

# Persmap

MEDUSA FILM  
AND OFFSIDE PRESENT

AFTER "INTO GREAT SILENCE"  
DISCOVER THE POWER  
OF THE SACRED

# IN MEMORIA DI ME

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
SAVERIO COSTANZO

WITH CHRISTO JIVKOV FILIPPO TIMI MARCO BALJANI  
ANDRÉ HENNICKE FAUSTO RUSSO ALESSI  
CINEMATOGRAPHY MARIO AMURA EDITING FRANCESCA CALVELLI  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MAURIZIO LEONARDI COSTUMES ANTONELLA CANNAROZZI  
SOUND GABRIELE MORETTI ORIGINAL MUSIC ALTER EGO  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OLIVIA SLEITER PRODUCED BY MARIO GIANANI  
A MEDUSA FILM AND OFFSIDE PRODUCTION

www.cineart.be - www.cineart.nl

**WINNER**  
ROBERT WISE AWARD  
BEST DIRECTOR  
FLANDERS FILM FESTIVAL - GHEENT

**57<sup>th</sup>** Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
COMPETITION

**cinéart**

# IN MEMORIA DI ME

een film van **Saverio Costanzo**

*Andrea is een charmante en intelligente jonge man die alles heeft om te slagen in het leven. Maar de oneindige mogelijkheden van de wereld hebben hem alleen maar in vertwijfeling gebracht. In deze gemoedstoestand besluit hij aan het noviciaat te beginnen, een periode van spirituele bezinning voorafgaand aan de priesterwijding.*

*Andrea ontdekt dat deze grote gemeenschap van novices, priors en gepensioneerde priesters méér is dan alleen maar een wereld van stilte, gebed en meditatie. Het klooster wordt een mysterieus universum waar elke blik, elk geluid de intriges weerspiegelt terwijl de novices aangemoedigd worden om de kleinste ondeugendheid van hun kameraden aan te geven. Ondanks de steun van de Prior, verliest Andrea zich in zijn zoektocht naar het absolute geloof. Terwijl zijn frustratie over het uitblijven van antwoorden toeneemt, staat hij op het punt om, net zoals zo velen vóór hem, de Orde te verlaten...*

**ROBERT WISE AWARD  
FOR BEST DIRECTOR  
FILMFESTIVAL VAN VLAANDEREN -  
GENT 2007**

**OFFICIAL SELECTION  
IN COMPETITION  
FILMFESTIVAL VAN BERLIJN 2007**

Land :           Italië  
Jaar :           2007  
Genre:          Drama  
Duur :          116 min  
Formaat :       35mm - 1:1,85  
Distributie:    cinéart  
Releasedatum: 19 juni 2008

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**Meer informatie:**

Cinéart coördinatie Publiciteit & Marketing: Noor Pelser

Persmap en foto's staan op: [www.cineart.nl](http://www.cineart.nl)  
Persrubriek inlog: cineart / wachtwoord: film

## Cast

Andrea	Christo Jivkov
Zanna	Filippo Timi
Father Superior	Andre Hennicke
Father Master	Marco Baliani
Panella	Fausto Russo Alesi



## Crew

Director	Saverio Costanzo
Script	Saverio Costanzo
Cinematography	Mario Amura
Editing	Francesca Calvelli
Music	Alter Ego
Producer	Mario Gianani

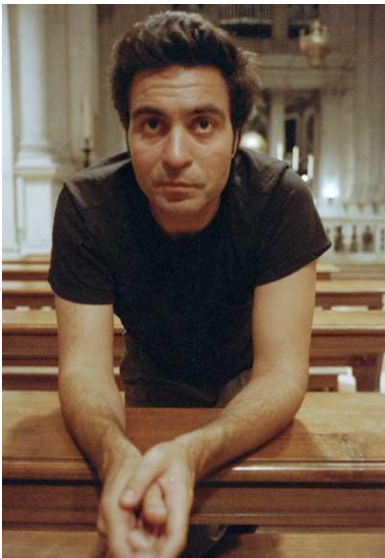
## Saverio Costanzo

Born in Rome on 28.9.1975, he studied communications and sociology at the Roman University, La Sapienza, graduating in 1998 with a dissertation on Italian-Americans in Brooklyn. He lived in New York for two years, where he made a documentary film and worked as a cinematographer.

His feature film debut about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, PRIVATE, received, among other accolades, the Golden Leopard at Locarno international film festival in 2004.

### Filmografie

- 1999 CAFFE' MILLE LUCI, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK (documentary)
- 2001 SALA ROSSA (TV serie)
- 2004 PRIVATE
- 2007 IN MEMORIA DI ME



## **Interview with Saverio Costanzo**

### **SOMETHING MISSING IN OUR DNA**

IN MEMORIA DI ME is the story of the difficult path towards absolute faith, focusing on lives wholly consecrated to God. It's the story of Andrea, a young man who seems to have everything it takes to be a "winner". He is intelligent, at ease with others, handsome. He has reached an age where he must make significant choices which will shape the rest of his life, but the infinite possibilities the world offers only confuse him. For Andrea, normal success isn't enough. He wants more in life. He wants a solid reason worth sacrificing the superficial freedom of his generation. He wants to turn his life into an experience uniquely his own, but he can't seem to find his way. Andrea's condition is similar to my own and also that of my generation. A sort of incapacity, impossibility to choose a definitive path: life with one person, one job, one lifestyle. It's as if something was missing in our DNA. We have followed our desires, only to end up in a limbo of never-ending adolescence.

### **A METAPHOR FOR ANY BIG LIFE CHOICE**

I think initiation into religious life can be a metaphor for any big life choice which involves a major commitment. In IN MEMORIA DI ME, disoriented Andrea decides to undertake the novitiate, a period of training for men before they become priests. Andrea begins a new daily life characterized by communal living, a small room, silence and house rules. Under constant surveillance by the Superiors, Andrea is taught the fundamental dynamics of becoming a man of God: a continuum of falling and rising back up. Anyone aspiring to solid, perfect faith must take into account his own human nature and the demons always ready to tempt one astray.

### **THE FATHER MASTER**

Through the test, Andrea discovers who he really is, while his previous existence is stripped completely. In their struggle, the novices must learn to "lose themselves" to make way for God in a process based on absolute obedience to the Superiors. Absolute obedience is no easy task, and the richer in spirit are more prone to rebellion. The rules are often incomprehensible and cruel. Andrea receives strong support from the Father Master, who quickly becomes a point of reference for him. The presence of spiritual masters used to be a common practice, but I discovered it is seldom done anymore. I found the master to be a very interesting figure. In today's world, no one has a master, nor someone to follow

### **LIVING TOGETHER WITHOUT TALKING**

In a place where everyone lives together without talking, I found myself looking everywhere and really going inside every situation, observing every single detail. When there's no verbal communication with others, you'll discover that you really have to look at other people. Strangely enough, when no one speaks, it seems more truthful, more than if the person was talking. I tried to use this situation to add tension to IN MEMORIA DI ME. Also, when Andrea arrives, everyone is interested in him because he is new. Everyone observes him in curiosity... There's also tension among the community because the novices are encouraged to denounce one another. In an office, if I reported you to the boss, I would be a bastard. But in this kind of context where everything is about spiritual training, being reported can be positive. To be able to acknowledge mistakes, to learn how to accept criticism. This can be helpful.

## **ANDREA AND ZANNA**

Andrea becomes friends with another novice, a rebel. Zanna is a young man possessed by faith and inhabited by God, with whom he maintains a direct relationship unimpaired by the institutions or Superiors. Zanna accuses the novitiate and the Church itself of wanting to follow the ways of the world, of constantly reproducing the world's ways in its own internal framework. He blames them for using the Word of God to gain power and influence over men; Andra is profoundly shaken by encounters with Zanna, realizing that his friend is totally sincere in his beliefs, while he, in comparison, seems to be feigning. Andrea wants to be more like Zanna, but he can't. Andra's successes and Zanna's failures do nothing to calm Andrea's anguish. Eventually, each must embrace his own way of following God... The struggle between the two characters is the struggle one person has with himself while searching for his or her faith. I believe faith has something to do with knowing yourself. At the moment you know yourself, you can believe in something or you can believe in your self. I think both are forms of faith.

## **THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISE**

I didn't do a lot of research, because I'm not so attached to reality; But the actors and I did go through the difficult spiritual exercise based on the teachings of Ignazio De Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. We went to this big house and spent nine days in total silence, with one hour of daily meditation accompanied by a spiritual guide. After four days, you could kill yourself, but things start getting better on the fifth day. Then things get tough again on the sixth day, but you feel much stronger by the end. It's an unexplainable experience, which led me to understand that I understood nothing. Even if you don't believe in God, this spiritual exercise can be quite an experience. It forces you to confront yourself in a very honest way. Everything in IN MEMORIA DI ME comes from this experience. But I wasn't trying to do documentary work, I just wanted to make a spiritual journey.

## **WRITING THE SCRIPT**

I wrote the script by trying to remain faithful to my experience with the spiritual exercise. Since the actors also did their own spiritual exercises, the writing of the film really happened during the shoot, in my dialogues with the actors. I must confess that I didn't fully understand this movie until I started to shoot. Then slowly, an understanding came about, along with my desperate attempt to be free, so I tried to forget myself and let my unconsciousness, my faith, guide me... When I had first read Furio Monicelli's book "The Perfect Jesuit", I was intrigued by the young protagonist's choice of entering a monastery to look for a different meaning of freedom. Also in the book, there's a very intelligent and profound relationship between two young men who discuss some very meaningful questions. I wrote the first draft of the screenplay based on the book's storyline, but it didn't work for me. I ended up realizing that I wanted to tell something else. I was more interested in the mystery behind the decision to enter such a place. Was it faith or pride?

## **INTERIORS AND INSTITUTIONS**

The large corridor is basically another protagonist in the film. For me, the corridor represents what is going on inside Andrea. It represents his soul. The corridor becomes a part of Andrea and Andrea becomes a part of it. The lighting changes frequently in the corridor. It changes according to the dramaturgy, to the direction Andrea takes. If Andrea is the corridor, then the community, the institution, is the dining room. Only in the dining room do we see everyone together. The mysterious door to troubled Panella's room can also be seen as another inanimate character.

## **SILENCE AND MUSIC**

I tried to stick to the silence. The main character doesn't talk very much. In fact, most of the characters don't talk much. But the audience might get the feeling that there is not much silence because of the musical score. In any case, there is a big difference between a monks' monastery and a priests' novitiate. The novices are dealing with intellectual studies, philosophy, theology, so they speak in the classroom scenes.

As seen in *IN MEMORIA DI ME*, many religious communities play music at mealtime. This discourages speaking. You just have to eat with your brothers. The music we used in the dining room scenes is far from religious. The waltz used is usually connected to amusement, to pleasure.

## **CROWDS AND PROCESSIONS**

Coming from a film like *PRIVATE*, it was good for me to make a more elaborate film in terms of mise-en-scene. It felt more like pure cinema to work with a lot of people. Although I worked with crowds, I wanted the community to maintain an individual feeling. Andrea doesn't make direct contact with anyone except Zanna and Panella. The other novices and priests just serve as background, for example, in the dining room. For me, the community represents the institution. For example, the funeral procession: I tried to paint it as something very cold. It seems even colder since it's religious. A funeral procession with ordinary people would look much less institutional.

## **UNIVERSALLY SPIRITUAL**

It wasn't necessary for me to cite Catholicism in the film, because everything in it is Catholic. If you come from a country where the Church isn't very important, then you'll probably see the movie in a less political way. At the same time, I think the film is universally spiritual. Not that you'll see rays shooting from the sky like the light of God in *IN MEMORIA DI ME*. The characters are everyday people struggling, and this fight for me is true faith... I don't see myself as a religious person, but I do try to believe in something. So I hope that the film will speak to everyone, whether religious or not, because it focuses on the very human side.

## **ACCORDING TO THE LOCATION**

For this kind of movie, location becomes a main subject. *IN MEMORIA DI ME* was entirely shot in Venice, on the island San Giorgio Maggiore. We shot everything in the same complex. I wanted to find one place and then adapt the movie to it. I wanted the film to grow according to the location, so I changed a lot of things on set. I wanted to see where the film took me, so I let myself be guided by the location. It's not a priority for me to follow the script. I prefer a more creative process. When working with only one location, I felt much more free, even though it's more or less a closed space. It was not easy to secure such an historical place, but it was worth it to have such an absolutely fascinating location. The church in the film is still used for religious purposes by a very small community of monks. The former monastery is now maintained by a private foundation and used for organized events.