)*. More than the wish to measure how much is autobiographical, what matters is to have a personal approach in relation to every single story.

How did you choose John Turturro?

Directors who have made far fewer films than I don't have any qualms about approaching international stars. But I'm not like that. I called on him because I liked him very much and it seemed to me that his acting style wasn't naturalistic. But also because we were already acquainted, and he already had a connection with Italy – he has even made a beautiful documentary about Neapolitan music called *Passione*. John had seen some of my films, which reassured me greatly. I admit that it would have been difficult for me to explain who I am, what I want, what my cinematographic expression is like. He also speaks and understands a little Italian. And he is a film director as well. It's nice to work with actors who are also directors; it makes it easier to understand one another.

When did you start thinking up the *Mia madre* screenplay?

I usually allow for a great deal of time between my films. I need to leave behind the psychological and emotional investment of the previous movie. It takes time to recharge my batteries. This time, however, as soon as *Habemus Papam (We Have a Pope)* was released, I started thinking about my next film. I started writing when the things that I recount in the film had just happened in my life. And that probably had an influence on the narrative.

How did you come up with the different narrative modes, where dream and reality sometimes intermingle?

It's important to tell a story in a non-academic manner, to have a narrative which doesn't limit itself to fulfilling the basics: a narrative which, although familiar with the rules, can do without them. However, it is also important that it rings true within yourself, and also within what you are in the process of telling. You should never have a flat and ordinary relationship with the material you want to present.

I liked the idea that when the audience would see a scene, they wouldn't immediately understand whether it was a memory, a dream or reality, for they all coexist in Margherita's character with the same immediacy: her thoughts, her memories of apprehension concerning her mother, the feeling of not being good enough. The narrative time corresponds with Margherita's various emotional states in which everything coexists with the same urgency. I wanted

to recount, from the point of view of a female character, this feeling of not being good enough in relation to her work, her mother, her daughter.

Is this the reason why you wrote it with three women, Chiara Valerio, Gaia Manzini and Valia Santella?

Perhaps, but those aren't things that you plan or set up in advance. I hardly knew Gaia Manzini and Chiara Valerio. I had met them during a reading. Each one of us was asked to read an extract from a book by Sandro Veronesi. Shortly after, when I decided to start working on this subject, I called them. Valia, on the other hand, is a friend of mine, and we have been working together for a very long time.

What did you imagine would be the film that Margherita was making?

There is a scene that I cut where Margherita says to her daughter: "I'm never in my films," and her daughter answers: "well, you don't necessarily have to talk about yourself in your films," and Margherita replies: "no, not necessarily, but I would like to make films that are more personal." There it is. I wanted Margherita, overwhelmed by her life and her problems, to make a film that was more political than personal.

In the press conference scene, a journalist asks her: "In such a delicate moment for our society, do you think that your film will succeed in appealing to the country's conscience?" Margherita starts to give a formatted answer: "Well, today, the public itself is demanding a different kind of commitment..." But her voice slowly fades and we can hear what she is really thinking: "Yes, of course it's the role of cinema, but why have I been making repeatedly the same things for years and years? Everybody thinks that I have the knack of understanding what is going on, of interpreting reality. But I don't understand anything anymore."

I wanted the sturdiness and assertiveness of her film to be in absolute opposition with her emotional state; with what she's experiencing and how she perceives herself. I wanted there to be a discrepancy between her very structured film and the very delicate moment she is going through.

How did you address the theme of mourning?

In *La stanza del figlio* (*The Son's Room*), I was exorcising a fear. Here, I am referring to an experience that many people share. The death of one's mother is an important rite of passage in life, and I wanted to recount it without being sadistic whatsoever towards the audience. This said, when you make a film, you are deeply engrossed in what you are doing: you work on the dialogue, the direction, the editing and as a result the theme you are treating doesn't strike you with the full extent of its impact. Even when the feeling is very strong, I tend to think that the director doesn't let himself be fully affected by it.

Is it more difficult to shoot, think through and recount a story like this one compared with other films?

No, I don't think so. There was just a moment during the writing process when I decided to reread the journal I kept during the course of my mother's illness. I did it because I thought that perhaps our exchanges, those lines could add weight and help the scenes between Margherita and her mother to ring true. In fact, the rereading of these journals was painful.

What else did you read or what did you watch in preparation for *Mia madre*?

During intense working periods and during a film shoot, I accumulate an array of things. When I finished shooting *Mia madre*, I realized that I hadn't had the time to review the books and the films that I had believed I should read or watch again because they broached the subject of pain, loss or death. It was a great relief for me to understand that I didn't need them anymore. I saw Woody Allen's *Another Woman* again, but I didn't watch Haneke's *Amour*, which was on my desk. And especially, I didn't read Roland Barthes. After my mother's death, a woman I'm friendly with, offered me *Journal de deuil* (*Mourning Diary*), which Barthes had written right after his mother's death. She told me that it had helped her. I opened a page at random, I read two lines, which felt like a stab in my heart, and I closed it. At the end of the film shoot I took the book off my desk and put it up on the shelf. Fortunately, I no longer felt the need to delve into grief.

The mother is played by an actress who is not known in France, Giulia Lazzarini.

This actress from the Piccolo Teatro de Strehler has a background which is very different from mine, and meeting her was a delightful experience. Not only was she able to understand me, and enter into my film, but, and I haven't the faintest idea how, she also thoroughly understood my mother.

Your mother was a professor...

She taught for thirty-three years at the Visconti High School in Rome: literature in the middle school, then during the last years, Greek and Latin in the high school. At least one person every week would tell me that she was their teacher. Sometimes, there are people who also had my father as a professor at the University (he was a professor of Greek epigraphy). Many of her former students would come to see her years after passing their baccalaureate. I never had with any of my professors the kind of relationship she had with her students. I'm going to confess something that is a little painful, and which upsets me a bit, but I'll say it: after my mother's death, through the things that her former students told me, I had the feeling that something very important about her as a person had entirely escaped me, something that her former students had been able to grasp and share with me. Something essential.

What have you learned making this film?

I can answer this question very specifically. I feel exactly as I did during my first film shoot - the same anxiety, the same confusion, the same utter lack of confidence. I don't think it's this way for everybody. I believe for many people with experience, their knowledge of the profession and a certain detachment counts. I, on the other hand, have this very clear impression: it always feels as though I am making my first film. This time, it was with even more anxiety. There are people who say it is my most personal film; perhaps that is the reason why. But I just don't know.

I can say, however, that I have learned something along the way. I'm nicer to the actors, I'm more willing to stand by their side; I stick up for them. And what else have I learned...well indeed, there's something I learned very quickly: the fact that when a film comes out, it no longer fully belongs to you. The public sees it, transforms it. There are things that have escaped you entirely that the public picks up, reveals and sheds a light upon...

"I want to see the actor next to the character." This is one of Margherita's lines that she often repeats to her actors.

It's something I say all the time. I don't know whether the actors understand it, but in the end, I'm able to get what I had in mind out of them.

This interview has been compiled from questions asked in various interviews given by Nanni Moretti to the Italian press in April 2015.

CAST AND CREW

NANNI MORETTI (Director)

Born in 1953, Moretti as an actor, director, producer, distributor and exhibitor has been a leading figure in the Italian independent film scene since the 1970s. His breakthrough international success was *Caro Diario (My Diary)* which won the Best Director prize at Cannes in 1994, and his stature as an international auteur was solidified with the Palm d'Or for *The Son's Room* in 2001. His Nuovo Sacher cinema, in a Fascist-era structure, is Rome's most popular arthouse.

1976	IO SONO UN AUTARCHICO (I AM SELF SUFFICIENT)
1978	ECCE BOMBO
1981	SOGNI D'ORO
1984	BIANCA
1985	LA MESSA È FINITA (THE MASS IS ENDED)
1989	PALOMBELLA ROSSA (RED WOOD PIGEON)
1993	CARO DIARIO (DEAR DIARY)
1998	APRILE
2001	LA STANZA DEL FIGLIO (THE SON'S ROOM)
2006	IL CAIMANO (THE CAIMAN)
2011	HABEMUS PAPAM (WE HAVE A POPE)
2015	MIA MADRE

MARGHERITA BUY

Born in 1962, Margherita Buy is one of Italy's most accomplished and acclaimed screen actresses, having won Italy's highest film accolade, the David di Donatello Award seven times during her career. She worked previously with Nanni Moretti on *The Caiman* and *We Have a Pope*.

HABEMUS PAPAM (WE HAVE A POPE) N. Moretti (2011)
UNA BELLA ESTATE N. Di Majo (2011)
COM'È BELLO FAR L'AMORE 3D (LOVE IS IN THE AIR) F. Brizzi (2011)
LA SCOPERTA DELL'ALBA (DISCOVERY AT DAWN) S. Nicchiarelli (2011)
MAGNIFICA PRESENZA (A MAGNIFICENT HAUNTING) F. Ozpetek (2011)
IL ROSSO E IL BLU (THE RED AND THE BLUE) G. Piccioni (2012)
MI RIFACCIO VIVO S. Rubini (2013)
VIAGGIO SOLA (A FIVE STAR LIFE) M. S. Tognazzi (2013)
LA GENTE CHE STA BENE F. Patierno (2014)
MIA MADRE N. Moretti (2015)

JOHN TURTURRO

Born in 1957, John Turturro is an Italian-American actor, writer and director known for his roles in the films *The Big Lebowski*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, and the first three films in the *Transformers* series. He has appeared in more than sixty films, is an Emmy Award winner, Golden Globe Nominee and three time Screen Actors Guild Awards nominee.

TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON M. Bay (2011)
GODS BEHAVING BADLY M. Turteltaub (2013)
GOD'S POCKET J. Slattery (2014)
EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS R. Scott (2014)
TEMPO INSTABILE CON PROBABILI SCHIARITE M. Pontecorvo (2015)
MIA MADRE N. Moretti (2015)

FRANCESCO PICCOLO (SCREENPLAY)

HABEMUS PAPAM (WE HAVE A POPE) N. Moretti (2011)
IL CAPITALE UMANO (HUMAN CAPITAL) P. Virzi (2013)
UN FIDANZATO PER MIA MOGLIE D. Marengo (2014)
IL NOME DEL FIGLIO (AN ITALIAN NAME) F. Archibugi (2015)

VALIA SANTELLA (SCREENPLAY)

TE LO LEGGO NEGLIO OCCHI (I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES) V. Santella (2004)
LASCIA PERDERE, JOHNNY! (DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME, JOHNNY!) F. Bentivoglio (2007)
NINA E. Fuksas (2012)
MIELE (HONEY) V. Golino (2013)
FAI BEI SOGNI M. Bellocchio (2015, in development)
PERICLE IL NERO S. Mordini (2015, in development)

CLELIO BENEVENTO (EDITING)

L'ULTIMO TERRESTRE (THE LAST MAN ON EARTH) G. A. Pacinotti (2011)
È NATA UNA STAR? L. Pellegrini (2012)
PASSIONE SINISTRA M. Ponti (2012)
CHA CHA CHA - Cronaca di un delitto M. Risi (2013)
VIVA LA LIBERTÀ (LONG LIVE FREEDOM) R. Andò (2013)
TUTTI CONTRO TUTTI R. Ravello (2013)
LA SEDIA DELLA FELICITÀ C. Mazzacurati (2013)
TI RICORDI DI ME? R. Ravello (2014)

PAOLA BIZZARRI (PRODUCTION DESIGN)

HABEMUS PAPAM (WE HAVE A POPE) N. Moretti (2011)
ANCHE SE È AMORE NON SI VEDE S. Ficarra - V. Picone (2011)
IL COMANDANTE E LA CIOGNA (GARIBALDI'S LOVERS) S. Soldini (2012)
BIANCA COME IL LATTE, ROSSA COME IL SANGUE G. Campiotti (2013)
ANDIAMO A QUEL PAESE S. Ficarra - V. Picone (2014)

ARNALDO CATINARI (CINEMATOGRAPHY)

MISSIONE DI PACE F. Lagi (2011)
LE GUETTEUR (THE LOOKOUT) M. Placido (2012)
BUONGIORNO PAPÀ (OUT OF THE BLUE) E. Leo (2013)
VIAGGIO SOLA (A FIVE STAR HOTEL) M. S. Tognazzi (2013)
NOI 4 F. Bruni (2014), **ANITA B.** R. Faenza (2014)
LA SCELTA (THE CHOICE) M. Placido (2015)

VALENTINA TAVIANI (COSTUME DESIGN)

L'ULTIMO TERRESTRE (THE LAST MAN ON EARTH) G. A. Pacinotti (2011)
GLI EQUILIBRISTI (BALANCING ACT) I. De Matteo (2012)
BUONGIORNO PAPÀ (OUT OF THE BLUE) E. Leo (2013)
I NOSTRI RAGAZZI (THE DINNER) I. De Matteo (2014)

END CREDITS

DIRECTOR	NANNI MORETTI
STORY BY	GAIA MANZINI NANNI MORETTI VALIA SANTELLA CHIARA VALERIO
SCREENPLAY	NANNI MORETTI FRANCESCO PICCOLO VALIA SANTELLA
CINEMATOGRAHY	ARNALDO CATINARI
PRODUCTION DESIGN	PAOLA BIZZARRI
COSTUME DESIGNER	VALENTINA TAVIANI
SOUND	ALESSANDRO ZANON
EDITING	CLELIO BENEVENTO
PRODUCED BY	NANNI MORETTI DOMENICO PROCACCI
CO-PRODUCTION WITH	SACHER FILM-FANDANGO RAI CINEMA LE PACTE - ARTE France Cinéma

CAST

MARGHERITA	MARGHERITA BUY
BARRY HUGGINS	JOHN TURTURRO
ADA	GIULIA LAZZARINI
GIOVANNI	NANNI MORETTI
LIVIA	BEATRICE MANCINI
FEDERICO	STEFANO ABBATI
VITTORIO	ENRICO IANNIELLO
ACTRESS	ANNA BELLATO
PRODUCER	TONY LAUDADIO
INTERPRETER	LORENZO GIOIELLI
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	PIETRO
SECRETARY	TATIANA LEPORE
DOCTOR	MONICA SAMASSA
NURSE	VANESSA SCALERA
EMPLOYEE	DAVIDE IACOPINI
FORMER STUDENT	ROSSANA MORTARA
FORMER STUDENT	ANTONIO ZAVATTERI
MARGHERITA GIOVANE	CAMILLA SEMINO FAVRO
GIORGIO	DOMENICO DIELE
LUCIANO	RENATO SCARPA

MUSIC

ARVOPÄRT	SARAH WAS NINETY YEARS OLD FÜR ALINA PARI INTERVALLO CANTUS IN MEMORY OF BENJA MIN BRITTEN TABULA RASA FESTINA LENTE SILOUAN'S SONG I LUDUS (CON MOTO)
ÓLAFUR ARNALDS ARNOR DAN ARNORSON	A STUTTER CARRY ME ANEW
ÓLAFUR ARNALDS	FOR NOW I AM WINTER
LEONARD COHEN	FAMOUS BLUE RAINCOAT
JARVISCOCKER	BABY'S COMING BACK TO ME
PHILIPGLASS	STRING QUARTET N° 2 (COMPANY) I - II - IV EXCERPT FROM KRONOS QUARTET
CINZIA DONTI, ISABELLA COLLIVA	CHARISMA
MARIO CANTINI, NINO ROTA	BEVETE PIÙ LATTE

About Music Box Films

Founded in 2007, Music Box Films is a North American distributor of acclaimed international, American independent and documentary features along with the best in international television. Current and upcoming releases include Anne Fontaine's acclaimed **THE INNOCENTS**, the story of a convent in post-WWII Poland traumatized by war crimes; and the Swedish box office smash **A MAN CALLED OVE**, an adaptation of Fredrik Backman's international bestselling novel. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films. www.MusicBoxFilms.com

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