

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Synopsis

“Where pride is, the snake goes,” Italian proverb

Adultery, the evil eye, and a snakebite are the circumstances that shape the childhood of Vittorio Innocente in the small village of Valle De Sole in a society dominated by religion and superstition. *LIVES OF THE SAINTS* begins in an Italy almost unchanged since the beginning of the last century—moving across time from the horrors of wartime Italy to the swinging counterculture that dominated Toronto in the late 60’s.

This “intimate epic” travels from the sun-drenched Mediterranean to the frozen Arctic, to the flatlands of rural Ontario and finally back to the isolated hilltop village of Valle del Sole, Italy (Valley of the Sun), 20 years later in a story suffused with mystery, and betrayal. Who will pay for the sins and secrets of the family past?

Vittorio’s turbulent childhood revolves around his love for his mother, Cristina, (whose husband Mario, has emigrated to Canada) but is informed by his Aunt Teresa (Sophia Loren). Also the village schoolteacher, she is his disciplinarian and his moral guide. To enhance his lessons, she uses stories from a religious picture book Lives of the Saints which she gives him

as a gift when he leaves Valle De Sole with his mother for the hope of a new and better life in Canada.

A widow, Teresa is the glue that holds the family together while Cristina (Sabrina Ferilli), an independent spirit, is strong-willed and fiery. The village is full of whispers when Cristina is bitten in the barn by a poisonous snake. Superstitions and ancient taboos come to light when she becomes pregnant. As if this were not enough, Cristina refuses to do penance and be cowed by the villagers' reaction to her condition. Much to their dismay, she appears to flaunt her pregnancy. The villagers' mistreatment of the family and the absence of Vittorio's father Mario, Tera's brother, fuel the multitude of family secrets that unfold as Vittorio journeys into adulthood.

Tragedy strikes, when he travels to Canada and Cristina dies giving birth to Vittorio's sister, Rita. With his mother's death, Vittorio takes on the role of protecting his baby sister. The children join Vittorio's father, Mario, who, to support his family, emigrated to Ontario ahead of them to farm. Vittorio is unable to show his love for Rita in front of Mario, as her existence is a constant reminder of his wife's infidelity. Mario cannot bear to see "the girl" who lives within the farmhouse like a shadow. Once in school, Rita begins visiting the ultra WASP home of her friend Elena Amherst and stays away from home for longer and longer periods. Vittorio's only comfort is Teresa, who arrives from Italy to run the household.

But, by the time Rita is eight, tensions in the house reach a breaking point, when Mario shoots Rita's dog for raiding the chicken coop. Finally, Rita goes to live with the Amhersts and eventually is adopted by them. Little by

little Vittorio loses contact with her, realizing he can never be part of her new world. Like his mother, Rita is no longer mentioned in the Innocente farmhouse. Vittorio becomes more alienated from his father, fleeing to the far north. He is forced to return home when his father commits suicide. At the funeral he is reunited with Rita, now a beautiful sensuous 18-year-old with the same spirited nature as his beloved mother, Cristina.

Rita deals with her own demons, and through an intervention by Teresa, meets her birth father. When this goes badly she turns to Vito for comfort in a sudden passionate seduction. Vittorio is forced to come to terms with this encounter and eventually with the truth of his own parentage, one of the many secrets that have been locked up for so many years.

Only when Vittorio returns to Valle del Sole is he able to shed light onto these family secrets, and begin to understand the harsh kindness of his Aunt Teresa. With this knowledge, Vittorio finally settles into the present and understands that life is a lesson, no matter how harsh. He also discovers that everyone needs the insight the past has to offer.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Production Information

Based on the best-selling, award-winning trilogy by Italian-Canadian author, Nino Ricci, ***LIVES OF THE SAINTS*** is an epic story of betrayal, suicide and forgiveness, spanning 20 years and two countries in the life of a young Italian boy. Moving across time from the horrors of wartime Italy to the swinging counter cultural scene in Toronto in the late 60's, it climaxes in Italy where family secrets and sins are ultimately revealed.

Sophia Loren (*A Special Day, Marriage Italian Style*) plays a school-teacher aunt to the Italian boy, played by Fabrizio Filippo (*Waydowntown, Action*). His sister is played by Jessica Paré (*Stardom, The Life and Death of Nancy Eaton*), their mother by Italian actress Sabriana Ferilli (*La Bella Vita, Ferie d'Agosto*) and father by Nick Mancuso (*Stingray, Under Siege*) with Kris Kristoferson (*A Star is Born, Lone Star*) as someone who reveals a long-kept family secret.

Based on the best-selling, award-winning trilogy by Italian-Canadian author Nino Ricci, ***LIVES OF THE SAINTS*** is directed by Jerry Ciccoritti (*The Many Trials of One Jane Doe, Trudeau*) from a screenplay by Malcolm MacRury (*Man Without a Face, HBO's Lawyers, Guns and Money*) . Gabriella Martinelli (*Romeo + Juliet, M. Butterfly*) and Giovanna Arata (*Young Casanova, Doctor Zhivago*) produce.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS is an Italian-Canadian co-production between Capri Films (Canada) and Mediatrade (Italy) in association with CTV Network. The mini-series will be telecast in Canada on the CTV Network, headlining a new strand of movies, *Heros, Champions, and Villains*, and will be aired in Italy on Canale 5.

films on location in Toronto and surrounding countryside for five weeks, after which the production moves to Italy to complete shooting in an abandoned hillside village in Umbria for an additional four weeks.

ABOUT THE STORY

Lives of the Saints is adapted from the Italian-Canadian author Nino Ricci's award-winning trilogy—Lives of the Saints, In A Glass House and Where She Has Gone, which span 30 years in the life of the young Italian boy Vittorio Innocente. Ricci's debut novel, Lives of the Saints, published in 1990, won the prestigious Governor General's Award in 1991, Books in Canada First Novel Award, was on Canada's bestseller list for 75 weeks, won awards in Britain and was short-listed for the Los Angeles Times First Novel Award in addition to being published in 14 countries. The New York Times hailed In a Glass House as a "haunting, lyrical and intelligent coming of age novel" that is "a genuine achievement." The stunning story of Italian life and immigration presented in Ricci's first and second novels was brought full circle in the magnificent final work in the trilogy, Where She Has Gone.

“When I started the project in 1985, I thought I was writing a story about a brother and sister and didn’t know I was going to write a trilogy on immigration,” recalls the author. But as I started getting into their lives, the immigration history that was part of my life entered into it. In some ways, it’s the big story of our times, about mass migrations of people, whether it be from one country to another, or from the country to the city, or just from one region to another region. There’s an uprootedness that’s a normal part of human experience now that was never the case in the past,” relates Ricci, whose family emigrated to Canada a few years before he was born in Leamington, a small town in southwestern Ontario where he grew up in a close-knit Italian community.

When director Jerry Ciccoritti, whose Italian parents also emigrated to Canada, read Ricci’s debut novel, Lives of the Saints in 1990, he connected to the story so strongly, he tried to option it, only to discover that producer Gabriella Martinelli, who also has Italian roots, had beat him to it. But it wasn’t until 13 years later, after the trilogy was completed, that they would finally meet to collaborate on the four-hour mini-series.

“Lives of the Saints is a great gripping saga about family secrets, murder, suicide, of families ripped apart by old secrets that aren’t revealed. It’s a story of lies and faith and above all a story of love and redemption. The final message of the movie is that everything can be forgiven,” states the director who identified so closely with the story, he equated it to doing his own autobiography.

“The main character Vittorio is me, I know this guy, I know this world, I know the emotions. It’s also a way for me to pay homage to my cultural background, the Italian Canadian immigrant experience. I’ve finally been offered subject matter which is the perfect vehicle with which to work out my own private demons.” Ciccoritti explains, “The young Italian Canadian man who’s born and raised in a culture of shame and guilt even though he didn’t commit a crime, is exactly the crisis state of every Italian Canadian of my generation. One of my big goals with this movie is to show that the Italian Canadian immigrant experience is completely different from the Italian American experience. The mistake we make is that we confuse the two because we’re all raised with American movies and TV. Part of my larger vision to show all aspects of my country to my countrymen.”

Producer Gabriella Martinelli was initially captivated by the project because it dealt with the Italian experience. It was identical to what she had gone through, coming to Canada at age 5 from Italy with her parents, then in their 30’s “who were very, very Italian,” relates Martinelli. “We were raised in this very strange environment whereby all the social order in our house was Italian, but outside was Canadian. Unless you’ve been through that, it’s hard to understand how schizophrenic that can be.”

When she read Lives of the Saints, Martinelli felt there wasn’t enough material in the first book to make a movie. But she changed her mind after meeting Ricci who explained he was writing a trilogy, and describing his overview and plans for the next two novels. Sensing that the books would strike a chord with a lot of people, Martinelli decided to option all three, making a promise not to begin the film project until Ricci finished the entire

trilogy. “Nino does not write quickly (the entire trilogy took more than a decade to complete), but I kept my promise to him,” smiles Martinelli.

Within a couple of years after the last book was finished, Martinelli was working and living part time in Italy, where she pitched the project to the Mediatrade, the company which had co-produced the feature film *Between Strangers* with her company, Capri Films. Mediatrade were equally enthusiastic about *Lives of the Saints*. She subsequently approached the Canadian television network CTV to co-finance the project with Mediatrade. CTV reacted by making the biggest commitment ever, deciding to launch *Lives of the Saints* as the first project in their new strand of movies called “Heroes, Champions and Villains.”

“What caught our enthusiasm about *Lives of the Saints* was not only the tale about Italian immigrants, but the fact that this is a family saga in the true sense of the word,” says Producer Giovanna Arata, Head of International Production at Mediatrade. “It’s a tale about love and redemption, about family ties that can bond or damn one forever. It’s a journey between two countries that mirrors an inner journey in search of our roots, and the truth that can be revealed only through a connection to our past. We cannot build our lives on secrets and lies. This is what we come to understand at the end of the movie.”

The Screenplay

“Both the trilogy and the film are about the pull and power of the past and how our lives are played out in the context of family; always shaped by the stories, drama and rituals that we inherit,” says screenwriter Malcolm

MacRury (*Man Without a Face*, HBO's *Lawyers, Guns and Money*), who adapted the mini-series from the novels. "Both the books and the mini-series are also about forgiveness; that the past need not be a straitjacket, though it might be if we can't find the gift of forgiveness."

He wrote the role of Teresa especially for Sophia Loren. Martinelli notes, "Teresa is the powerful thread linking the three novels. She becomes the glue that holds the three stories together." MacRury explains, "We needed an adult protagonist to unify the three books for a mini-series; an adult character to be at the heart of the drama to bridge the past and present, Italy and Canada. There isn't one in the novels except for Vittorio who ages from 7 to 26. I wanted to give him a constant traveling companion, creator, destroyer to accompany him on his epic journey. Teresa, therefore, is one part 'La Maestra', the holy school teacher in Valle de Sol; one part Cristina's father, the Mayor of the town; one part Aunt Teresa who comes to Canada to look after Vittorio and his bastard sister; and one part pure invention. I think this combination makes the drama work."

Loren confesses that she reads scripts a few times before making a decision to become involved. "I have too much respect for other people's work to say 'yes' too quickly. I want to be sure that I can bring something to the character and to the project. " She wants a script to move her emotionally or physically – to give her goosepimples before signing on. After reading the synopsis for *Lives of the Saints*, she was struck by the complexity of the story and signed on.

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

“When you’re talking about the story of an immigrant, there’s no better Italian person that you can have in your story than Sophia Loren. She is the ultimate,” says Martinelli. “Another phenomenal Italian actress, Sabrina Ferilli, who plays Vittorio’s mother, personifies Cristina’s fiery quality. Fabrizio Filippo plays Vittorio as an adult, whose parents emigrated to Canada from Italy in the 50’s. And we had a huge search for young Vittorio, 7-year old Flavio Pacilli, a natural actor from Italy, who also speaks English that he learnt at school.

Ciccoritti discusses the roles. “Sophia Loren plays Teresa, whose secret story ties the elements of all three books together. Her character is someone who moves from the ideal to the real. She starts off as a woman with a misplaced love who rediscovers the existence of love and the best place to direct it. Teresa is the keeper of all the family secrets and it is when the family reveals all the secrets that she rediscovers love.”

For Loren, Teresa “is absolutely dedicated to the family, and to the name of the family. She would do anything for the benefit of the family. She is the type of woman who wants to put on a good front for the rest of the world.” Teresa wants to protect the family from the judgements of others. “She wants to wash the family’s dirty clothes at home,” Loren explains.

Loren thinks that women like Teresa play an important role in the family and in the world. “They solve things,” she says before describing Teresa as one of the more complex roles that she has played in her career. “The story has

many important moments which challenge an actor. There is also the complication of playing a character through time. It was a physically and emotionally demanding role.”

For the other actors, Teresa is the character who holds the story together. “She is the authority of the piece – the moral force for good and bad,” says Parè. For Filippo, “Zia Teresa is a mentor to Vito. The pride with which he carries himself comes from her.” Their admiration of Sophia Loren the icon is underlined in all the conversations discussing her work. “Working with her was a dream come true for me. I could hardly believe that my first scene in the film was beside her,” recalls Filippo. Loren’s approach to her role was a surprise for her director. “She treats everyday on set as though it was the first day. We would have conversations about Teresa’s motivation and then the day would proceed.”

“Filippo understands the nature of Vittorio’s character; a young man whose personal dramatic crisis is that he feels he has no place in the world. He’s struggling to find out where he belongs – either in Canada or Italy. This crisis is expressed through a life of guilt and shame. Vittorio doesn’t know whom to love. He can’t love anybody properly until he learns to love and accept himself. Aside from being a great actor, Fabrizio’s personal experience as an Italian-Canadian gives him an insight into the character that goes beyond research and from reading the script. And,” smiles the director, “he’s as handsome as all get out!”

Filippo interjects, “I don’t think a lot of movies are going to come my way that explore the Italian Canadian immigrant experience. This is very

personal to me as I can draw off my parents' experiences. Vittorio is the soul of the piece. He's a young man born into a kind of shame and guilt that's intrinsic to the culture. He pushes it away from himself and ignores who he is until he can longer do it any more. And when his culture hits him, it hits him like a mack truck. He has to burn his way through it and come out the other side, a whole person. It's a coming of age story and he's the guy coming of age."

Ciccoritti continues, "There is a wonderful energy between Fabrizio and Jessica, who plays Rita, a woman who never experienced love in a family. She's never been touched with love by anyone. As a young adult, her need for love can only be expressed in her need to be touched; which is what causes her to live a dangerous, edgy existence being with the wrong people—too much sex, too many parties." Parè agrees. "Growing up without love has made her look for love in her sexual encounters. Her emotions are very close to the surface."

"Jessica is so physically beautiful, her personal experience of everybody wanting to touch her matches that of Rita," says Ciccoritti. "She is an image of desire in the story and she is also an image of where desire can lead. Vittorio and Rita's story is of the heart and the body that's been ripped into two pieces, and how the two of them are struggling to come together again."

Paré welcomed the opportunity to portray Rita. On reading the script for the first time, she was struck by the epic nature of the story. Parè describes Rita as the character that puts everything in motion. "She is the reminder of her mother's infidelity; and is therefore the subject of Mario's hatred. Growing

up without love has caused her to look for love in her sexual encounters. She's a fascinating character to play."

"Cristina, played by Italian actress Sabrina Ferilli, is a woman out of time. She's both ancient and modern. She's a free spirit in a world of conformity and repression. Had she lived, she would be an inspiration to everyone else in the story, but because she dies early on, she becomes a myth that haunts all the other characters for good or evil," says Ciccoritti.

"Mario is a man who has sacrificed everything for family duty and family honour, and by so doing, cuts himself off from love. He starts off appearing to be a villain but proves that you don't have to do good deeds to be a saint," says the director.

Nick Mancuso approached *Lives of the Saints* as a tribute to his own immigrant family. He saw it as a chance to "honour my immigrant past, to honour the sacrifices that were made by my father and my uncles who came over." For Mancuso, the film is about what it means to be Canadian, and how to make the transition as an immigrant in this country, this weather, this urban landscape. Mario does not survive the transition. "Mario is caught between two cultures. He has no relationships because he can't express the love that he feels. He achieves success but he can't enjoy it because he is still living in the past," comments Mancuso.

"They don't make men like Nick Mancuso any more. He is passionate and intense about everything that he does. He brings a weight to Mario's character that no-one else would have been able to do," offers Filippo.

The character of the artist Matthew Bok is played by Kris Kristofferson. He was drawn by the script's exploration of 'love, passion, hatred and redemption.' Kristofferson says that even though he couldn't connect with the cultural specifics of the Italian family portrayed in the story, "I identified with the feelings that come out of the story, particularly with the father-daughter relationship. I have three daughters and I wasn't always able to be there for them." He also found it easy to identify with the Bok the artist. "There are times when finding yourself as an artist means having to be selfish, so I could relate to that part of his character as well."

Ciccoritti chose Kristofferson because he "has a face with so much experience behind it. Matthew Bok is a warrior poet, man of peace who still understand violence. I knew that Kris could give me those notes."

Summing up the quality of his fellow actors, Filippo says, "it's the greatest cast in Canadian mini-series history."

Production Design

'Immigrants are part of the national fabric of Canada, which makes our drama distinctly Canadian,' points out Martinelli. 600,000 of those immigrants originated from Italy, making Toronto the largest Italian-speaking community outside of Italy. *Lives of the Saints* is an Italian *Roots*," she exclaims. "Jerry Ciccoritti is the perfect director because he's

had similar experiences as well. We have so many Italians working on this show who have gone through similar experiences; they're bringing out their scrapbooks," smiles Martinelli.

Concurs Ciccoritti, "Every single department has an Italian, which gives authenticity to the project. The story has unlocked many memories. For the scene when Teresa arrives in Canada with her suitcase, the Canadian production designer Rocco Matteo was able to easily assemble the contents – a big ornate gold brocade bedspread from – because he too is a part of that experience."

"The story of *Lives of the Saints* takes place in two very different worlds—the superficially idyllic village of Valley del Sole in Italy juxtaposed to the cold rural environment of Ontario," says Matteo. The early part of the film takes place in Italy where the pink stone village of Macerino in Umbria doubles for Valle de Sole. Set on a hill, the view of the landscape is green, soft and beautiful. Explains Matteo, "Italy represents the central dichotomy of Christianity, the Garden of Eden, green and beautiful. But there are very stringent rules to protect this Garden of Eden. And if you don't fit into those rules, you could be cast out, as is Cristina. It's a nice place to live and a hard place to leave, but you will if you have to."

He observes, "The real crisis of this movie is that the nicest places have the most difficult rules to live by. The rules are there to defend the faith and protect the image of the place at all costs. You must not bring shame or dishonour on the family, even if it means lying and hiding the truth.

“*Lives of the Saints* is a landscape picture,” says Matteo. Whereas Italy has shorter condensed distances, in Canada everything is spread out and far away. “We’re treating the seasons as a metaphor. As the family struggles to come to terms with their issues, we’re in winter mode, and working on a resolution to come out of the cold and the dark and into the light. It coincides with the Christian identification with seasons that after Christmas, we come out of the dark and into the light. It’s not until Mario’s death that the suppressed issues of the family are brought out and confronted. This allows us to move on from cold winter mode, the dark brown landscape where nothing is growing, and start to see evidence of progress on the farm as we explore a seasonal change.

“Images of Vittorio and Teresa working on the farm bring into focus their history of having worked the land in Italy. The toil associated with ‘cultivation’ shows us a rekindled hope of a better way of life that they might attain,” says Matteo.

The colour palette of cool blues and browns is everywhere, with the exception of Rita’s orbit. “When we encounter Rita in Toronto, we see someone who’s had a chance to develop a personality outside of this family. She has her own sense of style, illustrated by warmer colours. She’s been developed as emblematic of that era when young people were trying to find themselves outside of the cultural limitations that their parents had imposed on them,” explains Matteo.

Costume Design

“The challenge for me,” says Costume Designer Delphine White (*Bulletproof Monk, Bait*), “is that we are basically dealing with one culture and two different countries, and the effect the environment has on culture, particularly in clothing.”

The film takes place in four environments: Italy, small-town Ontario, Toronto and Baffin Island from 1951 through 1973, although the bulk of the action takes place in 1969. White spoke with many Italian immigrants to research the timeframe. She discovered that when the immigrants came to Canada, they bought new clothing to arrive in. This attire usually lasted for two years before they had to purchase North American clothing.

White notes that clothing was not a top priority when they were establishing themselves. She learned that none of the women wore trousers before they came to Canada, where they had to wear them to work on farms. The cultural difference also existed in the way that these clothes were attained. In Canada, they encountered ready-made clothing for the first time, and did their shopping in department stores. In Italy, their clothes were made by dressmakers, and their shoes by boot makers in their village.

White’s most exciting discovery was a treasure trove of thousands of photos in none other than author Nino Ricci’s parents home. Ricci’s father had kept a photographic record of the family from the 50’s, which included pictures from their life in Italy, and their arrival and subsequent settlement in Canada.

In dealing with the individual characters, White says “Mario, the Italian father, changes the least in his style over the course of time. Vittorio tries to compensate in his dress, so his wardrobe becomes very North American more quickly than the others’. (In those years, clothes were donated to immigrants). His sister Rita becomes a reflection of her mother Cristina in Italy, and is somewhat of a free spirit. “She is the most colourful, lively and passionate individual, and her clothing reflects that.”

Sophia Loren’s costumes were designed by Maurizio Millenotte, the notable Italian costume designer.

Locations

It can’t get more authentic than shooting on location in Italy in an isolated village in Umbria. The village perched atop a mountain, over-looks verdant hills and valleys. Like many contemporary Italian villages, Macerino, where only four people live on a permanent basis, has been abandoned and is used mainly for summer residences. The production took over the entire village to film in the main square, the church, and picturesque streets in the historically restored pink-stone village.

Macerino is located 18 kilometres northwest of Terni, where Papigno Studios are located. The dramatic events which take place on the ship, are the only film segments shot in studio.

Each scene in Canada was shot on locations ranging from downtown Toronto to within a 70 kilometre radius of the city. A quarry doubled as

Baffin Island (with additional help from CGI). An isolated small church and surrounding graveyard with tombstones dating back to the 1800's, provided a picturesque environment for a family funeral. The Amherst home was found in the small town of Woodbridge, and a 100 acre farm east of Toronto, served as the Innocente Farm. Vintage greenhouses from the '50's were disassembled and shipped 150 kms. from St. Catherine's in southwest Ontario to the main farm location where they were reassembled. Several thousand tomato seedlings, started in February, were flourishing by April when they were transplanted in the greenhouse for the dramatic interior greenhouse scenes.

MacRury sums up, "There's a snake in every garden and every stable too. But there's also an ax to kill it if you can find the courage to stop being afraid of the truth. No Saints in this story, only lives."

Ciccoritti has a different take. "Every single character in the movie is an examination of saintliness, because everybody has their love tested, everybody commits bad acts, everybody repents, everybody discovers love, everybody martyrs themselves, but not in the way we expect. The metaphor of *Lives of the Saints* asks us to see how saintliness can exist in our everyday lives."

ABOUT THE CAST...

SOPHIA LOREN plays Teresa, an Italian school teacher with a secret, who has a strong influence on Vittorio.

Loren most recently completed the feature film *Between Strangers*, written and directed by her son Edoardo Ponti, marking her 100th film in a long and distinguished career. Considered one of the best-loved and most phenomenal actresses in history, she became the first actor in a foreign film to be honored with a Best Actress Academy Award for Vittorio de Sica's *Two Women*, in 1962. Altogether, she won 21 awards in the same year for *Two Women*. As one of the premier leading ladies of film, Loren received an Honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in 1991; she won an Honorary Golden Berlin Bear in 1994 and a Cecil B. De Mille Golden Globe Award in 1995. In addition, Loren has received acknowledgments from all over the world, from the French Victoires to the German Gold Bear and Bambis, the Italian Donatellos and Silver Ribbon and the Japanese Samurais.

Selected credits include Lina Wertmüller's *Francesca e Nunziata* and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Destination Verna*, five decades after she began her career in 1950s as an extra in Mervyn LeRoy's *Quo Vadis*. She subsequently starred in *Aida* (her voice was dubbed with that of operatic legend Renata Tebaldi's), followed by Vittorio de Sica's *The Gold of Naples*. In 1954, de Sica teamed Loren with Marcello Mastroianni in *Too Bad She's Bad*, and the three were immediately reunited in 1955 for *The Miller's Wife*. She went on to star opposite Marcello Mastroianni in 14 films in such hits as *Marriage Italian Style* which earned her a 1965 Oscar nomination for Best Actress; *Sunflower*, *Lucky to be a Woman*, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*; *The Priest's Wife*; *A Special Day* and Robert Altman's *Ready to Wear*, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination as Best Supporting Actress.

Her first English-speaking role was in *The Pride and the Passion*, opposite Cary Grant and Frank Sinatra (1957), which opened the door to Hollywood. As she perfected her fluency in English, Loren moved with ease between Italian and English-speaking roles, starring in a string of successful films: *Houseboat* with Grant; *The Key* with William Holden and Trevor Howard; *It Started in Naples* with Clark Gable and de Sica; *The Millionairess* with Peter Sellers; *The Black Orchid* and *Heller in Pink Tights* with Anthony Quinn, earning honors in Cannes, New York and London along the way. In 1969, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association named her the world's most popular star.

Some of Loren's other films include: *El Cid*, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, *Boy on a Dolphin*, *The Condemned of Altona*, *Judith*, *Arabesque*, Charlie Chaplin's *Countess from Hong Kong*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Voyage*, *The Cassandra Crossing*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. More recently she starred in *Grumpier Old Men*, *Messages* and *Soleil*.

She has written four books including her autobiography *Living and Loving* (1979) and the best-seller, *Sophia Loren's Recipes & Memories* (1998).

Loren is married to Carlo Ponti. They have two sons, Carlo and Edoardo.

JESSICA PARE plays Rita Innocente, Vittorio's illegitimate sister, who manages to break free from the family bonds.

Paré is quickly becoming a young actress to watch in Canadian and European cinema. After a few small television roles, she was handpicked by

Director Denys Arcand to star in his celebrity satire, *Stardom*, as a young beauty plucked from a small town and launched into international superstardom. *Stardom* was the closing film in competition at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.

Paré followed that up with several diverse projects, the European film, *En Vacances*, directed by Yves Hanchar, Léa Pools' haunting tale of love within the confines of a girl's boarding school, *Lost and Delirious*, and John Smith's period picture, *Random Passage* in addition to cameos in Yves Simoneau's epic mini-series, *Napoleon*, as the emperor's first mistress to bear him a child; and Deepa Metha's *Bollywood Hollywood*, in which she played a pop star. She recently completed the feature film, *Wicker Park*, opposite Josh Harnett, directed by Paul McGuigan, and played in the title role of the yet-to-aired CTV mini-series, *The Death and Life of Nancy Eaton*, based on true events.

Born and raised in Montreal, Paré speaks fluent French. Her parents both acted, her mother in amateur productions and her father toured with a theatre company. Paré's appetite for acting was wetted as a youngster when she helped her father learn his lines for "The Tempest." At age 14, she took some workshops and acted in high school plays. During her last year of high school, she landed a small role in *Family: Joe Bonanno Story*, which convinced her to pursue an acting career. She then landed the lead role in *Stardom*, and the rest is history.

FABRIZIO FILIPPO portrays Vittorio, the young Italian Canadian man who must deal with the culture of shame and guilt into which he is born.

Filippo, who works extensively in Canada and the U.S.A. most recently completed the feature film, *Hollywood North*, directed by Peter O'Brian. He starred in the satiric comedy *Waydowntown*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival where it won the CityTV Award for Best Canadian Feature. He also starred opposite Sarah Polly in *Life Before This*.

On television, Filippo had a recurring role on the Showtime series, *Queer as Folk*. Previously he played a rebel computer-hacker in the Paramount/Sci-Fi series *Level 9*, and a drug-addicted actor in the critically acclaimed Fox series, *Action*, with Jay Mohr. As a series regular in *Hollyweird*, for producers/creators West Craven and Shaun Cassidy, Filippo played an underground filmmaker and he appeared in the Fox series, *Lush Life*. He guest starred in *Cracker*, for ABC, played a dangerous drummer in the ABC MOW *Radiant City* opposite Kirstie Alley, a love-struck Italian gondolier in NBC's *Providence* as well as appearing in episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. He played the older brother in the award-winning Disney series, *Ready or Not*.

On stage, Filippo performed in the Canadian premiere of the Australian hit play "Summer of the Aliens", as well as the theatrical productions of "Power Play" and "Steel Kiss."

Filippo has written, co-written, directed and performed in several plays including "Waiting for Lewis," "Things Are Falling Always," "The Gospel Accordingly" and "White/Noise/Jump" which played Toronto.

"White/Noise/Jump" was remounted in New York at the first New York

Fringe Theatre Festival, winning the Best Play award and earning Filippo a special mention for his performance.

NICK MANCUSO plays Mario Innocente, who emigrates to Canada from Italy to support his family on a small Ontario farm.

Born May 29, 1948 in Mammola, Calabria, Italy, Nicodemo Antonio Massimo Mancuso immigrated with parents and sister to Canada in 1956. He was raised in the Italian section of Toronto. The oldest of five, he has two brothers, and two sisters.

Mancuso began acting in high school, after a teacher had him read from "Julius Caesar". Up to this time, he had never seen a play performed, and knew nothing about theatre. He soon became fascinated with acting, and auditioned for the high school production of "Hamlet", landing a major role.

While majoring in psychology at the University of Toronto, Mancuso found himself going to the drama department and auditioning for their leading roles. He later transferred to the University of Guelph and graduated with a degree in psychology.

Although he planned to be a "research psychologist", his strong interest in dramatic arts prevailed. An audition for a Studio Lab Theatre production marked the beginning of his professional acting career in the early 1970s with a number of Canadian theatre groups. He founded a theatre troupe in Toronto called "Teatru Streetcarru", which produced plays for Toronto's Italian community. The troupe toured Canada, playing at such places as Vancouver's Playhouse Theatre, where Mancuso acted as a performer and artistic director for one season. Mancuso distinguished himself at Canada's

prestigious Stratford Festival in 1976, in the leading role of Bassanio in "The Merchant of Venice", as well as in "Antony and Cleopatra" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream", working with Maggie Smith, Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn.

In the mid-1970s, after years of working in live theatre, Mancuso made his feature film debut in *Dr. Scorpion*, by Universal television's producer-writer, Stephen J. Cannell. His American stage debut was in Tennessee Williams' play, "Tiger Tail", where he worked directly with the playwright. Shortly afterwards, Arthur Hiller signed him to star in *Nightwing*.

Over the years, Mancuso has worked in live theatre, starred in many movies, movies-of-the-week for television, and in television mini-series. During his career, he has also been the star of two television series of his own, *Stingray* and *Matrix*. His impressive career continues today as Mancuso recently starred in the hit CBS series, *Hack*, as well as playing the lead in the independent film *Time of Fear*.

Mancuso won a Genie Award for Best Actor for the movie *Ticket to Heaven* in 1982. In addition, he has twice earned Best Actor honors from the Houston International Film and Television Festival, and another at the International Film Festival in Taormina, Italy.

The author of numerous plays and poetry, Mancuso continues to read his poetry and other writings at The Colloquy in Beverly Hills. Several of his poems have been composed into soundscapes (poetry with a soundtrack) and performed in Europe. Mancuso speaks four languages, and he has written a book ("The Line"), about his experience as a young immigrant. He also paints, mostly in oils, completing several paintings in a day.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON plays Matthew Bok whose secret connection with the Innocente family is finally revealed at the end of the story.

A Texas native, Kristofferson graduated from Pomona College in California where he majored in Creative Literature. He was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in England, where he studied poet William Blake for two years. While abroad, he wrote country music, had a brief singing career as Kris Carson and was the subject of a “Time” magazine feature. Back in the United States, he joined the U.S. Army where he became a helicopter pilot. He declined a teaching post at West Point, moving instead to Nashville to pursue a writing career and to gain a foothold in the country music scene, encouraged by superstar Johnny Cash who had seen some of his songs. When cash was short, Kristofferson worked as a janitor at Columbia Records, tended bar, and flew choppers to offshore oilrigs.

Kristofferson’s country music career took off when he penned a series of hit songs including “Me and Bobby McGee,” “Why Me (Lord),” “Sunday Mornin’ Comin’ Down,” “Help Me Make It Through The Night,” “For The Good Times,” “Silver Tongued Devil,” “Jody And the Kid,” “Loving Her Was Easier,” “Once More With Feeling,” “I’d Rather Be Sorry” and “Please Don’t Tell Me How The Story Ends.” He ranks as one of contemporary music’s most performed songwriters, earning Grammys and Country Music awards in addition to Gold and Multi-Platinum records along the way.

He made his motion picture acting debut in 1970 in *Cisco Pike*, for which he also wrote and recorded music. He starred in *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*,

Bring Me The Head of Alfredo Garcia, Blume In Love, Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, Vigilante Force and The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With The Sea.

Barbra Streisand's remake of *A Star is Born* marked Kristofferson's emergence as a major screen presence, winning him the 1977 Golden Globe and Foreign Press Association Awards for Best Actor. This performance was followed by roles in *Semi-Tough, Convoy, Heaven's Gate, Songwriter, Trouble In Mind* and *Rollover*. During the '80's, Kristofferson's credits include *Flashpoint, Songwriter, The Last Days of Frank and Jesse James, Blood and Orchids, Stagecoach, Millennium, Welcome Home* and *Pair of Aces*.

Following a memorable performance as Sheriff Charley Wade in *Lone Star* in the '90's, he acted with Steven Seagal in *Fire Down Below*, Wesley Snipes in *Blade*, Brenda Blethyn and Julie Walters in *Girls' Night*, and Joan Plowright in *Dance with Me*. He starred in TNT's *Two For Texas* and went to Paris to film Merchant-Ivory's *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*.

Since then Kristofferson starred in Brian Helgeland's *Payback*, John Sayles' *Limbo*, Jim Gillespie's *Detox*, Ethan Hawke's *Last Word on Paradise*, Leszek Burzynski's *Wooly Boys*, Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes*, Guillermo Del Torro's *Blade II*, Ethan Hawke's *Chelsea Walls*, Sam Pillsbury's *Where the Red Fern Grows*, and George Armitage's *The Big Bounce*.

Kristofferson and his large family live on a mountaintop in Hawaii.

SABRINA FERILLI plays Cristina, Vittorio's and Rita's free-spirited mother, whose early death haunts the family, until Rita's true father is revealed.

One of Italy's most revered actors, and veteran of more than 40 films, Ferilli most recently completed **MORE TO COME**

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS...

DIRECTOR JERRY CICCORITTI is one of Canada's most exciting and prolific directors, whose work has drawn wide acclaim, earning himself and his actors multiple awards. Most recently he directed the television movie *The Many Trials of One Jane Doe*, starring Wendy Crewson based on the true-life struggle of a woman who took 12 years to successfully sue the Toronto Police Force for using her as unwitting bait to catch a serial rapist. In addition, he completed CTV's *The Death and Life of Nancy Eaton*, starring Jessica Paré and Brendan Fletcher, based on true-life events.

His mini-series, *Trudeau*, a biopic on and homage to Canada's late prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, starring Colm Feore, Polly Shannon, Don McKellar and Peter Outerbridge, won a 2002 Gemini Award for Best Direction. Ciccoritti won another Gemini for Best Direction for the drama, *Chasing Cain*, with Peter Outerbridge and Alberta Watson, which he also produced. In addition, he won Gemini Best Director Awards for the television movies *Net Worth* and, *Straight Up, Parts 1 and 11* and for

episodes of *Due South* and *Catwalk*. He earned a Cable ACE Award nominated for an episode of *Hidden Room*.

His 1999 feature, *The Life Before This*, a drama starring Sarah Polley, Catherine O'Hara, Stephen Rea and Fabrizio Filippo, was an official selection at the Toronto and Berlin film festivals; *Boy Meets Girl*, a romantic comedy with Kate Nelligan and Joe Mantegna, which also premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, was named Best Film at the 1998 Cologne Film Festival, and *Paris France*, was selected for the Toronto, Vancouver and Karlovy Vary Film Festivals. Ciccoritti wrote and produced the feature films *A Whisper to a Scream* and *Night of Retribution*; and wrote and directed *The Understudy: Graveyard Shift I and II*.

Born and raised in Toronto, the son of Italian immigrants, his plans to be a painter were swept aside when, in high school, he helped his best friend make a Super-8 short film. Ciccoritti spent his teen years making dozens of short films before enrolling in the film programme at York University. He dropped out after one year to write and direct his debut picture, *Psycho Girls*. The horror-comedy, which he wrote and directed, was shot in nine days for \$15,000. It was picked up by Canon Films for \$150,000 and Ciccoritti's film career was launched.

PRODUCER GABRIELLA MARTINELLI, a veteran of 20 years in the film industry, has produced such films as Baz Lurhmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, and David Cronenberg's *M. Butterfly* and *Naked Lunch*, as co-producer.

Martinelli is President of Capri Films Inc., a Toronto-based production company.

Martinelli's credits include: Baz Lurhman's *Romeo + Juliet*, starring Leonardo Di Caprio and Clare Danes, shot on location in Mexico, David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers*, *Naked Lunch*, co-produced with Jeremy Thomas (*The Last Emperor*), starring Peter Weller, Judy Davis and Ian Holm, *M. Butterfly*, starring Jeremy Irons and John Lone, filmed in China, Europe and Canada, and Clive Barker's *Nightbreed*, starring David Cronenberg, filmed at Pinewood Studios in London and distributed by 20th Century Fox, and *Between Strangers*, a Canadian-Italian co-production.

She executive produced *The Amazing Panda Adventure*, a Warner Bros. release, shot entirely on remote locations in China, and produced the documentary, *Journey to Enlightenment*, based on the life of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, a revered teacher of his Holiness the Dalai Lama, filmed in Tibet and India, with narration by Richard Gere and music supervision by Philip Glass. Her Canadian films include *My American Cousin*, *John and the Missus*, and *Milk and Honey*.

Born in Italy, Martinelli immigrated to Canada as a young child and studied Literature and Art History at Carleton University in Ottawa and at the University of Victoria. She divides her time between Rome and Toronto.

PRODUCER GIOVANNA ARATA worked in Milan as a freelance journalist in 1981 followed by a stint in London as a correspondent an Italian

magazine before joining Mediaset in 1982 as a writer and, ultimately, producer.

From 1988 to 1991, she contributed to the development of the first TV news programs for the Independent Networks as Head of On-Air Promotion for Canale 5. In 1997 Arata was promoted to Deputy Managing Director at Canale 5, responsible for in-house production and programs scheduling.

In 1999, as Executive Assistant to the C.E.O. of Mediatrade, she worked at the start up of Mediaset's new content provider, focusing on feature film co-financing and TV drama production. Arata is currently Head of International Production at Mediatrade and Chief of Operations for Evision. Her recent projects include the co-financing of such films as *The Sixth Sense*, *The Insider*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. In addition she produced the mini-series *Dune*, *Les Miserables*, *Young Casanova*, and the TV re-adaptation of *Doctor Zhivago*.

ITALIAN LINE PRODUCER MARIO COTONE has more than 25 years of worldwide-experience working as an executive or line producer on such highly-acclaimed and award-winning films as Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, *Little Buddha* and *Stealing Beauty*; Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*; Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* and Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers*.

Among his other film and television credits are *Between Strangers*, *Marco Polo*; *Assisi Underground*; *Salome*, *Basileus Quartet*; *The Berlin Affair*; *Haunted Summer*; *The Torrents of Spring*; *Everybody is Fine*; *The Star*

Man; Something to Believe In, Così' Ridevano; My West; Canone Inverso and *Malena*.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WLADYSLAW BARTOSZEWICZ, a graduate of the Warsaw University of Technology, has been actively involved in cultural affairs during and since his university years. Latterly, he entered the film industry as Executive Producer of *Between Strangers*, starring Sophia Loren.

One of Poland's most successful entrepreneurs, Bartoszewicz ran Polkomtel S.A., a mobile telephone network from 1995 to 1999, ranked as one of the top private companies in Poland. On his initiative, Polkomtel developed an ambitious programme of cultural patronage and has produced a number of outstanding artistic events amongst which was the world premiere of "Requiem for My Friend," composed by Zbigniew Preisner, staged in Warsaw and directed by Edoardo Ponti, acknowledged as the best cultural event of 1998 in Poland.

Born in Poznan, Bartoszewicz began his professional career in major production plants in the machine industry, eventually becoming a private entrepreneur for 10 years. Since 1990, he has worked as a consultant in legal, investment consulting and advertising, setting up the Polish branch office of Saatchi & Saatchi, and was also director of the branch office of Arthur Maiden Ltd. London, specializing in outdoor advertising. In addition, he held positions in the state Administration in the Ministry of Foreign Economic Cooperation and the Ministry of Privatization.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FABIO CIANCHETTI, one of Italy's most highly respected cinematographers, with more than 40 feature films to his credit, has worked such acclaimed directors as Bernardo Bertolucci for whom he lensed two features *The Seige* and *The Dreamers* as well as the short, *Ten Minutes Older: The Cello*. For Bertolucci's brother Guiseppe, Cianchetti photographed *Especially on Sunday*, *Love in Progress*, *Probably Love*, and *Il dolce rumore della vita*.

Among his other extensive credits are *Canone inverso*, directed by Riky Tognazzi, *Amada mia*, directed by Gianpaolo Tescani, *Necessary Love*, directed by Fabio Carpi, *The Guardian*, directed by Egidio Eronico. More recently, he photographed *The Triumph of Love*, directed by Clare Peploe, *Sons and Daughters*, directed by Marco Bechis, *Gasoline*, directed by Monica Stambrini, *The Best Day of My Life*, directed by Cristina Comencini and *Memory Lane*, directed by Fabio Carpi. Cianchetti just completed the two-part television production *Julius Caesar*.

Born in Milan, where he still lives, Cianchetti briefly studied architecture and worked as a photographer before moving into the film industry in 1968 where he honed his skills on commercials and on television productions before landing his first feature film in 1983, *Come dire*, directed by Gianluca Fumagalli.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER (Canada), ROCCO MATTEO is responsible for designing the Canadian segment of *LIVES OF THE SAINTS*, filmed in Ontario.

Most recently Matteo art directed reshoots on *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and worked as production designer on Seven Arts/Fireworks' feature film *I-60*. He designed the Showtime features *Freak City*, *The Phantoms* and *The Wharf Rat* and the television productions *Cheetah Girls*, for Disney; *Chasing Cain: Face*, directed by Jerry Ciccoritti for CBC TV; 22 episodes of *Mutant X*, 88 episodes of *La Femme Nikita* in addition to the pilot and four episodes of Disney/Atlantis' *Flash Forward*.

As an art director, he worked on the films *Rebound*, *Gotti*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Stupids* and *Indian Summer*. Among his television credits are *Shock Treatment*, *RoboCop*, *Matrix* and *J.F.K. Reckless Youth*.

Born in Toronto of Italian immigrant parents, Matteo graduated from University of Toronto with a degree in architecture. He studied at Ontario College of Art for a year and worked for a few years at design firms before becoming a freelancer, executing drawings for opera and theatre sets. From there he segued into film.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER (Italy), MAURIZIO SABATINI was born in Rome. While studying architecture, he began his professional career as an assistant at a prominent architectural company where he gained experience designing large construction projects. In 1982 he became an art director on his first film, *Anno Domini*. He 1984, he met Production Designer Damilo Donati, for whom he worked for 20 years as Art Director on some of Italy's most important movies.

His extensive credit list includes: *Pinocchio*, directed by Roberto Benigni, *Jerusalem, Nana, La vita e bella, Marianna Ucria, I magi randagi, Occhiopinocchio, Quando mirgrano I germani, Il placido don, Una famiglia in giallo, Donna d'onore, La voce della luna, Francesco, Stradivari, L'intervista*, and *Momo*. Sabatini most recently worked as the Production Designer on *Tosca e altre due*, directed by Giorgio Ferrara.

COSTUME DESIGNER (Canada) DELPHINE WHITE most recently completed the feature films *Buttproof Monk*, starring Chow Yun Fat, Sean William Scott and Jamie King; *Brian's Song*, with Mehkai Pheiffer and Ben Gazzaro; and *Bait*, starring Jamie Fox. Among her other motion picture credits are David Cronenberg's *Fast Company, The Brood, Videodrome* and *Scanners*, which earned her a Genie nomination for Best Costume Design. She earned a second Genie nomination for her work on *Brain Candy*, starring The Kids in the Hall.

White was nominated for an Emmy Award for the television special *My Mother Never Was a Kid*. Selected television credits include *A Sainly Switch, My Date with the President's Daughter, Blackmailers Don't Shoot, Bionic Showdown: The Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman, Norman Jewison's Painted Word, Philip Marlowe Private Eye, Lives of Girls and Women, World's Oldest Living Bridesmaid* and *Spider and the Fly*.

Born in Windsor, Ontario, White graduated from University of Windsor with a B.A. in Political Science and continued her studies at the University

of Sussex in Brighton, England. After her return to Canada, realizing her true love lay in theatre and film, she switched career paths to work in the entertainment industry. In 2001, White traveled to China where she studied textiles and dye techniques of the Bai People in the Yunnan Province.

SCREENWRITER MALCOLM MACRURY was born in Montreal and raised in Toronto. He has had over 40 scripts produced for film and television. His first feature-length screenplay was *Man Without a Face*, directed by and starring Mel Gibson. Among the novels he has adapted for the screen are Mary McGarry Morris' "Songs in Ordinary Time" and Howard Norman's "The Bird Artist. He is currently writing a UK/Canada feature film based on Alistair MacLeod's novel, "No Great Mischief", as well as creating an original TV series for HBO entitled, *Lawyers, Guns and Money*. His mini-series, *Hemingway vs. Callaghan*, was telecast on CBC television in the spring of 2003..

AUTHOR NINO RICCI was born in 1959 in Leamington, the tomato-belt of Ontario. His first novel, "Lives of the Saints" (1990), the first volume in the trilogy, was published to critical acclaim in Canada and around the world, including the U.S., the U.K., France, China, Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Poland and Italy. In Canada, it won the Governor General's Award for Fiction as well as the F.G. Bressani Prize and the W.H. Smith Books in Canada First Novel Award, and was the best-selling work of fiction that year in Canada. In the U.K., the book won the Betty Trask Award, The Winifred Holtby Prize and in the U.S., it was shortlisted for The Los Angeles Times Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction.

The

second volume of the trilogy, “In a Glass House,” published in 1993, was hailed by The New York Times as a “haunting, lyrical and intelligent coming of age novel” that is “a genuine achievement”, and the third volume, “Where She Has Gone” was published in 1996 and shortlisted for the Giller Prize. Ricci’s new novel, “Testament,” nominated for a Trillium Award (Canada), is a controversial and critically acclaimed retelling of the life of Christ. Ricci lives in Toronto, with his wife, also a writer and their three children.