

PACO CINEMATOGRAFICA E VISION DISTRIBUTION PRESENTANO



MASSIMILIANO
GALLO

MARGHERITA
BUY

MARINA
CONFALONE

IL SILENZIO GRANDE

TRATTO DALL'OMONIMA OPERA TEATRALE DI MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI

UN FILM DI
ALESSANDRO
GASSMANN



ANTONIA
FOTARAS

EMANUELE
LINFATTI

PACO CINEMATOGRAFICA E VISION DISTRIBUTION PRESENTANO IN COLLABORAZIONE CON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO IN COLLABORAZIONE CON SKY IN COLLABORAZIONE CON RAI CINEMA UN FILM DI ALESSANDRO GASSMANN IL SILENZIO GRANDE MASSIMILIANO GALLO MARGHERITA BUY MARINA CONFALONE ANTONIA FOTARAS EMANUELE LINFATTI TRATTO DALL'OPERA TEATRALE "IL SILENZIO GRANDE" DI MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI REGISTA MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI SCENEGGIATO DA ANDREA BIZZA MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI ALESSANDRO GASSMANN FOTOGRAFATO DA MIKE STERN STERZYŃSKI COSTUME DA LAVINA BONGIUNDE REGISTRO DA ANTONELLA DI MARTINO COLLABORAZIONE SCENICA DA PIVOT E ALDO DE SCALZI MONTAGGIO DA MARCO POLETTI MONTATTORE PIERLUIGI MARISSANO ANIMAZIONE DA EMILIANO CARADONNA ALESSANDRO LEONE OPERA REALIZZATA SOTTO IL CONTROLLO DELLA REGIONE SARDEGNA - PER PER INFORMAZIONI VISITATE IL SITO WWW.SILENZIOGRANDE.IT E LA COLLABORAZIONE DI FEMMINUCIUM REGIONE SARDEGNA - OPERA REALIZZATA CON IL SOSTEGNO DELLA REGIONE ULLUO RESERVATA PER IL CINEMA E LA DISTRIBUZIONE DA PACO CINEMATOGRAFICA - ARGENTINA: BANDA PRODOTTI DA CARIELLA COCCHIA ARTURO PARELLA UN FILM DI ALESSANDRO GASSMANN

DAL 16 SETTEMBRE AL CINEMA





present

IL SILENZIO GRANDE

a film by

ALESSANDRO GASSMANN

with

**MASSIMILIANO GALLO MARGHERITA BUY MARINA CONFALONE
ANTONIA FOTARAS EMANUELE LINFATTI**

in collaboration with



in collaboration with



in collaboration with



distributed by



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IL SILENZIO
GRANDE

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Regione Lazio – Regional Film Funding



This film complies with environmental sustainability criteria



IL SILENZIO
GRANDE

CAST

MASSIMILIANO GALLO

Valerio Primic

MARGHERITA BUY

Rose Primic

MARINA CONFALONE

Bettina

ANTONIA FOTARAS

Adele Primic

EMANUELE LINFATTI

Massimiliano Primic

with

as

ROBERTO DE FRANCESCO

Luca

CREW

Directed by

ALESSANDRO GASSMANN

Story

MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI

Screenplay

MAURIZIO DE GIOVANNI
ALESSANDRO GASSMANN
ANDREA OZZA
in collaboration with
ALESSANDRO REGALDO

Produced by

PACO CINEMATOGRAFICA
ISABELLA COCUZZA
ARTURO PAGLIA

In collaboration with

VISION DISTRIBUTION

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In collaboration with	AMAZON PRIME VIDEO SKY RAI CINEMA
A Poland-Italy co-production	PACO CINEMATOGRAFICA AGRESYWNA BANDA
Co-producers	EMILIANO CARADONNA ALESSANDRO LEONE
Executive producer	MASSIMO MONACHINI
Cinematography	MIKE STERN STERZYŃSKI
Scenography	ANTONELLA DI MARTINO
Editing	MARCO SPOLETINI
Costume Design	LAVINIA BONSIGNORE
Music	PIVIO E ALDO DE SCALZI
Music Publishing	CREUZA SRL EDIZIONI CURCI SRL
Distributed by	VISION DISTRIBUTION
Running Time	107'

SYNOPSIS

Once luxurious, the Primic mansion looks more like a ghost house today, and Rose has no choice but to put it out for sale. A painful decision that her children, Massimiliano and Adele have both reluctantly agreed to. Valerio Primic feels alone in his protest, and slowly starts to realize he doesn't truly know his own family, and perhaps not even himself. His journey of self-discovery will end in shocking awareness.

Living doesn't necessarily translate into being alive.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I met Maurizio De Giovanni, the author of "The Damned of Pizzofalcone", in 2019, while I was on the set of season 2. I asked him to write a play on the underground side of Naples and its aura of mystery. It took him 20 days to write a powerful script that I thought I would love to direct, both for the stage and the screen. It showed potential and deep roots. Since its debut, 2 years ago at the Napoli Teatro Festival Italia, the show felt thrillingly unforgettable. We then had a year of highly successful reruns, before the pandemic hit, in February 2020.

"The Great Silence" is about a family that recalls my own to some degree. A famous, highly educated man, his wife, two children in their twenties, and a housekeeper who's been running the house since forever. A story marked by conflict, misunderstandings and contrasts, light and shadow, silence and loudness, laughter and anguish. A family that is as exceptional as it is dysfunctional, where everyone talks, but no one truly listens.

It's the mid-sixties in Posillipo, a wealthy neighborhood overlooking the Gulf of Naples. Valerio Primic is an internationally known writer who is mysteriously going through a decade-long dry patch. He and his family cannot afford any longer to live in the big villa, now looking more like a creaky ghost house than the luxurious mansion it used to be. Rose Primic sees no other option than to list the place, a painful decision that upsets not only the two children, who would lose their golden cage but also Bettina, the housekeeper, who would lose the job of a lifetime and the roof over her head. In the process of changing their entire existence, everyone feels somehow compelled to reveal their secrets to Valerio. Adele discloses his pregnancy and Massimiliano his homosexuality. Crushed by his father's strong personality and looking for some sort of retribution, he is taken aback by Valerio's mild reaction to the revelation, and astonished by his comment that he could have come out long before. In the midst of inevitable change, family ties, and time passing by, Valerio will eventually realize that he's never really known his own family, perhaps not even himself, and that living does not necessarily translate into being alive.

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When Rose discloses that the house has been sold and the new owners will soon move in, a twist at the end of the film will turn the audience's point of view upside down, and the many oddities throughout our story will finally make sense.

We chose to set the story in 1965 because it allowed us to portray Italy as it once was, at a time when people felt close to each other and relied on human contact. A time when spoken words counted more than cellphone messages, and relationships were marked by manners and respect. Today, something has been lost, we pay less attention, and the whole society just stopped listening. The younger generation is paying the highest price and cannot help but imitating their parents in this general lack of interest for the other.

Isabella Cocuzza and Arturo Paglia, from Paco Cinematografica, showed immediate interest in this project, and soon involved Amazon, Sky, and Rai. The film is theatrical and the set is a little claustrophobic as we shot the whole thing inside a villa, in an isolation due less to the script than to the ongoing pandemic. Despite this, we tried to keep a balance, to work around the rarefied intentions of the actors, and never to overstate laughs or emotions like we often see in Italian movies.

I had met Mike Stern on the set of "Thou Shalt Not Hate", and I knew I could count on him for sober, elegant cinematography. Villa Kern, in Posillipo, will become the dream house of all of our audience. I love the music by Pivio and Aldo De Scalzi, and I wanted them to contribute to this film. I had worked with Andrea Ozza on season two of "The Damned of Pizzofalcone", and together with him and Maurizio De Giovanni, we wrote the script.

Maurizio and I had the same idea. While he's responsible for the structure, I gave my contribution by developing it my way. He was pleased with the result and he thinks I went even deeper into the story than he did.

The shooting was an amazing journey that my cast and I took together. They have been simply sublime, there is no better definition. They are all playing characters that are unusual for them, and this is one of the main reasons why I feel satisfied. Massimiliano Gallo had finally the chance to play the leading role on the big screen, and he showed maturity and elegance. He's a fine actor, no doubt. I asked for sobriety and he delivered it so flawlessly he reminded me of Scandinavian actors. His blue eyes make him incredibly handsome, but he just looks goofy at times. What I've always loved about him is his great irony. He is the comedy propeller in this film and when he's with Marina Confalone he can make you laugh just by raising an eyebrow. In real life, he is the son of a much-beloved Neapolitan singer, Nunzio Gallo, so this part not only fits him, but it relates to him in a special way. His performance was personal and intense. He worked hard to shed the theatre off of it and played his character in quite a different way than

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he did on stage. So, by putting at risk the applause and laughter he positively experienced in the theater, paradoxically, he is now funnier than ever.

Margherita Buy and Marina Confalone immediately came to mind. They are both great actresses and I knew they'd be perfect in their respective roles. Margherita accepted the offer straight away, despite the fact I'm no famous director. She was the one I knew the least and feared the most, as she is generally particularly strict, especially with herself. She turned out to be astonishing and deeply moving, and I especially admired the way she "tamed" her much exploited neurotic side to give life to a woman her own age, with a streak of heartbreaking melancholy that feels emotionally engaging. She was happy with the result but commented she could have acted even better. I replied it gets no better than this.

I was happy to have Marina Confalone on board. She is the hottest Neapolitan actress around and a real prodigy. Her character, Bettina the housekeeper, is very sweet, but she is responsible for keeping up the comic process of the situation. She and my wife Sabrina are longtime friends, and she has always liked my work in the theater. She had loved the play and so she immediately accepted to help take it on screen. On set, she simply does what you expect from the magnificent actress that she is.

Last but not least, Antonia Fotaras and Emanuele Linfatti, 20 and 24 years old respectively, the two young actors who play the children, are just great. They were selected among many good artists and after tons of auditions that made me realize that the level of the new generation of Italian actors is way higher than it was when I was their age.

Alessandro Gassmann

INTERVIEW WITH MARGHERITA BUY

How did you get involved in this project?

Alessandro Gassmann sought me out to ask me to join the cast and spoke to me at length about the film. He then sent me the script and a recording of the play. He warned me that the script would be different, with milder tones. Indeed, the opening scene introduces the beautiful mansion in Posillipo, where the story takes place, and some moments in the story are more intense and articulated, to give characters more leeway.

Tell us about your character, Rose.

She and her family are going through a rough patch: she knows they're at a turning point and that life for them will never be the same. She is sad and disillusioned, but in a controlled manner, almost "restrained". She is a woman of the '60s, more ethereal than those we are used to seeing in modern times. She has her own, personal way to express her difficulties in taking care of a family in hardship, but she's quite sober and delicate in sharing her feelings in some sort of suspended, mysterious atmosphere. Both Alessandro Gassmann and the Director of Photography Mike Stern have been great at communicating this peculiar mood, this subtle, unrealistic, out-of-time setting that is more autonomous than the stage version.

Beside your character, what did you like most?

Alessandro Gassmann bravely got himself exposed by choosing an unusual story, far in time and definitely not in line with what's hot right now in Italy as cinema topics go. There is an overflow of violent and explicit realism, in my opinion, and a tendency to choose themes that are too close to our present.

What is Gassmann like, when he is on set?

What I noticed since the start was his mental clarity. He was determined, capable, and showed no hesitation whatsoever. He found a new interpretation, he gave new life to a story involving a mystery that unravels slowly, and is scattered with small, disturbing hints that the audience can only understand at the very end. He was also very good at

recreating the house environment, which comes to life before your eyes and is a protagonist in itself. All of this arouses curiosity and a strange feeling that something is going on that you can't fully grasp. It makes the viewers feel unaware, brings up questions.

How did you relate to the rest of the cast?

We just followed the script, the chemistry happened straight away. Massimiliano Gallo is extremely pleasant and he is a scrupulous actor who works hard but can make it fun for everybody. He knew the character as he had played it on stage and you can tell straight away that he and Gassmann are a team. It is a well-oiled mechanism and I felt like a guest who strove to do her homework right. Alessandro wanted to shoot long sequences and I studied the script thoroughly, trying to learn every single line to perfection. The story had originally been written for the stage, so it wasn't easy. Each morning, being on set felt like a theatre debut, and I knew I had to be prepared for every single detail. Massimiliano has been great in changing his approach to playing Valerio, in the migration from the stage to the screen. It happened to me too, so I know what it's like to play in front of a camera a character that you have already played in the theater. If you have a specific sonority in mind, a sound that belongs to the stage, it's not easy to shift gear and change your vocal timbre, yet he did it with ease and skill.

How does Rose relate to the others?

What we know for sure is that her marriage is still strong, and the love between Rose and her husband is not only romantic but solid. With their whole world about to shatter, our characters feel upset and everyone looks for something to hang on to. Rose is not present, she is not "centered", she's somehow up in the air, so she drinks to alleviate her anguish, she tries to calm down, to quell. With her children, she is loving and attentive, but she gets distracted by other problems. They've been privileged their whole life, and it is time for them to become independent, but they feel lost in a situation that needs to be resolved and they would rather speak to their father than to her.

Who is Bettina and what does she represent?

She is the loyal housekeeper who has been taking care of the family for years. She has helped to raise the children and she is the very soul of the home she is about to lose. She's some sort of Jiminy Cricket, somebody who keeps trying to remove the dust from every situation, yet the dust keeps relentlessly coming back. Bettina is aware that what keeps this family alive is the love between Rose and Valerio. She adores the writer

for a talent she isn't actually capable of understanding, due to her low levels of education, and this makes their interactions really funny.

Let's talk about Marina Confalone.

I worked with her in the past, in Daniele Luchetti's "The Storm Is Coming". She is a star, there is no more I can say. She can steal the scene while standing silent in a corner of the room. There can be no competition because you know you're going to lose right from the start.

What do you remember about the filming process?

We started shooting last winter, right in the middle of the pandemic. It felt like being "suspended" in some sort of a "bubble" that was the villa in Posillipo, where the story is set. Naples was a ghost city in an emergency lockdown and we walked around like on eggshells. We took shelter in our film, so going to work every morning felt like going home, in a protected environment that, compared to the outside world, made things easy to handle. Our crew was small and silent: they only spoke Polish, and this made communication hard, but we somehow managed to build a very good relationship. Professionally, they were extremely efficient and delivered a great product in the end.

INTERVIEW WITH MASSIMILIANO GALLO

You played Valerio both on stage and on set. How do they compare?

They are two separate languages, and the approach is completely different. Theatricality doesn't work on screen, you need to deconstruct your character entirely and work on his psychological side, on introspection and thoughts. When the camera is pointing at you, it can tell whether you're thinking of something or not. Acting is a complex job, and this time I had to rebuild Valerio from head to toe, to make him suitable for the cinema.

Alessandro Gassmann and I trust each other and I would definitely call him a friend. Our partnership is based on mutual respect and understanding. and I hope it will last over time. We share the same work ethic and we both embark on a new project with passion, dedication, and discipline. We met on this path and it was like looking at yourself in a mirror. For both of us. I found a great director who loves his actors and is

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extremely sensitive in relating to them, to their flaws and fragility. He did a great job and it wasn't easy, you know, to turn a play into a movie, especially when you are filming the whole thing in a studio. It's a quite complex operation.

I hope we'll keep working together, as we did not only on the stage version of "The Great Silence" but also in Rocco Papaleo's "Onda su onda", and in the TV series "La grande famiglia" and "The Damned of Pizzofalcone". I think his curiosity, passion and sensitivity will be invaluable tools to help him grow as a director and make more great films.

Another common trait between you and Gassmann is having a famous artist as a father.

Add to this that our fathers not only were famous artists, but they both had strong, vibrant personalities. It may sound arrogant, but it does feel like a "burden", at times, to be related to such beloved people. It's a responsibility you carry on your shoulders, and it takes time for you to become just "you". The credit you get from this kind of legacy comes from due respect for your father, but it can be quickly lost and become counterproductive.

What did you like about Gassmann as a director?

His sensitivity, his love for his actors, and his capability to read them as well as their fragility. He struck me as being very prepared. He approached the complex film grammar work that was needed for this project with great skill, trying to avoid trivial shots. Even when you only had two people on the scene, he looked for depth and three-dimensionality. He was heavily involved and showed tenacious will in telling the story his own way. Every morning, when I arrived on set, I noticed he had a specific idea about that specific day.

What was it like to work with Margherita Buy?

We had never worked together before, but I can say, at the risk of sounding cliché, that she's a brilliant actress and a great person to work with. She is nice, funny, and self-deprecating. When we were filming in Naples we were right in the middle of the pandemic, and she would cautiously wear both a mask and a face shield. I found it quite funny, as if she couldn't wait to leave the place.

As an actress, she has her own way of communicating things, about herself or the outside world, and always manages to turn the rhetorical side of a text into

something light and pleasant. When it comes to feelings and emotions, she is truly extraordinary at eliminating the obvious through perhaps a micro-gesture, a gaze, or

simply through those eyes of her, that can tell you everything she's thinking. Her character only has few nuances, it is complicated to play, but she delivered an amazing performance nonetheless.

Alessandro would jokingly say to her: "You are an emotion carrier". And he was right. I felt moved by Margherita's 360° acting, she really took her performance to the level of perfection. She managed to convey great humanity, a sense of protection towards her children, but also the desperation of feeling alone in taking care of her entire household.

What was it like to work with Marina Confalone?

Marina is extremely sensitive and receptive. I think the general atmosphere of the production made her feel loved and protected right from the start. At one point she told me that was the best work environment she had ever found in her long and productive career. She is one of the purest people I've ever met, she reminded me of a child looking forward to showing you what she can do. She is an amazing actress that makes her job look easy. She can put wonderful humanity and great truth in each and every word of the script and, if there's something she doesn't like, she never fails to point it out, in an endless search for perfection. She has been an unexpected discovery for me, but I must say that if we worked so well together it is also thanks to Alessandro Gassmann and his ability to humanize Bettina as a character.

Who is Bettina and how does she fit into the story?

She's the loyal housekeeper who keeps showing up unannounced in Valerio's study room to scold him for his various shortcomings as a husband and father. She acts as his conscience, his Jiminy Cricket, she tries to open his eyes, like a mother to a son, or a psychotherapist to a patient. She is oddly wise, despite her lack of education, and she often knows what's going on much better than he does. There's a reason for that but it'll be revealed only in the end.

Whats' the relationship between Valerio and his children?

Valerio is a great writer who deliberately isolated from the outside world. He's proud of his achievements and his role as the house breadwinner. He's provided the family with every comfort and he can't understand the reason for all the confrontation and demands he keeps getting left and right. As a father and a husband, he is a

cumbersome figure to have around. Not that he's been around much, over the years. Their children now seem to want to blame him for his success, his celebrity, and whatever else they believe they have had to endure, while he feels he only gave them opportunities.

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Emanuele Linfatti and Antonia Fotaras are talented, unusual, and beautiful. In a country where meritocracy is not often a significant criterion of choice, it's probably worth mentioning that they have been cast only based on their skills.

What do you think of the final result?

Even though I knew it by heart, I was excited and surprised when I saw the wrap-up. It feels more like a French or an English film, I don't think we are used to seeing this kind of movie in Italy. On the stage, we had a backdrop onto which we would project Valerio's memories. Alessandro found a very interesting solution for the screen, figuring that a creative writer could very well picture his feelings and thoughts as real events happening just before his eyes. In the film version, we also notice a different rhythm, since we have a wider environment to exploit, rather than seeing everything happening in a single room. Our story is not as confined and we can show our characters' feelings, memories, and that sense of abandonment that comes from an inevitable loss.