

ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY
& FABRIZIO MOSCA PRESENT

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG
VINCENZO AMATO



venezia 63
competition

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

TORONTO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
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2006

GOLDEN DOOR

(NUOVOMONDO)

A FILM BY EMANUELE CRIALESE

ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY & FABRIZIO MOSCA PRESENT A FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY EMANUELE CRIALESE CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG VINCENZO AMATO "GOLDEN DOOR" (NUOVOMONDO) AURORA QUATROCCHI FRANCESCO CASISA FILIPPO PUCILLO VINCENT SCHIAVELLI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AGNES GODARD PRODUCTION DESIGNER CARLOS CONTI COSTUME DESIGNER MARIANO TUFANO SOUND PIERRE-YVES LAVOUE EDITOR MARVLINE MONTHIEUX MUSIC ANTONIO CASTRIGNANO EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BERNARD BOUIX TOMMASO CALEVI A MEMENTO FILMS PRODUCTION TITTI FILMS RESPIRO PRODUCTION IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH ARTE FRANCE CINEMA IN COLLABORATION WITH RAI CINEMA IN ASSOCIATION WITH WILD BUNCH WITH THE PRODUCTION OF CANAL PLUS WITH THE SUPPORT OF TPS WDR CNC MEDIA EURIMAGES QUINTA INDUSTRIES CINEMART COFIMAGE 16 SOFICA SOFICINEMA ARTE COFINOVA 1 BANQUE POPULAIRE IMAGES 6 SOFICA EUROPACORP WORLD SALES WILD BUNCH PRODUCED BY ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY FABRIZIO MOSCA AND EMANUELE CRIALESE



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2006

ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY AND FABRIZIO MANGANO PRESENT

A FRENCH-ITALIAN CO-PRODUCTION
MEMENTO FILMS PRODUCTION / TITTI FILMS

PRODUCED BY
**ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY, FABRIZIO MANGANO
AND EMANUELE CRIALESE**

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH **ARTE FRANCO**

IN COLLABORATION WITH **RAI CINEMA**

**CHARLOTTE GAINSBORG
VINCENZO AMATO**

**GOLDEN DOOR
(NUOVOMONDO)**

A FILM BY
EMANUELE CRIALESE

35 MM / SCOPE DOLBY SR DIGITAL / COLOUR

LANGUAGE: ITALIAN - ENGLISH

RUNNING TIME: 118 MINUTES

ITALIAN RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2006

SYNOPSIS

A modern fable that tells the story of people from the past. Of a voyage across time and space, impelled by pictures of a land dreamed of but never seen, a Garden of Eden where fruits grow perfect and huge, where money falls from the trees. The New World. America.

Sicily. The beginning of the twentieth century.

In a desolate corner of the Sicilian countryside lives a family of peasants who have worked the same land for generations, at one with nature, surrounded by the spirits of the dead. The hard changeless monotony of daily life is interrupted by tales of the New World and its inhabitants, of the riches of this paradise. And there are even photographs - potatoes as big as carriages, carrots as long as canoes, trees laden with gold coins - proving the truth of this fabulous place, sent to the families of men who have left previously and who are now happily working in the Promised Land.

Salvatore makes the momentous decision to sell all he has - his land, his home, his livestock - and to take his children and aged mother to a better life across the ocean.

To become citizens of the New World, they must die a little and be reborn. They must leave behind the antiquated customs and superstitions of their homeland; they must be strong in body and healthy in mind, learn to obey and swear loyalty if they wish to pass through the Golden Door. They must transform themselves from old-fashioned humans into modern ones. The time during which this metamorphosis is to be accomplished is the time of suspension on the waters of the ocean, four difficult weeks of crossing, to arrive at the final judgment: the Island of Tears, Ellis Island. Here, the guardians of the New World will study them, case by case, millimetre by millimetre. They will scrutinize the bodies and minds of these prospective citizens, in this wonderful, terrible place where many families will be forced to choose, to split up forever. Not all are destined to enter the gates of Heaven.

From the director of the internationally-acclaimed *RESPIRO*, *GOLDEN DOOR* tells the story of an odyssey: of a past abandoned and a people transformed. Of history made and humanity reborn.

CAST

Charlotte Gainsbourg
Vincenzo Amato
Aurora Quattrocchi
Francesco Casisa
Filippo Pucillo
Federica de Cola
Isabella Ragonese
Vincent Schiavelli
Massimo Laguardia
Filippo Luna
Andrea Prodan
Ernesto Mahieux

Lucy
Salvatore
Donna Fortunata
Angelo
Pietro
Rita
Rosa
Don Luigi
Mangiapane
Don Ercole
Del Fiore
Dr Zampino

CREW

DIRECTOR Emanuele Crialese
SCREENPLAY Emanuele Crialese
DP Agnès Godard
PRODUCTION DESIGNER Carlos Conti
COSTUME DESIGNER Mariano Tufano
SOUND Pierre-Yves Lavoué
EDITOR Maryline Monthieux
MUSIC Antonio Castrignanò
PRODUCTION Memento Films Production
Titti Film
Respiro
PRODUCED BY Alexandre Mallet-Guy
Fabrizio Mosca
Emanuele Crialese

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IN COLLABORATION WITH
WITH THE SUPPORT OF

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CNC, France
Cinema Department of the Ministry for
Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLOTTE GAINSBURG

What first attracted you to this great adventure, GOLDEN DOOR?

I'd been entirely seduced by RESPIRO. I met Emanuele Crialese, who was literally possessed by his project: he had an amazing spiel, mixing French and Italian with a very infectious enthusiasm. The script was enthralling, and it came with extraordinary visuals: magical images of places, faces, the ship... A chapter of history about which I knew nothing, the feeling of touching something very authentic in Italian culture. I didn't hesitate for a moment. I had an 'exterior' point of view on this project, like a foreigner, an outsider – which is also what I play in the film. I didn't really know what Emanuele wanted to do with my character, I didn't see her 'journey' very clearly, but I certainly wanted to take part in this choral film. At that stage, we didn't yet know where we'd be shooting: Odessa, Morocco and Turkey were all mentioned. When I learned that I was going to spend four months in Buenos Aires, away from my family, it was a shock, but I never questioned the film.

How did you prepare your character?

The first step was the creation of the costumes, which took place very early on, in Rome. Emanuele was very open to my suggestions. He asked my opinion: "What colour would your character's clothes be"? I thought it interesting that she should have a very stiff collar, a very buttoned-up attire that distinguishes her from the other women, and that later, on the ship, she should become a little more naked... Then there was the choice of the wig: that it was auburn became emblematic, but we didn't know it straight off. There was talk of Lucy's hair being severely cropped. In any case, her hairstyle had to mark her out from the other characters.

I'm not complaining, I know there are roles for which make-up takes 5 hours, but 2 hours of make-up and wig fitting every day was a real ordeal! Also, I hadn't worn a corset since JANE EYRE, and it wasn't easy being squeezed into that girdle. I really envied the extras who didn't have to wear them... But all of that provided a way into the character, as if I was

wearing a mask, as if I was in someone else's skin. It really focussed me.

We don't really know who Lucy is: all we know about her are tall tales. Do you know more?

Personally, I began with the idea of a prostitute, burdened with a very troubled past. I wasn't very certain. The day before we began shooting, I suffered a real doubt, a major moment of panic. I went to Emanuele and told him that I was totally unclear, that I didn't know what I was there to do, that I couldn't rely on the dialogue – whenever other characters talk about her, it's improvised, there was nothing solid written in the script. He was somewhat troubled by this: someone panicking on the eve of such an important day... But he told me later that it helped him, like an electric shock treatment...

But what did he tell you at the time?

That he was going to think about it! In fact, I stayed pretty much with my original idea, because I wanted something concrete to fall back on. Although, for example, I didn't develop the character's vulgarity – apart perhaps from her hairstyle! During the shoot, there remained at all times a real mystery surrounding Lucy. Emanuele wanted uncertainty: one day, he told me you could imagine something very different, that she came from high society, that she was a fallen woman, thrown out by her husband. We invented any number of credible biographies. And in addition, her character has a symbolic function: Lucy is the link between the ancient and the new worlds, she incarnates a sort of modernity.

How did you work on the language, as the character speaks both Italian and English?

I studied Italian as a second language at school, but it seemed to me that was a long time ago, that it wasn't enough. I told Emanuele that I should have lessons again, that I should study with a coach to speak Italian with an English accent. At one of our first meetings, he handed me the Italian newspaper he was reading and said: "Go on!". I read, and he said straight away: "Perfect! Don't work on it." Nonetheless, working on an accent might have helped me. I felt uncomfortable acting in Italian, as if I were absurd, doing it badly.

Emanuele didn't notice, or else he made use of it. We almost got into an argument the day we shot the scene with the doctor: I couldn't continue with him not telling me whether I would act it in Italian or in English, I wanted to learn the lines. And he held on till the very last minute. He told me: "You'll do the scene in English". Then just as we were about to shoot, he changed his mind: "Do it in Italian!".

It wasn't an everyday shoot...

It was the most extreme film making experience I've had, without any doubt! And Emanuele has his own unique methods: a lot of improvisation, a lot of last minute changes to scenes and dialogue. In Buenos Aires, we began with very physical rehearsals. For example, the storm: a crowd learning to move together, and to fall, as if choreographed. It was like a theatre workshop. Because of my poor Italian and Spanish, I couldn't communicate well with the rest of the cast or the extras, and the basic contact was physical. Although I'm really rather inhibited, I had to throw myself into it, without any modesty!

Next, we shot in order the scenes inside the ship, then at Ellis Island, all of which were pretty much written. And then came the scenes on the bridge, and it was much stranger: we were all summoned, actors and extras together, a whole mass of people on a very small boat, and we left the quay for the day at sea without knowing what we were going to do. Emanuele would decide according to his inspiration. I was in the service of the film, but the ego always surfaces in the end. I asked myself: will I inspire him enough that he'll want to use me today, or am I going to stay in the dressing room? And if we're doing a crowd scene, what will he want from me specifically? I was left to my own devices. I observed a lot, it was such a spectacle! I took photos; I made sketches. I could stand to one side, watching and being watched by the others, I really felt as one with my character...

All the same, Lucy is a character who evolves, she grows more and more human as the film unwinds...
But the hostility she radiates - for example, the haughty fashion in which she turns a girl out of her bed - I liked that a lot. I almost wish there was

more of it: I really like disagreeable characters! And then, suddenly, it became obvious to lead her in the direction of something more human. But for me, even at Ellis Island she remains rather haughty: it's her language, she knows how things go, she's different from the others...

I also knew from the start that we would have, Vincenzo Amato and I, a rather unusual love story to play, that we were going to end up together... but it was introduced piece by little piece: scenes where we understood the stakes, the hide-and-seek in the air vents, the fog-shrouded arrival in New York. Honestly, we didn't know how they would be edited, we could only play out the situation...

You say they will "end up together". Are you certain?
Yes, I'm a real optimist! I know it's a bit stupid to imagine a future for these two characters, but that's how I am.

Do you see the film in political terms?

You can reflect on its vision of the United States, but I didn't dwell on that. There's certainly a clear discourse on standardization: all these different people you see at Ellis Island, who will all be poured into the same mould. But it's Emanuele's film, he had it all in his head, and carried it all from start to finish. I did my job as an actress, and I feel more and more that it's a matter of putting oneself at the disposal of a director, for the pleasure of allowing yourself be carried, led, without controlling anything. Personally I adore the early parts of the film, the way Emanuele captures the magic of the ancient world, the way he films the women, the brutality of abandoning everything, this feeling for matter, whether it's bodies or landscapes. And then there's the whole absurd, dream-like aspect. It's funny, the scene with the giant carrot in the milk! Even if we were all freezing in the swimming pool...!

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

GOLDEN DOOR is about a journey that changes men. Their destination is a promised land, a place on the other side of the ocean where men, armed with good will, can better their lives.

The beginning of the twentieth century. Slavery has been abolished only recently in America and its vast lands require young labor and a determined spirit. Mainland Italy also looks optimistically on the mass departures that rid the country of men who are starting to demand their own property, to find hunger increasingly difficult to bear, and who are prepared to do anything to emerge from their poverty. The Italian State and the Catholic Church encourage these departures. The first big shipping companies are founded; the tickets are sold at the police station where new passports are also prepared for a price. A good income for the State, a fitting mission for the Church and the beginning of a dream and of hope for the millions of young men who set off, leaving the villages to the elderly and to their women, now alone.

The first images of this new land arrive in the rural areas: supposedly "real-life" images, the first doctored photographs, photomontages of little men next to giant vegetables. This is the earliest "propaganda" to come out of America to encourage peasants to abandon their arid farmland and depart for the land of plenty whose bounty is guaranteed.

I put aside the history books and concentrated on studying the *parole di carta*, or "paper words", as the letters that millions of Italians dictated to those who knew how to write were called. I decided to reconstruct a memory that, as well as containing firsthand experiences, was selective and therefore incomplete to some extent, latent and filled with more or less voluntarily repressed elements. I was not interested in an historical or social account, the story of the masses. I wanted to retrieve the personal element, the man who leaves his homeland to undergo a metamorphosis through a journey, to change from an ancient into a modern man.

The man who leaves takes few belongings with him, but all of his dead. He is a man who has lived with a strong sense of identity and memory – the memory of the stories told by his father and his grandfather. The few square kilometers of land on which he has lived, and which he has never left, constitute a world populated by invisible presences. His animals keep him warm at night and accompany him during the day. This man knows and respects nature and its moods; his survival depends on their relationship. He is a man at one with his environment; he notices every stone, every smell, every barely perceptible change.

In leaving, this man decides to abandon everything he knows, the place to which he belongs, his memory. To quote a description, which I find beautiful, taken from a letter written by one of these men while facing the spectacular ocean crossing: "*We are all souls in flight*" towards a paradise which, if it is the will of Fortune, will be granted to us in this life "*but we are dying with the passing of each wave*".

Ellis Island. The island of quarantine, or the "Island of Tears" as our heroes called it, was the first stop, where the emigrants had their first encounter with the citizens of the New World. That's where this story began. I spent a year studying the documents and procedures that were applied during the first two decades of the twentieth century. I discovered that Ellis Island was not simply a processing centre and temporary shelter for the new arrivals. It was also a kind of laboratory-archive. After four weeks at sea in steerage – improvised dormitories in the hold, below sea level, no windows, little space and few toilet facilities – these Sicilian emigrants were disembarked on the island and immediately inspected by American naval personnel. Medical examinations were carried out on the spot to detect any diseases: trachoma, tuberculosis, alcoholism, malfunctions of the limbs, blindness... All the disabilities that would have prevented the young emigrant from working and earning were recorded as imperfections, and those who displayed them immediately deported. Those who proved physically sound were subjected to intelligence or aptitude tests: the first mental tests carried out on the

masses of which there is historical evidence. The men of the New World were convinced that a lack of intelligence could be transmitted like the colour of the eyes or hair, and those emigrants who did not achieve the minimum pass level were made to undergo further examinations and tests that would confirm or deny their mental deficiency.

These intelligence and aptitude examinations carried out on all the races that came to America from the four corners of the earth were recorded, and have come down to us as the first eugenic studies carried out on such a large scale. A scientific discipline aimed at the perfection of the human race through the study and selection of physical and mental characteristics held to be positive, and the elimination of negative ones, eugenics was also, and above all, a biopolitical means of discrimination and persecution aimed at standardizing the nation and purging the social body. Immigration and marriage laws and, above all, forced sterilization policies were applied to a vast range of “degenerate”, “unproductive” or “abnormal” individuals.

While reading the manuals of the mental examination of “aliens” that were published annually from 1913 on, I looked at the photographs of the new arrivals lined up in rows for the examinations, losing myself in their gaze. Their eyes seemed to be asking for an explanation as they struggled, disoriented, with the geometric shapes that had to be arranged in a rectangle of wood, in front of uniformed men who kept their eyes fixed on the clocks to record how long it took them to find the solution, when there was a solution...

Ancient man was required to transform himself in an unnaturally and terrifyingly short period of time. He had to prove that he could become a modern man, that he no longer believed in spirits, ghosts, the devil and all those things that cannot be seen and cannot be explained, and therefore do not exist. The man of the New World is a rational man, master and tamer of nature, builder of hundred-story apartment blocks, of giant factories that workers can only leave to go home in the evening. It is the duty of the man of the New World to use progress

to reshape the world as he wishes, to produce more than enough for his own survival, to generate wealth and money.

I followed that gaze to find a meaning or to not be afraid of losing one. There are no moral judgments. It's not a political film, it's not a historical film, it's not a social film. I have sought to tell the story of my heroes, men of a past era who still believe in the importance of mystery and who still see things that cannot be seen, which does not mean they do not exist.

- *Emanuele Crialese*

www.emanuelecrialese.com

THE DIRECTOR

EMANUELE CRIALESE

A Rome-based director of Sicilian origin, Crialese was born in 1965. In 1991 he moved to America to study film direction at New York University, graduating in 1995. After making various shorts, he shot his first feature *ONCE WE WERE STRANGERS* in 1997 selected for the Sundance festival. In 1999 he collaborated with producer Bob Chartoff on a treatment about Ellis Island. In 2002, he won the Cannes Critics' Week Award with *RESPIRO*, which was enthusiastically acclaimed in France, sold to over 30 territories worldwide and became a big hit in Italy. Set on the rugged, sun-drenched island of Lampedusa, the film stars Valeria Golino, who gives an outstanding performance, and Crialese's fetish actor Vincenzo Amato.

THE ACTORS

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG

Charlotte Gainsbourg made her cinema debut in 1984 with *LOVE SONGS* by Elie Chouraqui. Other movies include: *L'EFFRONTÉE* by Claude Miller (1985), *LA TENTATION D'ISABELLE* by Jacques Doillon (1985), *JANE B. PAR AGNÈS V.* by Agnès Varda (1987), *KUNG-FU MASTER* by Agnès Varda (1987), *THE LITTLE THIEF* by Claude Miller (1989), *NIGHT SUN* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (1990), *AUX YEUX DU MONDE* by Eric Rochant (1990), *AMOUREUSE* by Jacques Doillon (1992), *THE CEMENT GARDEN* by Andrew Birkin (1993), *GROSSE FATIGUE* by Michel Blanc (1994), *JANE EYRE* by Franco Zeffirelli (1996), *SEASON'S BEATINGS* by Danièle Thompson (1999), *THE INTRUDER* by David Bailey (1999), *FELIX AND LOLA* by Patrice Leconte (2000), *MY WIFE IS AN ACTRESS* by Yvan Attal (2001), *21 GRAMS* by Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu (2003), *L'UN RESTE L'AUTRE* part by Claude Berri (2004), *LEMMING* by Dominik Moll (2005) and *THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP* by Michel Gondry (2006).

VINCENZO AMATO

A well-known Sicilian sculptor living in New York, Vincenzo Amato made his movie debut in 1997 with *ONCE WE WERE STRANGERS* by Emanuele Crialese. In 1999 he played in *PRISON SONG* and in 2002 worked again with Crialese in *RESPIRO*, which was such a hit at the Cannes Critics' Week. That same year he appeared in *CIAO AMERICA* by Frank Ciota. He has also voiced roles in *LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL* and *PINOCCHIO*, both directed by Roberto Benigni. In 1999 he won the Best Actor award at the 26th Annual Brussels Film Festival.

AURORA QUATTROCCHI

Aurora Quattrocchi made her cinema debut in *MARY FOREVER* by Marco Risi (1989). This was followed by *THE REBEL* by Aurelio Grimaldi (1993), *THE HUNDRED STEPS* by Marco Tullio Giordana (2000) and *UN DIÀ DE SUERTE* by Sandra Gugliotta (2002).

FRANCESCO CASISA

GOLDEN DOOR is the second film Francesco Casisa has made with Crialese. The first was *RESPIRO*.

FILIPPO PUCCILLO

Filippo Puccillo appeared in *RESPIRO*. *GOLDEN DOOR* is his second feature with Crialese.

VINCENT SCHIAVELLI

Vincent Schiavelli died recently. He appeared in over a hundred and forty films, working both in Italy and the US. His most memorable performances include: *TAKING OFF* by Milos Forman (1971), *THE GREAT GATSBY* by Jack Clayton (1974), *FOR PETE'S SAKE* by Peter Yates (1974), *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST* by Milos Forman (1975), *CHU CHU AND THE PHILLY FLASH* by David Lowell Rich (1981), *FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH* by Amy Heckerling (1982), *THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI* by W. D. Richter (1984), *AMADEUS* by Milos Forman (1984), *COLD FEET* by Robert Dornhelm (1989), *GHOST* by Jerry Zucker (1990), *BATMAN RETURNS* by Tim Burton (1992), *THE BEAUTICIAN AND THE BEAST* by Ken Kwapis (1997), *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* by Roger Spottiswoode (1997), *INFERNO* by John G. Avildsen (1999), *3 STRIKES* by D.J. Pooh (2000), *DEATH TO SMOOCHY* by Danny DeVito (2002), *FERRARI* by Carlo Carlei (2003), *GLI INDESIDERABILI* by Pasquale Scimeca (2003) and *MIRACOLO A PALERMO!* by Beppe Cino (2005).

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