



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
COMPETITION  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

# HAPPY AS LAZZARO

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**ALICE ROHRWACHER**





# SYNOPSIS

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This is the tale of a meeting between Lazzaro, a young peasant so good that he is often mistaken for simple-minded, and Tancredi, a young nobleman cursed by his imagination. Life in their isolated pastoral village Inviolata is dominated by the terrible Marchesa Alfonsina de Luna, the queen of cigarettes. A loyal bond is sealed when Tancredi asks Lazzaro to help him orchestrate his own kidnapping. This strange and improbable alliance is a revelation for Lazzaro. A friendship so precious that it will travel in time and transport Lazzaro in search of Tancredi. His first time in the big city, Lazzaro is like a fragment of the past lost in the modern world.

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## LUCA CHIKOVANI

AS TANCREDI

Born in Georgia in 1994, Luca Chikovani is a young actor and singer-songwriter raised by the internet. Four years ago, after moving to Rome together with his mother, he started uploading YouTube cover videos of hit songs by the most popular artists among teenagers, especially Justin Bieber (“Love yourself”, written by Ed Sheeran) and One Direction (“Drag me down”), reaching a total of over 5 million views. In 2016, after signing his first record deal with Universal Music, he officially debuted with his album “Start” which was preceded by the single “New Generation Kids”. In the same year Luca hit the road as supporting act on Michele Bravi’s Tour, and he opened many other concerts by international artists as well. He has just finished shooting his very first film *Lazzaro Felice*, directed by Alice Rohrwacher, set to be released in 2018.

## ADRIANO TARDIOLO

AS LAZZARO

Alice Rohrwacher’s *Lazzaro Felice* (*Happy as Lazzaro*) is Adriano Tardiolo’s acting debut. Born in Orvieto, Italy, in 1998, he was scouted in a public high school in Orvieto, closing a search that involved more than a thousand other boys of the same age. Adriano had never done any acting before, but he was convinced to accept the role after getting to know Alice Rohrwacher. He read the script and loved it, and he was curious to try a new experience. Adriano is currently studying Economics at Viterbo University. He will finish his studies before considering acting again.







# COMMENTS

FROM ALICE ROHRWACHER

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*Lazzaro Felice is the story of a lesser sanctity, with no miracles, no powers or superpowers, without special effects. It is the sanctity of living in this world without thinking ill of anyone and simply believing in human beings. Because another way was possible, the way of goodness, which men have always ignored but which always reappears to question them. Like something that might have been but that we've never ever wanted.*



# GOOD GUYS, SAINTS, LOSERS AND LAZZAROS

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Travelling through my country and my time I've often met "happy Lazzaros", people I would describe as good but who, more times than not, don't devote themselves to doing good because they don't know what doing good is. They are, and what they are makes them stay in the background because, wherever they can, they abdicate themselves to leave room for others – so as not to disturb. They can't emerge or, rather, they don't even know it's possible to "emerge". They are the ones who finish off the heavy, unpleasant jobs left over by humanity, putting right the things others absent-mindedly ride roughshod over, though no one notices them doing it. Books and films speak a lot about the destiny of heroes who rebel and fight injustice, who transform and assert themselves – they want to change the world! But our Lazzaro can't change the world and his sanctity can't be recognised. As we imagine them, saints should have strength and charisma and have to impose themselves. But I don't believe sanctity is charisma. I believe instead that if a saint



were to appear today with his unsustainable call for another way of existing, if he were to appear in our modern lives, perhaps we wouldn't even recognise him or perhaps we would rid ourselves of him without a second thought. We're speaking here of a religion of humanity, not of a well-administered official religion with its dazzling robes and weekly rules.



# MOVING FROM MIDDLE AGES TO MIDDLE AGES

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I wanted to use the adventures of Lazzaro to tell – as gently as possible, with love and humour – the tragedy that has devastated my country, namely the passage from a material Middle Ages to a human Middle Ages: the end of rural civilisation, the migration to city boundaries of thousands of people who knew nothing of modernity, their giving up of little to have even less. A world of grubby exploitations that comes to an end and turns into one of newer, glossier, more attractive exploitations.

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# TRAVELLING IN TIME AND ALWAYS STAYING IN THE SAME PLACE

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Without knowing it, Lazzaro travels in time and, with friendly eyes wide-open, questions images of the present as an enigma. Why travel in time? Folding the pages of history and seeing eras so contradictory yet so similar – it was always a desire of mine when I was at school to shake the book and shuffle the cards. And cinema somehow makes this possible.







# THE BIG SWINDLE

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To construct the story I started from a real-life event I'd been struck by: an episode in which a Marchesa in Central Italy exploited the seclusion of some of her lands to keep her peasants in the dark about the end of sharecropping. When, in 1982, the sharecropping agreements still in force were converted into leases or paid labour, this Marchesa pretended nothing had happened. Thus, for some years, her peasants continued to live in semi-servile conditions, even as the abolition of sharecropping was transforming centuries, maybe millennia, of exploitation into contracts on equal terms

regulated by the laws of the state, an epoch-making transition that was changing centuries of subjection into a deliberate, negotiable choice.

I've always been deeply moved by the story of these peasants who turned up late at this appointment with history, who were cut off from transformation and could only pick up the remnants of such a resounding transition.

It was a newspaper cutting that might have been forgotten about the next day. But they conserved it jealously, hanging it on a wall to turn yellow, the only record of a world that had fallen apart and left them lagging behind: THE BIG SWINDLE!

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# A VERY REAL FABLE

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Even more than in my previous films, in Lazzaro Felice we've decided to experiment with the genre of the fable, with all its inconsistencies, its mysteries, its recurrences and its heroes and villains. The fable and its symbolism, seen not as ethereal abstraction or a promise of nebulous superhuman adventures, but as a hook between reality and another layer of being: it is from life that symbols are born, so deeply and in such detail that they become the life of all, the life of a country, Italy, as it undergoes transformation. The story is always the same: a story of rebirth, of the phoenix, and of innocence, which, despite everything and everyone, comes back to haunt us, to torment us. The characters are thus fantastic but real just as the locations are fantastic but real, in the crudest meaning of the term.





# THE SHOOT

We shot the film in the summer and winter of 2017, the first part between Vetriolo and Bagnoregio, near Viterbo, and Castel Giorgio, in the province of Terni, the second part in Milan, Turin and Civitavecchia. How can places that are so far apart belong to the same geography? We usually divide Italy into North and South and set conflicts on a vertical axis, but I believe that the big differences are no longer to be found on that axis, between North and South, but between interior and exterior, between a mountainous nucleus and the towns and cities and coastline. Migrations and movements of people involve a passage from an isolated reality to an open one. They are no longer vertical but go in all directions – obliquely, crookedly, horizontally – to draw an ever broader, complex landscape.

As in previous films we shot on super16 film, not digitally. The choice wasn't made for reasons of style or nostalgia but out of enchantment with a fantastic technology that influences one's method of working. While we're shooting, we're all highly concentrated and take a great deal of care in our work. Nothing is ever snatched at and everything is carefully prepared and rehearsed, even though it may appear to be done on the spur of the moment. Despite all the trying and testing, however, the medium conserves all its mystery and impact: there is no total control over the images and the result is always an amazing combination of the liveliness of the exposed film when the camera's running and our filming. There's also a slowness, an expectation for the day's rushes, a secrecy in what one's doing that, in my opinion, conserves the power of the images and preserves the film better. In a period in which we're asphyxiated by replicated and replicable images, cinema can still distil, nurse and play with the eye – surprising and being surprised.







# ALICE ROHRWACHER

WRITER-DIRECTOR

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**Alice Rohrwacher** directed *Le Meraviglie* (*The Wonders*), winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival.

Born in 1981 in Fiesole, she studied in Turin and Lisbon. She has worked in music and documentary projects. She has also worked as an editor and composer for theatre. Her first feature *Corpo Celeste* made its world premiere in the Directors' Fortnight (Cannes 2011).

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**2018** *Lazzaro Felice*  
(*Happy as Lazzaro*)

**2014** *Le Meraviglie*  
(*The Wonders*)

**2011** *Corpo Celeste*



# MAIN CAST

**Adriano Tardiolo**  
Lazzaro

**Agnese Graziani**  
Antonia

**Alba Rohrwacher**  
Antonia (grown-up)

**Luca Chikovani**  
Tancredi

**Tommaso Ragno**  
Tancredi (grown-up)

**Sergi Lopez**  
Ultimo

**Natalino Balasso**  
Nicola

**Gala Othero Winter**  
Stefania (grown-up)

**David Bennent**  
Engineer

**and with Nicoletta Braschi**  
as the  
Marchesa Alfonsina de Luna



with: **Pasqualina Scuncia** (the nun), **Carlo "Carletto" Tarmati** (Carletto), **Pippo** (child) **Edoardo Montalto**, **Pippo** (grown-up) **Carlo Massimino**, **Stefania** (child) **Maddalena Baiocco**, **Teresa** (young) **Giulia Caccavello**, **Teresa** (grown-up) **Elisabetta Rocchetti**, **Natalina Iris Pulvano**, **Natalina** (old) **Annunziata Capretto**, **Catirre Luciano Vergaro**, **Catirre** (old) **Annibale De Luca**, **Ardito Giuseppe Corsini**, **Ardito** (old) **Marcello Duranti**, **Maresciallo Carabinieri Alessandro Genovesi**, **Don Severino Marco Donno**, **Giuseppe Nicola Sorci**, **Mariagrazia Sofia Stangherlin**, **Mariù** (young) **Silvia Lucarini**, **Mariù** (grown-up) **Cinzia De Luca**, **Grandmother Agostina Lucia Centoscudi**, **Assuntina Anita Crucitti**, **cheated woman Daria Deflorian**, **Nicola** (old) **Antonio Salines**



# MAIN CREW

**Lazzaro Felice (Happy as Lazzaro)**

2018, Italy, 125 min, Super 16mm,  
Sound 5.1, 1,63:1, in Italian

**Director and Scriptwriter:** Alice Rohrwacher

**Cinematographer:** Hélène Louvart

**Editor:** Nelly Quettier

**Sound:** Christophe Giovannoni

**Sound Editing:** Marta Billingsley

**Set Designer:** Erita Frigato

**Costume Designer:** Loredana Buscemi

**Line Producer:** Giorgio Gasparini

**Assistant Director:** Nicola Scorza

**Casting:** Chiara Polizzi

**Acting Coach:** Tatiana Lepore

**Music Consultant:** Piero Crucitti

a **tempesta** / Carlo Cresto-Dina production with Rai Cinema

in coproduction with Amka Films Productions, Ad Vitam

Production, KNM, Pola Pandora

in coproduction with RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera,

ARTE France Cinéma, ZDF/ARTE

with the participation of ARTE

with the support of Eurimages, Ufficio Federale della Cultura (DFI), Svizzera and Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg with the participation of Aide aux Cinémas du Monde, Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image Animée - Institut Français, Regione Lazio Avviso pubblico Attrazione produzioni cinematografiche (POR FESR LAZIO 2014-2020) Progetto cofinanziato dall'Unione Europea supported by Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo – Direzione Generale Cinema

produced by Carlo Cresto-Dina

coproduced by Tiziana Soudani, Alexandra Henochsberg,

Grégory Gajos, Arthur Hallereau, Pierre-François Piet,

Michel Merkt, Michael Weber, Viola Fügen

tempesta

Rai Cinema

AMKA  
FILM PRODUCTIONS

AD VITAM

KNM

POLA  
PANDORA

RSI  
Radiotelevisione  
svizzera

arte

ZDF

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THE MATCH FACTORY



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## tempesta

In 2009 Carlo Cresto-Dina started his own company tempesta, after many years spent within important companies in Italy and the UK, producing films of authors like Ken Loach, Abbas Kiarostami, Emir Kusturica, Ermanno Olmi and Fernando Trueba. Le Meraviglie (The Wonders), feature film directed by Alice Rohrwacher and produced by tempesta, won, amongst others awards, the Gran Prix in Cannes 2014.

Along with new titles for cinema, tempesta has different TV series projects in development. The UK branch of the company is now producing Wildfire, Cathy Brady's first feature film.

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## Ecomuvi

Lazzaro Felice (Happy as Lazzaro) was produced using "EcoMuvi", the protocol of environmental sustainability for the film industry created by tempesta. "EcoMuvi", first in Europe, is a real "production process" that can indicate the best solutions to achieve energy savings and environmental sustainability in film production. Not just compensation but an active step-by-step procedure to make films with lighter impact on our planet. Thanks to Ecomuvi 10 tons of CO2 were saved in pre-production and production.

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*A political fable, an unexpected  
fairy tale, a song about the last 50  
years of our history.*



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