

"Vincere": The Hidden Passions of Benito Mussolini

Benedetta Grasso (March 09, 2010)



Director Marco Bellocchio presented his last movie at Casa Italiana in September 2009. Now the time has come for "Vincere" to be released in the United States on March 17 2010

As we leave the 2010 Academy Awards behind us and get ready for a new season of movies that will sweep us off our feet, make us reflect on important topics and entertain us, it is worth noticing an original gem from Italy, "[Vincere](#) [2]" by Marco Bellocchio, which will be released in the United States on March 17, 2010.

The movie begins several years before Benito Mussolini's March on Rome of 1922 and focuses on the personal life of Mussolini, and a tragic love story that spiraled into a vortex of tormented passions and madness, forever changing the lives of those who were deeply linked to his rise to power, also



putting his personal ethics into question.

Benito Mussolini was a young socialist leader before Italy entered World War I. In Milan he met a woman who fell madly in love with him, to the point of giving up everything that she owned and making enormous sacrifices to be with him.

This woman was Ida Dalser (played in the movie by [Giovanna Mezzogiorno](#) [3]) with whom Mussolini had a brief but intense relationship.

When Ida became pregnant, the two married secretly in 1915. As Ida's hopes and fascination with this charming man grew, Mussolini abruptly decided to leave, inconsiderate of her feelings, and Ida discovered that he had gotten married to another woman.

Mussolini married Rachele Guidi, a more simple woman than Ida, from his own home town, an appropriate match for his upcoming political campaigns. Yet the ghosts of his past haunted him, and he decided to destroy all evidence of his other marriage, and did his best to, keep Ida and the child as far away from him as possible.

Ida was separated from the child. The movie follows his problematic upbringing and how he eventually ended up in a mental institution, as well as Ida's attempts to find him and be recognized as Mussolini's wife.

The movie is dramatic and very emotional, yet realistic. One views a slice of history from the point of view of a woman, a tragic "outcast", yet strong and determined character, one that is deep and humane.

A few months ago, on September 30, 2009, Marco Bellocchio came to New York to present his movie at [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò](#) [4] (New York University) in a discussion with Stefano Albertini, director of Casa Italiana and Antonio Monda, [NYU](#) [5] Professor and journalist.

On that occasion Bellocchio recalled how his inspiration was triggered by the discovery of this truly hidden relationship between Mussolini and Ida, that he himself hadn't heard of until a few years ago. In fact, Mussolini was a young charismatic journalist for "Avanti!", a socialist publication and, as Bellocchio explains, his encounter with Ida happened at the same time as a crucial crossroad in his career. While the Socialists pushed for Italy to remain neutral and not join the war, Mussolini was an interventionist and was expelled from the Party.

In the movie, the carnal passion of his relationship with Ida is as strong as his political ambition and it's interesting to see that while Mussolini literally drives Ida mad, leading her to a very dark place emotionally, the fate of Italy follows a very similar pattern and tragic arch.

Bellocchio is an internationally known director who has worked on over twenty feature films, and has always infused them with his political views and interests, with the themes of madness, family relationships and social issues underlying his work.

"Vincere" received incredibly positive critical reviews in Italy as well as abroad, was nominated for a Golden Palm in Cannes, and won various festivals in the United States.

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[3] <http://www.giovannamezzogiorno.com/>

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