

Remembering the Great Alberto Sordi in the Late Actor's Roman Villa

Roberta Cutillo (January 07, 2020)



To mark the 100th anniversary of the actor's birth, the Alberto Sordi Museum and Foundation presents an exhibition in the late film star's Roman villa, which will last from March until June 2020.

The Alberto Sordi Museum and Foundation is dedicating a show to the beloved Roman actor 100 years after his birth. This multimedia exhibition will take place throughout various spaces inside Sordi's beautiful roman home as well as in the square in front of the villa, where a selection of the actor's films will be on view free of charge. The show, supported by the municipality of Rome, is set to open in March and will remain on view through June 2020.

Born in Rome on June 15, 1920, Sordi, or Albertone as he is often referred to by fans, is an Italian film icon, having appeared in over 200 films over the course of his 65-year-long career.

He is mostly known for his leading roles in a series of post-war comedies, in which he portrayed the



archetypal roman man, playing up his hilariously heavy accent. However, he also starred in a few dramatic films and even stepped behind the camera on several occasions to take on the role of director and collaborate on screenplays.

At the age of 12, Sordi began to take part in amateur theatre productions and eventually went on to study acting at Rome's Academy of Dramatic Arts, while performing in cabarets and musicals on the side and eventually made his film debut with a small part in Mario Bonnard's *Il Feroce Saladino*.

He also worked in radio, particularly dubbing American stars such as Oliver Hardy in some of the few foreign productions that Mussolini allowed to be shown in Italy. His interpretation of Ollie, who in the Italian version speaks in a comical english accent, became instantly iconic and marked Sordi's rise to fame.

But his cinematic career really took off when he was chosen by Fellini to star in his 1952 film *The White Sheik*. The acclaimed director was so pleased with the actor's performance that he returned to him for his next film, *I Vitelloni*, the following year.

In 1954, Sordi starred in his most iconic film yet, Steno's *An American in Rome*, which tells the story of Nando Moriconi, an Italian man who desperately tries to look American by adopting what he believes to be American mannerisms, habits, behaviors. In the film, Nando claims he is from Kansas City, where Sordi was invited following the movie's release and made an honorary citizen.

Since then, Sordi has starred in countless films, becoming the leading face of the 'Commedia all'Italiana' genre. His comically flawed characters, though often exaggerated, are highly relatable. Through his interpretations of the stereotypical unsophisticated lower-middle class roman man, he represented Italian society as a whole, its peculiarities and shortcomings.

"My films were deliberate and never chosen at random," he once said. "They had to reflect the reality of Italian life." This is presumably why he refused to pursue a career in Hollywood, despite receiving offers from prominent American figures such as Billy Wilder. He wanted to make films that reflected what he saw around him.

However, this didn't stop him from receiving numerous awards throughout his career, including a Golden Globe, a Silver Bear in Berlin, a David in Italy, and a Golden Lion for his Lifetime Achievements at the Venice Film Festival.

When he passed away on February 24, 2003, all of Italy mourned him. He was beloved across the country, but especially in Rome, where on his 80th birthday in 2000, he was named 'Mayor for a day' in recognition of his role as one of the city's main representatives.

Because of how approachable and genuine he appeared in the eyes of the Italian public, it makes all



the more sense for an exhibition in his honor to be held in the intimate context of his former home in the Celio neighborhood in Rome.

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