

Open Roads: A Quick Look Behind the Scenes

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Every year, Open Roads, co-presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Istituto Luce Cinecittà, offers a diverse and extensive experience of contemporary Italian cinema, and that's not just a treat for the audience but it's a special opportunity for filmmakers alike that get a chance to meet with US distributors, in case their films have not found distribution yet, with local press and with fellow Italian or international filmmakers and artists of all sorts.

"I don't understand why here in New York so many buildings have fire escapes out like that... doesn't it make it easier for burglars to get in the apartments?" We are in a cab on our way to the Gansevoort Hotel, the rooftop bar seems to be a great spot to look at the city.

Italian film director Edoardo Galeone, who is here to present his film *God Willing* at the 16th edition of Open Roads New Italian Cinema, was in New York about 30 years ago so everything he sees is basically new. "They couldn't have fire escapes like that in Rome," he adds.

Falcone, who was "born in Rome, loves in Rome and will die in Rome seventy years from now," is a well known screenwriter and *God Willing* marked his directorial debut. The comedy, starring Alessandro Gassman in the role of a charming priest and Marco Giallini in the role of an atheist heart



surgeon, earned Falcone a Davide di Donatello for New Emerging Directors in 2015. He is now ready for his second feature which he will start shooting in September.

While in New York he had a chance to meet a well known Italian singer-songwriter, Jovanotti, and to listen, while exploring the city's subway, to some of his lesser known music. "I want to ask him if I can use a song (we won't say which) for the final scene of the new movie." Needless to say, he asked, Jovanotti said yes and we will find out it that really happened once the film comes out.

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"We used to live in the countryside," Maria Sole Tognazzi said while recalling her childhood, "and my father, renown actor Ugo Tognazzi, would always have friends over for dinner. Some of his friends were Pier Paolo Pasolini, Mario Monicelli, Ettore Scola, Marco Ferreri, Pietro Germi, Marcello Mastroianni and Vittorio Gassman. They would sit around the dining table, eat and talk and that's how projects were created. Just by being together and coming up with ideas. That's the air I breathed since I was a child."

Regardless of the family friends that Tognazzi got to know growing up, she didn't really want to be part of the film industry. "I didn't even discuss it with my father, because, differently from my three brothers, I wasn't into it at all. It all happened after his death. I needed a job and everyone I knew and that could help me out was in the film business. It was inevitable, yet still there was no doubt I had to be behind the camera, I am too shy and I have no inclination to do any acting. I never really liked posing for pictures either."

Indeed once the photographers ask for a pose, Maria Sole wears her sunglasses, "as a shield to protect myself... also jet leg is killing me, you don't want to see my eyes!"

Jet leg is a "big enemy" of the delegation that usually come here just for a few days, about 3 or 4, and has a calendar filled with events. Their first morning is filled with interviews, often bilingual, which are followed by a meet and greet lunch, held for representatives of several local Institutions and US film distributors.

On Opening Night, Lincoln Center always hosts a Cocktail Party in a salon at the Walter Reade Theater. This year The Italian Trade Commission has supported the organization working closely with Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Lincoln Center's Film Society by bringing in an authentic flavor of Italian food and lifestyle (a video titled "Magnificent Italy" was shown in order to promote Italy as a film location).

Directors, and some actors, are also invited to participate to Q&As following the screenings of their films, and to an exciting roundtable hosted by NYU's Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò where they usually talk about their work and the state of filmmaking in Italy. Everything comes to an end with a special Sunday brunch where the delegation has a chance to meet with other artists and local filmmakers.

A team of local professionals, headed by Sally Fischer PR, and representatives from Istituto Luce make sure that nobody gets lost and makes the best of each and every event.

When nothing is going on, some like to sleep in their room, while others find the energy to explore the city and visit museums. Favorite shopping destinations? The Gap, Uniqlo and Century 21, while MoMA and The New Whitney are the biggest cultural stops. Sushi is always a big hit as are burgers and fries. Just walking around, though, is enough for many.

"New York is incredibly inspiring," Maria Sole Tognazzi has said about this city, "While I am here I observe everything and take it back home with me. I will come back to it later and will get ideas from what I have seen. It's part of my creative process, I take it in and then, at a later moment, it will



inspire me.”

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