

WHY LA DOLCE VITA?

Raisat Cinema could not possibly miss this unique and never-to-return occasion: the 50th anniversary of *La dolce vita*, Cannes Palme d'Or in 1960.

Fellini is to the cinema what *La dolce vita* is to the modern world, even today, 50 years after it was made (Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1960). *La dolce vita* marked the transition, in real time, from society news to history, brought about by the emerging society of show business. It was made in the form of “glossy magazine on film”, seeking to recount, in artistic form, the chaos of the modern world, by accumulating episodes, impressions and situations in organised disorder. It might seem paradoxical, but if an instant movie has ever existed at all, it must be *La dolce vita*.

Always a careful observer of the Italian cinema and the movies that have become the form and the source of inspiration for the great directors - and in this regard, Fellini is the epitome - Raisat Cinema has devoted a number of film festivals to Rimini's master director and a vast amount of programmes dedicated to Fellini's life and work.

It was therefore natural that when Tullio Kezich suggested that we should produce “*Noi che abbiamo fatto La dolce vita*” we jumped at the idea with conviction and passion. Kezich wrote the film, which was directed by Gianfranco Mingozzi and produced in cooperation with the “Federico Fellini Foundation”, featuring some of the people who were personally involved in what Kezich has defined as “a particularly lengthy, eventful and inventive production”.

In 1983 Federico Fellini wrote that “the greatest temptation is to say that the future is already past.” We agree with the Master, but for us the future can only be intercepted, never reached: it is all tension and planning, and always only the beginning of an adventure.

Raisat Cinema

KEZICH and FELLINI

I am not writing about Tullio Kezich because he was a particular friend of mine. I only caught a glimpse of him at the occasional first night, or at the odd private screening. Nor because I would later become a colleague of his, writing reviews for the same daily newspaper - he for films and I for the theatre. And neither is it due to any special relationship with Raiset Cinema or the Locarno Festival, even though that is the only Film Festival I have been to with some regularity across the years. No. I am writing out of admiration for him.

An admiration that dates back a long way, when I made my début in journalism. In 1968 I began working as the theatre critic for "Paese Sera". At that time, the film critic for that no-nonsense newspaper was Callisto Cosulich, a man bursting with energy and eloquence, who did not think twice before speaking to the youngster that I was then. He was always ready to tell me and all of us in the showbusiness world about the episodes of his glorious youth in Trieste (such as the cineclub he set up on the ship). He also told me about his colleague and friend, Tullio, a man with a surname that ended like his own, a trifling detail, but something that eventually became a source of fascination to us. Cosulich-Kezich: these were the real film critics at that time, an inseparable and fantastic double act, already legends in their life-time (and still only around forty years of age).

I naturally began reading Kezich's pieces and, like everyone else, I discovered his real inventiveness, an inventiveness that would revolutionise the film critic's profession. Out went the lengthy, detailed critiques and reviews, and gone were the highfaluting cultural articles. In came the four-page critique, 120 lines, and 8,000 characters. With films that was possible. Overnight, Kezich shortened everything. He had started to write short pieces, not the sketchy review-ettes they write today, which are a degeneration, a pathology, but short, concise, and pithy pieces: it was possible to say everything in a small space. As far as I remember no-one ever objected to them in the course of our conversations in the office or anywhere else. Instinctively, unconsciously, we all understood that that was the right thing to do.

Why? Not because cinema is a less noble art than the others. But it is bound up, more than the others, with contingent events. The fact that we still watch movies made half a century ago with the same pleasure that they gave us then in no way belies what I am saying. The cinema is bound up with contingent events in the sense that it seizes reality on-the-fly, off the street - that street that will no longer be there tomorrow, and also because within a few days it will be showing in your local cinema - and, if you, the filmgoer, fail to act at once, quickly, immediately, you will have missed that film, perhaps never to see it again. But there is also a third and final reason: so many films used to be made, and the critics had to review all of them, sometimes sharing their work with someone else. It seemed a gigantic enterprise. Brevity was obviously the solution to the problem.

It was not until many years later that I discovered what it was that gave me a kinship with Kezich. And that day has remained indelibly stamped on my memory ever since. It was in 1960. At three o'clock in the afternoon I was queueing up in front of the Fiamma cinema. I was quivering with excitement to see "*La Dolce Vita*". I still have no idea why I, a 17-year-old, was standing there, all worked-up and full of expectation. It's almost beyond belief. I saw the film twice. That night, I swear, I couldn't close my eyes. Fellini's images tormented me, excited me, accompanying my long sleepless night, my insomnia.

That superb book, "*Noi che abbiamo fatto La dolce vita*", is now standing on my bookshelf with other no less prestigious works such as Lilian Ross's book on John Huston's "*The Red Badge of Courage*", or Gregor von Rezzori's on Louis Malle's "*Viva Maria!*" - not works of criticism, but diaries, log books, eyewitness accounts, moving stories. And in this superb work, Kezich put a question to Fellini, and Fellini's reply explained everything to me: Kezich asked him, "What would you most like to hear said about this film, and what would you least like to hear?" To which Fellini replied, "I would not like to hear people saying that I have tried to amaze, or to moralise, or that I am being too autobiographical, or was trying to discover new trails. I would not like to hear people saying that the film is pessimistic, despairing, satirical, grotesque. Or too long. For me, *La Dolce Vita* is a film which should leave people feeling happy, with a powerful urge to plan new things. A film that instils courage, in the sense that it helps to show reality in a new light, not allowing themselves to be deceived by myths, superstitions, ignorance, cheap culture or sentimentalism. I would like people to say that it is a sincere film".

And on the subject of sincerity, how can one fail to mention Kezich's other great undying passion? For him, the Fellini is cinema. The theatre is Svevo. Did Svevo write few plays? Are his plays never staged? The truth is that in the space of forty years Kezich has been careful never to neglect his other great Master: long-standing loyalty. From every point of view, his most important text (or rather his most outstanding enterprise) is his play based on "Zeno's Conscience". In that case, he had a double loyalty, including a respectful interpretation while remaining at all times close to the original, never looking the other way. With the theatre, even though each one of us remains in our respective places (I am not sure which), Kezich and I have come closer together.

At this very moment I am looking at a beautiful postcard which he sent to me in April this year. It is on "Beyond the Rocks" with the photograph of Gloria Swanson. And on the back is his kind invitation to view the DVD of a play staged by "La Contrada" of Trieste, a quasi-monologue (all true, yet all imagination) by the mother of Livia Veneziani, Svevo's wife.

Well, I think that this humorous, slightly teasing and indulgent (towards the excesses of her son-in-law) voice is the real, secret voice of Kezich himself. Through it, he looks at himself at arm's-length, for the sake of elegance, and sobriety. But the further he steps away from himself, the closer he approaches, once again, the voice of Svevo, his other love on which he has never reneged.

Franco Cordelli

NOI CHE ABBIAMO FATTO LA DOLCE VITA

How can I describe Fellini as he was at just turned thirty-eight? I have told the story so often that I cannot find the right image: a diviner approaching water? a dog that has just sniffed out some truffles? a sprinter poised to dash? Just looking at him gave you the urge to jump on the ship about to set sail, under the command of a foolishly fearless captain.

We spent a couple of typical days, of the many that we were later to enjoy (or perhaps I should say squander?) together in a similar fashion. He was on the track of his film, but not just one path: there were ten, fifty, a hundred of them. And Federico was always ready to change direction, to turn back, and to hide away, while the rest of us felt like kids skipping school. Those who took part in *La Dolce Vita* will tell you that the atmosphere was one of doing sweet nothing, of gay abandon. And yet we worked on, if that is the right word, until we saw dawn breaking...

People knew little about how Fellini worked with his scriptwriters: Tullio Pinelli, Ennio Flaiano and Brunello Rondi. He would see them separately, and was anxious to avoid hurting their sensitivities. Particularly with Flaiano, who was by no means an easy man to get on with, he had a kind of conjugal relationship, tormented by moodiness and spite. Pinelli was, I think, the most diligent, the one who wrote the most, and while Brunelli scared Fellini with his learning, he was used as his "ghost writer" for interviews and articles in cultural journals.

Then there was the circle of his secret advisers, including Pier Paolo Pasolini who had been his guide during the filming of *Nights of Cabiria*. Nearly every night Federico took one or other of his chosen advisers in his car (in those days he enjoyed driving) to race along the mysterious Cassian Way or the seafront promenade at Ostia, which so closely resembled his own Rimini. And all the time they talked about the picture, so that even when discussing something else, in no time at all they always came back to the film. It was not just to check the script, but also to "take the pulse" of the work in progress. The Poet wanted to hear many opinions about all the possible alternatives before taking the final decision himself: and this gave rise to a kind of competition between the members of his 'inner circle', about which suggestions he would take up, and which he would not.

It was odd how all of us felt that we were the actors in the movie. But (and this is something I discovered later) this applied not only those of us involved in what we might call the culture brigade, but also the camera operators, electricians and extras. And for years afterwards, whenever our paths crossed, from Mastroianni to the least important manual worker on the set, we would always (and still do - those of us that have survived, that is) greet each other with a particular affection. Were we or were we not in Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*?

From March to September 1959 we just gave ourselves over to seizing all the opportunities and stimuli, and to enjoyment and "the sweet life",

structured into chapters, like so many films rolled into one, as the cinematographic giant fed on itself and grew, doubled, and expanded until it finally reached a running time of three hours. And yet there were a number of episodes that we had had to cut out: the picnic on the sea at Ischia, particularly dear to Angelo Rizzoli who eventually became the producer after a dozen others had turned the chance down; and then the mature Dolores, the lover of the reporter, Marcello, the part which Louise Rayner (of *The Good Earth* fame) had been preparing for to mark her return to the silver screen. We can only imagine how badly she took it when Fellini told her that he no longer needed her.

There was certainly no shortage of women in the film: the splendid Anita Ekberg, who entered history by plunging fully-clothed into the Fountain of Trevi; the fragile and wilful Anouk Aimée, the curvaceous Yvonne Furneaux, the sprightly little dancer Magali Noël... all of them flocking around Mastroianni all the time, who thoroughly enjoyed being the cock of the roost.

And he performed superbly, floating on the events of the film and of life, allowing himself to be borne along by the currents.

Minute by minute, decisions were taken on the spur of the moment, and humorous inventions were introduced which created the myth. Fellini would speed past the production convoy at dawn, and block the road and order "Turn back, I've changed my mind!"

Fellini would fall in love with some face or other on the set and invent a whole situation to serve that face. Fellini summoned Enrico Maria Salerno and Alain Cuny and asked the two actors to play out, separately, the whole part of Steiner, the intellectual who committed suicide, so that he could choose one of them in his own time.

"I wish this film would never end!" we all thought, and from time to time someone actually said so. And as summer began to wane, and with landing of the monster fish on the beach at Passo Oscuro, the shooting came to an end, and then began the other hard work of editing, dubbing and printing. Nino Rota tiptoed in, with his musical marvels, including the theme taken from *Mack the Knife*, which turned into a national anthem.

And then - and this had to come about eventually - the film was ready, and became the property of everyone. It hit the world like a bombshell in February 1960, and the next day people realised that Italy would never be the same again. *La Dolce Vita* had certainly not changed it, but it had vividly heralded in that change: the signal of a decade of change that was to follow at break-neck speed.

On disembarking from the great Fellinian ship our heads were still spinning. And, looking back nostalgically to those bright and enlightening nights we braced ourselves to bore our grandchildren by telling them, "I was there..."

(from Tullio Kezich, *Noi che abbiamo fatto La dolce vita*, Sellerio Editore Palermo)

SYNOPSIS

It is the 50th anniversary of one of the most famous films of all times and the celebrations, to be inaugurated with a conference organised by the Fellini Foundation in Rimini in mid-November, will keep in step with the significant dates.

16 March 1959, filming began; September, filming ended, followed by the editing, printing and the first screenings of the director's cut at Cinecittà; February 1960, the première at the "Fiamma" in Rome and the "Capitol" in Milan, triggering scandal, enormous controversy in the newspapers and even Parliamentary questions.

May 1960: Palme d'Or at Cannes, awarded by the jury chaired by Georges Simenon.

This 50' production starts with the famous words of Mastroianni: "Having been part of *La dolce vita* was like having done military service together".

It is directed by Gianfranco Mingozzi to a screenplay put together with Tullio Kezich: Mingozzi had been Fellini's assistant director, and in that capacity he clapped the first clapperboard at Cinecittà; Kezich followed progress of the production to write the daily diary which will appear once again in the bookshops shortly published by Sellerio. Vittorio Boarini, director of the Fellini Foundation, is the production consultant. One very interesting aspect is the use of the original "La dolce vita" print which Mingozzi has kept all these years, with notes and sketches by various people, including Fellini himself. Following the reminiscences of Mingozzi, as a member of the original troupe, and of Kezich, as a frequent visitor to the sets, interviews will be conducted with the other "dolcevitaists" who are still alive today, with specific excerpts of scenes and photographs from the movie. But only the leading and supporting actors and personalities involved - and no historians or critics or opinion-formers, who would have given the program different slant.

The people invited to take part (and here we are just making a few random suggestions and if some are not available we will certainly be able to find others) are divided into various groups.

1) artistic co-workers: Tullio Pinelli (screenwriter, who has just happily celebrated his 100th birthday); Lucia Mirisola (assistant wardrobe mistress of the art director Piero Gherardi, Oscar for the costumes for the film); Paolo Nuzzi (assistant director); Arturo Zavattini (cameraman, brother-in-law of the cameraman Otello Martelli); Lili Veenrnan (Italianised Dutch citizen, volunteer assistant). We are also thinking of going to London to interview the over 90-year-old charismatic Louise Rayner (if she is available and willing), the only diva who won two Oscars in a row, and was sought after and signed up for the movie, but was eventually not used by Fellini); and then to Los Angeles to interview Dino De Laurentiis, the would-be producer (and there were so many reasons, that he himself will explain, for not going ahead with it) who was replaced by Angelo Rizzoli.

2) the actors: Anita Ekberg; Anouk Aimée (from Paris); Yvonne Fourneaux (from the United States); Magali Noel (from Paris); Adriano Celentano (who danced at Caracalla); Giulio Paradisi and Enzo Doria (the two remaining *paparazzi*, the first now a film director, and the second a producer), John Francis Lane (a British journalist playing himself at Anita's press conference), the film director Giulio Questi (playing the part of an aristocrat in the scene at Bassano di Sutri), Jacques Sernas, Umberto Orsini and Riccardo Garrone (partygoers in the orgies scene); Valeria Ciangottini (the little girl at the end at Passo Oscuro).

The whole point about making "*Noi che abbiamo fatto La dolce vita*" is to reconstruct as faithfully as possible the special atmosphere which, according to everyone who took part in it, dominated what was a particularly long, painstaking, eventful and inventive production, with a 40-year-old Fellini at the peak of his energetic exuberance and expressive genius.

3) Gianfranco Mingozzi volunteered to work as assistant director, and was engaged in 1959 by Federico Fellini to operate the first clapperboard for “La dolce vita”; he uses the same technique to introduce this video he has directed, based on an original idea by Tullio Kezich, /Noi che abbiamo fatto La dolce vita / (‘Those of us who made La Dolce Vita’). This RaiSat and the Rimini-based Fellini Foundation production tells the story of twenty veterans who worked on that historic production. Magali Noel and Yvonne Furneaux are interviewed, and several recorded interviews are taken from the archives.

Two celebrities who missed the chance of being involved in the film are also interviewed: Dino De Laurentiis in Hollywood, and the distinguished actress, Luise Rainer (now 99) in London, in a unique document. Half a century later they still regret their reluctance to take part in the film, while the others express their realisation of having played a part in a never-to-be-forgotten event.

CREDITS

Title: NOI CHE ABBIAMO FATTO LA DOLCE VITA
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Editor: Mascia Calamandrei
A project by: "Fondazione Federico Fellini"
Consultant: Vittorio Boarini
RaiSat Executive Producer: Barbara Cuzzo
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Executive production: Media Land S.r.l., Rome

A RaiSat - Fondazione Federico Fellini Production

Camera DV_CAM
Master Beta DV_ DVD Pal
Running time 85'
Excerpts 15' from "La dolce vita" by F. Fellini
Excerpts 5/7' from Teche Rai

Media Land Srl
Vicolo di S.Agata 15/100153 - Roma

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR

“Dear Federico, I do not want to list everything that I have learned from you (and I'm not saying this to cheer up an adieu which, believe me, is painful, especially to me) but at least please allow me to say this: you were a Master, a great Master, in spite of yourself. ‘What do you mean, by in spite of myself?’ I seem to you say.

Can you teach FANTASY or IMAGINATION? Certainly not, but one can certainly learn that (your) imagination can be applied to an implacable method for the benefit of a story or a character. Can LIGHTNESS OF TOUCH AND THE DESIRE TO WORK be taught? On a set in apparent chaos I saw you moving around at all times but never losing your concentration, your humanity, your sense of humour, like an inspired choreographer touching and urging on sceptical technicians and turning them into wonderful dancers in a show within the show. Can BREATHING LIFE into callow actors, with faces of marble, be taught? You have the skill to transform inert bodies, not trying to adapt them to some pre-existing script but - and this is where your unique brilliance lies - adapting yourself to their limitations, so that they can then become part of a new project (as if it were a game) that you recreate on the spot, inventing it. You taught me - and this is the truth - PATIENCE: to find the right people, faces and backgrounds, never being content with the easiest and most obvious solutions. You taught me THE ABILITY TO BE STEADFAST, hour after hour, withstanding the adversities caused by a difficult and extenuating shooting sessions. You taught me STUBBORNNESS, in doggedly following through an idea, an insight, a glimpse of a vast and rich world (your own) into which, alas, it was impossible or difficult to penetrate. But above all, by giving me your trust and your affection, you gave me the STRENGTH TO BELIEVE in myself.

Others, I say to you with LEVITY - which I have also learned from you - thank you.

G.”

And thanks to all of you who have had the patience to listen to me.

Gianfranco Mingozzi

BIOGRAPHY and FILMOGRAPHY of Gianfranco Mingozzi

Gianfranco Mingozzi was born in Bologna, from where he graduated in Law. He attended the Film Director's course at the C.S.C. (Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia) in Rome, and was Federico Fellini's assistant director (La Dolce Vita/ Boccaccio 70).

In 1964, in Canada, he spent a long period working at the National Film Board of Canada (N.F.B.).

Screenplay writer and film director, documentary-maker and investigative TV programme maker.

He made his debut with the documentary LA TARANTA (First Prize at the Festival dei Popoli - Florence 1962)

OTHER DOCUMENTARIES

Note su una minoranza (16mm - 58'- 1964) - Premio Este `64

Li mali mestieri (35mm - 10'- 1964) - Cannes Film Festival `64

Con il cuore fermo Sicilia (35mm - 30'- 1965) - Leone d'Oro, Venice Film Festival `65 - Nastro d'argento `65 - nominated for an Oscar `65

Antonioni, storia di un autore (16mm - 55'- 1966) - Premio Bergamo `66 Maria Denis, la fidanzata d'Italia (video-85'-2004) Festival dei Popoli - Florence

Nino Vingelli, io sono il comico (video- 46'- 2005) "Il cinema ritrovato" Film Festival

Vento Antico (Video 20') 2007, Corecom Lazio Film Festival: "Lazio, terre, gente e miti"

Giorgio/Giorgia, a story about transsexualism through the life of a diva (54' 2008)

FILMS

Trio (35mm - 1967) with Marisa Galvan, Walter Velza, Mariella Zanetti, Semaine de la critique (Cannes `67) - Premio CICA at the Pesaro Film Festival `67

Sequestro di persona (35mm - 1968) with Franco Nero, Charlotte Rampling , Karlovj Varj Festival `68 - Noce d'oro Italian Critics' Prize `68

Morire a Roma (La vita in gioco) (35mm - 1973) with Mimsy Farmer, Giulio Brogi, William Berger - Quinzaine des réalisateurs (Cannes Film Festival `73)

Flavia, la monaca musulmana (35mm -1974) with Florinda Bolkan, Claudio Cassinelli, Anthony Corlan. . Mention for the colour photography at the Barcelona Film Festival `74

Gli ultimi tre giorni (35mm - 1977) with Lina Sastri, Claudio Cassinelli, Franco Lotterio, Locarno, Taormina, Chicago, Melbourne, San Francisco Film Festivals `77

La vela incantata (35mm - 1982) with Massimo Ranieri, Lina Sastri, Paolo Ricci Monica Guerriore, William Berger
Valencia Film Festival, Prize for the Best Director `82 - First Prize at the Prades Incontri Internazionali `83 - Cannes Quinzaine des réalisateurs `82 - Avignon, Vienna, Seville, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Moscow Film Festivals

L'iniziazione (35mm - 1986) from the novel by Guillaume Apollinaire, with Fabrice Josso, Claudine Auger, Marina Vlady, Serena Grandi

Le lunghe ombre (35mm 1987) with Lina Sastri, Leonardo Ferrantini, Antonio Degli Schiavi
Premio Italia - Valencia Film Festival '87 - San Francisco Film Festival `87

Il frullo del passero (35mm -1988) with Philippe Noiret, Ornella Muti, Nicola Farron
Istanbul, Madras, and Cairo Film Festivals '89

L'appassionata (35mm - 1989) with Piera Degli Esposti, Nicola Farron
Gran Premio at the Villerupt Film Festival `89 - Prize for the best leading actress at the Valencia Film Festival `89

Tobia al caffè (35mm -2000) with Roberto Citran, Nicola Russo, Candice Hugo
Taormina, Cairo, Tashkent, Sana'a, Beijing Film Festivals

TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

Pantere nere (16mm - 1970) - on the American Black Panthers

C'è musica e musica (16mm - 1970-72) - 12 one-hour episodes in cooperation with the composer Luciano Berio

Sud e magia: in memory of Ernesto De Martino (16mm - 1980) - 4 one-hour episodes

Il treno per Istanbul (35mm - 1980) from the novel by Graham Greene with Mimsy Farmer, William Berger, Alfredo Pea, Lea Padovani, Mirella D'Angelo - television film in four episodes

L'ultima diva: Francesca Bertini (16mm-1982) portrait of the actress in 3 one-hour episodes

Sulla terra del rimorso (16mm-1983) one-hour film on the birth and death of Tarantismo
Special Mention - Festival dei Popoli, Florence 1982

Storie di cinema e di emigranti (16mm - 1985) - Italy's presence in the American cinema in 7 one-hour episodes

La terra dell'uomo (16mm-1988) - tre puntate di un'ora sulla Sicilia di Danilo Dolci's Sicily in 3 one-hour instalments

La vita che ti diedi (Video - 1991) from the play by L. Pirandello, with Piera Degli Esposti

Vento di mare (35mm - 1993) - television film in two 100-minute episodes with Gianni Garofalo, Ilaria Borrelli, Jean Hebert, Giulia Fossà, Daniel Ciotti Sommer

Stabat mater (Video - 1996) from the play by A. Tarantino, with Piera Degli Esposti

Cuore mio (Video -1998), from the show by, and starring, Lina Sastri

Maria Denis, la fidanzata d'Italia (Video - 84' - 2004) on the diva of the 30s and 40s

Io sono il comico: Nino Vingelli (Video - 45' - 2005) on the famous Neapolitan actor

“Fondazione Federico Fellini”

The Federico Fellini Foundation - Fondazione Federico Fellini - is a not-for-profit Cultural Association. It was established in 1995 by Fellini's sister, Maddalena Fellini, and the Municipality of Rimini. The President is Pupi Avati, and Tullio Kezich is the Honorary President. The core elements in the Foundation's programme are promoting initiatives to celebrate Fellini's work and to establish an international centre of Fellinian studies to preserve and hand on the historical memory of the Master