

One Man Doing Things prod.

present:

-STABAT MATER-

A film by
Gianni Cardillo

Stabat Mater narrates how a kid who dreamt of a normal life becomes a young gangster.

It's a hard story, essential, dramatic, yet full of funny, ironic and sweet moments. Timeless, like a fairy tale, but in a fully realistic set. It takes place in the beautiful, sneaky and chaotic town of Bari Vecchia "old Bari", but it's a universal tale.

The 13-year old Riccardo is absorbed by a drug-addicted mother (Maja) and a 9-month old brother (Giulio), to whom he must act like a father. He is prisoner of his own destiny, on the path of crime, in spite of him dreaming of a normal life. To fulfil this dream, Riccardo takes a tough and painful decision, but in the end the only beneficiary is the person chosen as the "sacrificial lamb": baby Giulio. On the contrary, Riccardo will end up being victim of himself, defeated by his own destiny.

The film aims at participating in festivals, but it can reach both cinephiles and a much wider audience. Since it is a universal tale, it has a potential international appeal.

It is suitable for a co-production, given the many sequences set in various parts of the world and especially the different countries of origin of some of the main characters (Poland, Cuba, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.).



SYNOPSIS

Bari Vecchia “old Bari” is a decadent maze of alleys. The air is filled by a pungent smell of fish, meat, fruit, deep-frying foods, spices... It's populated by characters who are ruthless as much as they are benevolent. This is home to Riccardo, 13 years old, a mother (Maja) whoring to afford heroin and whom he tries to save, and a 9-month old baby brother (Giulio) whose father is unknown.

Riccardo works with Mimmo, his inseparable friend, for the Professor, local kingpin and their mentor. Time has come for the two kids to step up. At last, according to Mimmo. Too early, according to Riccardo: should he forsake the dream of a normal life and surrender to a life of crime, or try all that he can to save himself and his mother?

His dream of normality includes Sara, a blonde young girl from the upper-class Bari in which Riccardo himself was born. Then his father died, maybe suicidal, and his mother, too weak, sunk in the lower meanders of society.

Facing this little stuck-up girl, who represents all he has lost and all he longs for, Riccardo's petty criminal confidence vanishes, giving way to a frail kid in need of love. Trying the impossible to fulfil his dreams, Riccardo finally steps up to Sara, but he is rejected and humiliated by her.



Right in one of the toughest moments, when he risks losing his mother to an overdose, life unexpectedly gives Riccardo the shattering love of Yamina, a beautiful 18-year old African girl for whom Bari is just a stop-over in her escape to a new life. This encounter, that would remain episodic, gives Riccardo the chance to change perspective and suddenly become a man, understanding that dreams have a price and he is willing to pay, also because the time for trying is running out. Social services are closing in and, given Maja's condition, they will certainly place Riccardo and Giulio in foster care and send Maja to a rehabilitation centre.

So Riccardo takes action. During one of the many moments when Maja leaves Giulio alone, the baby is concealed. It seems like he has been kidnapped, that's what everybody believes. Actually, with the Professor's help, Riccardo has sold him to a very wealthy couple. The baby will grow up without even recalling his origins and will have the chance to live the good life Riccardo barely remembers.

What Riccardo hopes is that these events will shake his mother. But he knows that, as long as they are in that place, nothing will change. That is the reason why he has secretly studied Spanish without telling anybody his real purpose: using the money to escape with his mother, far far away. To Cuba. In a country where drug traffic and abuse are strictly punished, Riccardo believes he can fulfil his stubborn dream of normality.



But the illusion quickly fades away. Realizing that her son would be better off without her and after discovering that it was Riccardo himself who had sold his own brother, Maja kills the Professor and plans to overdose. When Riccardo goes to pick her up, hours before leaving to Cuba, she is still convulsing. He carries her on his shoulders, desperately trying to reach the hospital, but he is assaulted by three boys from a rival gang, with whom he has a score to settle. The thugs want his money, which he has earned from selling his brother and which he and Maja need to build a new future far away. So he fights. He would be beaten without the intervention of Mimmo, who has accepted the "promotion" offered by the Professor and rescues his friend at gunpoint. But Maja is already dead, because of the three thugs. So Riccardo takes one of their pistols and shoots them dead right in front of Mimmo who, gobsmacked, is powerless against his friend's burst of rage.

There will be no such thing as a normal life for Riccardo, who is doomed to become a gangster.



CHARACTERS

Maja: Polish, 35 years old. She sunk into heroin and the slums when she lost Sandro, her husband, father of Riccardo and accomplished violinist. She only carries on for her children. Sometimes she tries to get back on track in an outburst of pride, but only to avoid Riccardo losing all hope. After surviving an accidental overdose, she almost gives in to Raul's interest in her. But not feeling anything and realizing to be completely numb, she feels even worse. So when she understands that her son would be better off without her and that he is the one who sold his own baby brother, she kills the Professor to set her son free from his yoke and, hopefully, from the life of crime he is headed for. Then she kills herself.

Riccardo: 13 years old. As long as his father was alive, Riccardo lived a happy middle-class life. Then everything fell apart and he adjusted himself. On the Professor's payroll, he is doomed to become a gangster. But he dreams of a normal life, just like the life he has been deprived of. To achieve it, he goes all-in, even selling his own baby brother, Giulio, to give him that normality he longs for. On the other hand, Riccardo remains imprisoned in his destiny.

Mimmo: 15 years old. Inseparable friend of Riccardo, he acts like he is a skilled veteran. Actually, he is just a deprived child whose only possible destiny is crime. He, too, dreams of going away and change life. But as soon as the Professor offers him to step up in the organization, he accepts enthusiastically. When Riccardo seems to take a different direction he suffers, but still he admires his courage. In the end the events will reunite them and Mimmo knows that, whereas Riccardo will become a boss, he will just be a henchman.





Professor: 60 years old, boss of the neighbourhood, he knows that his "career" does not contemplate any step forward. Despite being a loser, he tries to expand his gang's control over another neighbourhood, while raising Mimmo and Riccardo as his own children. He helps Riccardo, who he sees as his successor, to sell Giulio to a very wealthy family and is deeply saddened to hear about his decision to leave. He will be murdered and will never know that Riccardo, once his dream of leaving is shattered, will follow his steps instead.



Yamina: 19 years old, African, illegal immigrant, she arrived in Italy on a boat to escape war. Her stay will be brief, but long enough to make Riccardo fall in love with her, to give him the first night of sex in his life and the feeling that he can be loved. But the greatest gift she involuntarily gives him is setting the example that, to fulfil your dreams, you must go for broke.



Sara: 13 years old, blonde, she belongs to the upper-class Bari. Riccardo courts her with great shyness, just because she represents everything he wants and he misses, that could have been and no longer is. She mocks him, makes fun of him. But when Riccardo steps up, Sara rejects and humiliates him with her friends. She doesn't know that for Riccardo this humiliation is a further push.

Raul: 40 years old, Cuban exile. In Cuba he was a professor, in Palermo he works at the market. He gives Spanish lessons to Riccardo, to whom he would act like a father, since he is in love with Maja. But he doesn't have the guts to step up to her. At least until he helps her survive an overdose. For a while, it seems like Maja gives in to his love, but Raul doesn't even realize that she doesn't feel anything, that she is totally numb. His social project is fulfilled by becoming the owner of a market stand.

Clara: 55 years old. During the day she takes care of abused and mistreated immigrant women. She also tries to take care of Maja, who rejects every attempt of help. At night she must return to prison, where she is convicted for having murdered his abusive husband.

Mother in law: 70 years old. The mother of Sandro, Maja's husband, she belongs to the upper-class Bari. Strict, grim, severe, she blames her daughter-in-law for her son's death. She would be glad to take care of Riccardo, provided that he leaves his mother, and build for him the same life as a musician she had so carefully planned for Sandro. But Riccardo would never do it. To force him, she calls the social services to take the children away from Maja. But her attempt fails, thus pushing her grandson further away from her and condemning herself to loneliness.



DIRECTION NOTES

Bari still is and always be the Greek Pànormos: a great harbour. It's in the people, the contrasts, the sounds, the colours, the decadent alleys, the "landscape that ignores the middle ground between lascivious softness and cursed harshness, that is never wretched, plain, conciliatory, human, as a land made to host rational beings is supposed to be" (Tomasi di Lampedusa, The Leopard).

What I feel I can voice in this film is that world of losers over which lingers a dusty sense of life, defeating everyday's death with a very humane and serene vitality. That world where there is no escape from destiny, as intended in Greek tragedy.

Bari Vecchia is the backdrop and the setting of this bittersweet portrait. A multi-ethnic and welcoming Bari full of folklore, but not folkloristic at all. A Bari Vecchia where drugs are not a social problem, but a dramatically individual one, and so are unemployment, shattered dreams, frustration and subjection. A Palermo where light can conceal and darkness can reveal. A Bari inhabited by characters that, frail as a goldfish in a bowl, see the chance of an elsewhere but don't dare to dream it could be just where they were born.

The camera will be a moving eye, but not hectic, leading the audience inside the characters' fishbowl without any smugness. The film will have a light taste, almost fairytale-like, even contrasting the harsh reality it portrays. Also colour-wise: that is why I think of a Bari that is a palette of crepuscular, saturated colours and contrast lights.





AUTOR BIO

GIANNI CARDILLO

As a screenwriter, he has written the scripts for the movies: In carne e ossa (directed by Christian Angeli), Il sole nero (directed by Krzysztof Zanussi), Fate come noi (directed by Francesco Apolloni), La verità, vi prego, sull'amore! (directed by F. Apolloni), Il silenzio intorno (directed by Dodo Fiori), Intolerance (episode 'Roma Ovest 153', directed by Paolo Virzì).

He has written various TV series, including: Medico in famiglia, Distretto di Polizia, Il commissario Nardone.

As a director, he has worked for several years in the theatre field, then he has directed the short films Un viaggio, Love song, Gabbie, and the feature film Ristabbanna.

Incentives and Financial Plan

The location of the Movie (Bari Vecchia) allow us to apply to 2 different Incentives: the Italian Tax Rebate and the Apulia Cash Rebate.

Italy - type: Tax Incentives

- up to 30% (it's called from 25% to 30%, but was announced NOT officially that 30% will be the base) Tax Discount for maximum the 75% of the total budget
- Request will take maximum 60 days for the confirmation
- Not eligible for the Incentives: the Production Service Fee
- Offices expenses and secretary eligible until 7,5%
- Money back in a year (or discounted since the beginning with a commission in between 5% to 8%)

Puglia - type: Cash Rebate

- Maximum Cap: 500K
- 2/3 month for application
- refunding: 5 month after the offline Cut presentation
- 30% on all the logistic local expenses: Locations, Catering, Internal Transport, Hotels, etc.
- 50% on local talents: Crew, Actors and Extras

CREATIVE MATERIAL and PROMOTIONAL LINKS:

- Thanks to the support by many artist in between Europe and Latin America, we have been able to create a Teaser that provide the feelings and the taste of the Movie we are going to realize: <https://vimeo.com/281014200> The creative style adopted at this stage will not be utilized for the full feature that we will be producing, which will be a conventional live action picture.

- As well we realised this video of introduction to the movie, with a double interview of the Director and the Producer: <https://vimeo.com/270215352>

SCREENPLAY AWARDS



WINNER
**New York
Screenplay
Contest**
2018



2018
**VAN GOGH
AWARD**
Amsterdam Film Festival



SILVER AWARDS
**The European
Independent Film
Award**
2017



OFFICIAL SELECTION
**LA LIVE
FILM FEST**
2018



OFFICIAL SELECTION
**Sunlight
International Film
Festival**
2018



OFFICIAL SELECTION
**Fort Worth
Indie Film
Showcase**
2018



OFFICIAL SELECTION
**The Monkey
Bread Tree Film
Awards**
2017



2018
OFFICIAL SELECTION

FWIFS
Fort Worth Indie Film Showcase

THANKS!

One Man Doing Things prod.

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