

MORE TO ITALIAN FILM FEST THAN MEETS EYE

TERESA SMITH

ITALIAN film-maker Antonio Falduto's relationship with South Africa has grown over the years, helped by the Italian Film Festival, now in its 10th year. Held at the Labia in Orange Street, the festival is

not only a chance for audiences to watch films we wouldn't otherwise access, but also a covert networking exercise.

"It's useful because we bring with us Italian film producers, writers and directors and the festival is just an excuse to meet local professionals. We think it

is important that we have a co-production treaty, but making films is not just a matter of finding money, but also finding stories and ideas.

"So, the festival is the right instrument to connect people to each other and develop stories together," said Falduto (whose last film, *Il Console Italiano/The Italian Consul*, was completed via the co-production treaty and shot in Cape Town).

Festival organisers, which include Falduto, usually choose contemporary films to screen, and at least one older director and a younger director who is doing the rounds of prestigious international film festivals to visit.

Sebastiano Riso, from Catania in Sicily, worked as an assistant for several film and stage directors before completing a degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. His feature film debut, *Più Buio di Mezzanotte* (*Darker than Midnight*), was part of the official selection of Cannes' Critics' Week this year.

The film initially received a much stricter age restriction in Italy than anywhere else, which surprised Riso. The film is about an androgynous 14-year-old who leaves home to escape his strict father's persecution, and Riso thinks a conservative social culture in Italy was responsible for the initial X-rating, which was eventually lowered.

"The problem is conceptual. The message is dangerous," he said. "To talk about youth sexuality in my country is a problem and homosexuality is considered something for adults and then the adult is considered deviant. So when talking about youth sexuality in this way, you somehow legitimise it."

"His film doesn't show any explicit sex scenes though," Falduto interjects.

Riso has been travelling around the world with the film and is emboldened by the positive reception by non-Italian film festival audiences. Striking the balance between making a feature film of high artistic merit and something that has mass consumer appeal on a low budget is difficult, but Riso thinks the answer lies in finding a universal theme and using a simple visual language.

In the case of *Più Buio di Mezzanotte*, the theme he chose was adolescence: "What is happening with



Più Buio di Mezzanotte (*Darker than Midnight*).

the film is interesting because it is getting seen in all sorts of territories except Muslim ones."

The 31-year-old sees his role of film-maker as important to remind his fellow Italian citizens of their culture and rights and to question the disjoint between how individuals think about issues like freedom, equality, sexuality and human rights and what the Italian government would prefer should be the party line.

Director Lucio Gaudino, 61, is here in his capacity as screenwriter and producer of Matteo Andreolli's film *Eppideisi* (*Seven Little Killers*). As a film producer, Gaudino fulfilled a mentorship role he found helpful when he started out as a film-maker. He was able to draw on the experience of Antonio Avati when he made *Io e Il Re/Me and the King* (1995) and hoped to do the same for Andreolli, who had served as assistant director to him on previous projects.

Gaudino sees the mentorship role as a continuation of a very old tradition of Italian film-making. It's not that Andreolli didn't know what he was doing, Gaudino insists, it's just that every bit of experience helps when you are slogging away at your first film.

The Italian film industry of the '60s to '70s turned out up to 400 local films a year, which has now diminished to about 100.

While access to digital technology has lowered the entry barrier for new directors, Gaudino says a lack of experience is telling when the films are technically sound, but lacking in content or story.

"Today there is a redefinition of cinema. Is it still an experience where you share a common emotion with people, or is it just a screen to watch something flashy? For me, cinema is still about that common emotion, but maybe that's because I'm old and romantic. I think when there's a passing on of experience, it's better."

● The Italian Film Festival also screens: Pier Francesco Diliberto's *La Mafia Uccide Solo d'Estate* (*The Mafia Kills Only in Summer*); Gabriele Salvatores' *Un Giorno da Italiani* (*Italy in a Day*); Ferdinando Vicentini Orgnani's *Vinodentro* (*Rewined*); and Edoardo Gubini's *In Grazi di Dio* (*Quiet Bliss*) until Sunday. Check www.labia.co.za for the schedule.

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SHOWTIMES

FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER – THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER

*Movies and times are subject to change without notice. Details correct at time of going to print.

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CANAL WALK

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
Fri–Thu 09:15 11:30 14:00 16:45
19:30 21:45
Annabelle
Fri–Thu 09:45 12:00 14:30 17:30
20:00 22:15
Blood Ties
Fri–Thu 20:00 22:45
Dracula Untold
Fri–Wed 10:00 12:15 14:45 18:00
20:15 22:30
Dumb and Dumber To
Fri–Thu 09:30 12:00 14:45 17:30
20:00 22:30
The Equalizer
Fri–Thu 09:15 12:15 15:15 18:00 20:45
18:15V
Gone Girl
Fri–Thu 09:00 12:00 15:00 18:00 21:00
18:15V
The Good Lie
Fri–Thu 21:15 17:45 22:30

NOW SHOWING



GRANDWEST

Dolphin Tale 2
Fri, Sun–Thu 12:00 14:30 18:00
Sat 09:30 12:00 14:30 18:00
Interstellar
Fri–Thu 09:15 13:00 16:45 20:30
Laggies
Fri–Thu 09:15 11:30 14:15 17:00
19:30 22:00
Let's Be Cops
Fri–Thu 10:00 15:00 20:00
18:15V
Lucy
Fri–Thu 10:00 14:45 20:15
18:15V
The Maze Runner
Fri–Wed 09:15 12:15 14:45 17:30
20:00 22:30
Thu 09:00 12:15 14:45 17:30 20:00 22:30
Postman Pat
Fri–Thu 10:00 15:00
Postman Pat
Fri–Thu 12:15 17:45
Tarzan
Fri–Thu 09:30 17:15
Tarzan
Fri–Thu 11:45 14:30 19:45 22:15
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2D
Fri–Thu 09:30 11:45 14:15 16:45
19:30 21:45
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3D
Fri–Thu 09:45 12:00 14:30 17:30
20:00 22:15
A Walk Among the Tombstones
Fri–Thu 09:30 12:00 14:45 17:30
20:00 22:30
What If
Fri–Thu 12:30 17:30 22:30
When the Game Stands Tall
Fri–Thu 09:00 11:30 14:15 17:00
19:30 22:00

V&A WATERFRONT

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
Fri–Thu 10:15 12:30 15:00 17:00
Brick Mansions
Fri–Thu 11:45 17:15 22:15
Dumb and Dumber To
Fri–Thu 09:30 12:00 14:45 17:30
20:00 22:30
The Equalizer
Fri–Wed 09:30 15:00 20:30
18:15V
Gone Girl
Fri, Sat, Mon, Wed 09:00 12:00 15:00
18:00 21:00
Sun 09:00 12:00 21:00
Tue 09:00 18:00 21:00
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1
Fri–Thu 09:30 12:15 15:00 17:45 20:30
18:10-12PG
Interstellar
Fri–Thu 09:15 13:00 16:45 20:30
18:15V
Laggies
Fri–Thu 09:45 12:15 15:00 17:45
20:15 22:45
The Maze Runner
Fri–Wed 12:15 18:00
A Most Wanted Man
Fri–Thu 19:30 22:15
The Prince
Fri 09:45 20:00
Sat–Thu 09:45 14:45 20:00
The Signal
Fri–Thu 10:00 12:30 15:15 18:00
20:30 22:45
Tarzan
Fri–Thu 09:15 14:15 19:30
Tarzan
Fri–Thu 11:30 17:00 22:00
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2D
Fri–Thu 09:30 17:00
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3D
Fri–Thu 11:45 14:15 19:45 22:00
This Is Where I Leave You
Fri 12:00 14:15 17:30 22:30
Sat–Thu 12:00 17:30 22:30
A Walk Among the Tombstones 18:15V
Fri–Thu 09:15 14:30 19:45

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MOUNTAIN HILL

Dolphin Tale 2
Fri, Sun–Wed 12:00 14:30 17:15
Sat 09:30 12:00 14:30 17:15
Interstellar
Fri–Thu 11:30 14:30 17:00 20:00
Gone Girl
Fri–Wed 19:45
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1
Fri, Sun–Thu 12:15 15:00 17:45 20:30
18:10-12PG
Interstellar
Fri–Thu 11:30 15:00 19:30
Postman Pat
Fri, Sun–Thu 12:30 15:00
Sat 10:00 12:30 15:00
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2D
Fri–Thu 12:15 19:45
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3D
Fri, Sun–Thu 12:00 14:30 17:30 20:00
A Walk Among the Tombstones 18:15V
Sat 09:30 12:00 14:30 17:30 20:00

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