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Mia Madre




**Acclaimed Italian auteur Nanni Moretti finds comedy and pathos in**

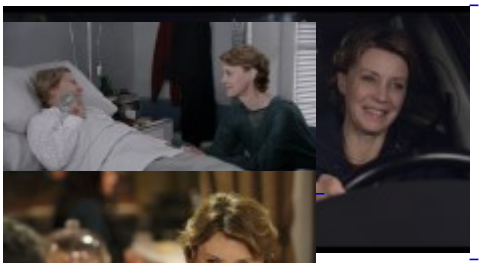
**the story of Margherita, a harried film director (Margherita Buy, A Five Star Life) trying to juggle the demands of her latest movie and a personal life in crisis. The star of her film, a charming but hammy American actor (John Turturro) imported for the production, initially presents nothing but headaches and her crew is close to mutiny. Away from the shoot, Margherita tries to hold her life together as her beloved motherâ??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 Italyâ??s 2015 Donatello Awards. Characteristically self-reflexive and autobiographical, Morettiâ??s latest speaks to the poignancy of human transience, how we process loss and how we gain strength through humor.**

## *Mia Madre* opens in Los Angeles and New York on August 26th with a national roll-out to follow!

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## Shots from *Mia Madre*

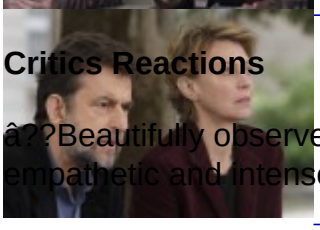












## Critics Reactions

â??Beautifully observed and delicately balancedâ?¦this is Moretti at his interpersonal best; intimate, empathetic and intensely humane.â?• â?? Mark Kermode, *The Guardian*

â??Carefully measured and satisfyingâ?¦the film emerges as a deeply affecting reflection on solitude.â?• â?? Ela Bittencourt*, Slant Magazine*

*â??*Fascinatingâ?¦a rich and incredibly detailed world.â?• â?? Oliver Lyttelton, *The Playlist*

**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 Iâ??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! Sheâ??s a much better actor than I am. Margherita carried much of the filmâ??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 filmâ?¦**

In the scene in front of the Capranichetta movie theater in Rome, during which Margheritaâ??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 meâ?¦ 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 â?? itâ??s not real life.

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

Autofiction is a term I really donâ??t understand. And as for autobiographyâ?¦ 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 Orlandoâ??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 donâ??t have any qualms about approaching international stars. But Iâ??m not like that. I called on him because I liked him very much and it seemed to me that his acting style wasnâ??t naturalistic. But also because we were already acquainted, and he already had a connection with Italy â?? 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. Itâ??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 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?**

Itâ??s important to tell a story in a non-academic manner, to have a narrative which doesnâ??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 wouldnâ??t immediately understand whether it was a memory, a dream or reality, for they all coexist in Margheritaâ??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 Margheritaâ??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 arenâ??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: â??Iâ??m never in my films,â?• and her daughter answers: â??well, you donâ??t necessarily have to talk about yourself in your films,â?• and Margherita replies: â??no, not necessarily, but I would like to make films that are more personal.â?• 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: â??In such a delicate moment for our society, do you think that your film will succeed in appealing to the countryâ??s conscience?â?• Margherita starts to give a formatted answer: â??Well, today, the public itself is demanding a different kind of commitmentâ?¦â?• But her voice slowly fades and we can hear what she is really thinking: â??Yes, of course itâ??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 donâ??t understand anything anymore.â?•

I wanted the sturdiness and assertiveness of her film to be in absolute opposition with her emotional state; with what sheâ??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 Sonâ??s Room), I was exorcising a fear. Here, I am referring to an experience that many people share. The death of oneâ??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 doesnâ??t strike you with the full extent of its impact. Even when the feeling is very strong, I tend to think that the director doesnâ??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 donâ??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 motherâ??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 hadnâ??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 didnâ??t need them anymore. I saw Woody Allenâ??s *Another Woman* again but I didnâ??t watch Hanekeâ??s Armour, which was on my desk. And especially, I didnâ??t read Roland Barthes. After my motherâ??s death, a woman Iâ??m friendly with, offered me *Journal de deuil* (*Mourning Diary),* which Barthes had written right after his motherâ??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 havenâ??t the faintest idea how, she also thoroughly understood my mother.

**Your mother was a professorâ?¦**

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. Iâ??m going to confess something that is a little painful, and which upsets me a bit, but Iâ??ll say it: after my motherâ??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 â?? the same anxiety, the same confusion, the same utter lack of confidence. I donâ??t think itâ??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 donâ??t know.

I can say, however, that I have learned something along the way. Iâ??m nicer to the actors, Iâ??m more willing to stand by their side; I stick up for them. And what else have I learnedâ?¦well indeed, thereâ??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 uponâ?¦

**â??I want to see the actor next to the character.â?• This is one of Margheritaâ??s lines that she often repeats to her actors.**

Itâ??s something I say all the time. I donâ??t know whether the actors understand it, but in the end, Iâ??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. Press materials provided by http://www.musicbox.com)

**Category**

1. Uncategorized

**Tags**

1. Actor
2. Capranichetta Movie Theater
3. Cinema
4. Director
5. Film
6. John Turturro
7. Margherita Buy
8. Nanni Moretti
9. Producer
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