



Palace Films presents

THE NEW FILM BY MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM

# GENOVA

Starring

**COLIN FIRTH · CATHERINE KEENER**  
**WILLA HOLLAND · PERLA HANEY-JARDINE · HOPE DAVIS**

Running-time

**93 MINUTES**

Rating

**M**

Release Date

**5 NOVEMBER 2009**

Official Selection

**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**  
**SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**  
**- Winner: Best Director -**

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The picture-perfect town of Genova provides a fresh start for Joe and his two young daughters, a family seeking new lives after the sudden death of their mother. While Jo strikes up a new friendship with an old flame, sixteen year old Kelly explores the underbelly of this mysterious new world, and the younger Mary has ghostly visions of her mother wandering the labyrinth-like streets...

## **SYNOPSIS**

From acclaimed filmmaker Michael Winterbottom (*The Road to Guantanamo*, *A Mighty Heart*) comes *Genova*, an intimate familial drama about love, loss and forgiveness, set against the beauty of the Italian coastal city.

Following the death of his wife in a tragic accident, Joe (Colin Firth) decides to leave behind his home in the United States - which holds too many memories of a once happy family – in search of a new start. With hopes that the change of setting will help to pull his fractured family from the limbo of their bereavement, Joe relocates himself and his two young daughters to the exotic town of Genova, Italy, where he accepts a position teaching at the local university.

As Joe rekindles an old friendship with university colleague Barbara (Catherine Keener), his daughters occupy their time by attending piano lessons and exploring the labyrinth-like laneways of the old city. 16-year-old Kelly (Willa Holland) finds herself drawn into the sexy and dangerous underbelly of this mysterious new world, speeding around on Vespas and partying with the local boys, while the younger Mary (Perla Haney-Jardine), who is most clearly struggling to move past her acute emotional pain, begins to have visions of her mother wandering the streets of the scenic northern Italian town.





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- Director, Michael Winterbottom

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Inspired by a visit to the city of Genoa that Michael Winterbottom had made some years ago, *Genova* was shot on location in Italy, Sweden, UK and the US.

The filmmakers were keen to make a film with a European setting, as producer Andrew Eaton explains. "We've shot quite a few films in the past few years in the Middle East and we wanted to do something a bit closer to home and European in setting. Nearly all of Michael film heroes are European: German, French and Italian, so he was particularly enthusiastic about making a film set in Europe. There are very few films which have American characters in a European setting set in the present day so hopefully that's something fresh and original."

Winterbottom was also inspired by the Marguerite Duras novel "Moderato Cantabile". "Something about Genoa reminded me of that novel which is also set in a port. I read it a long time ago, but part of it had stuck in my mind about a parent taking a child to a piano lesson. So we borrowed that idea. I have two daughters and I thought it would be nice to do something about a father and two girls."

The city also reminded Winterbottom of Nic Roeg's film *Don't Look Now*. "Genoa is in a way a twin city with Venice, the atmosphere is similar with very narrow alleyways. It's very beautiful, but also quite spooky and that reminded me of Roeg's film. So that was also an influence."

With the key elements in place Winterbottom turned to the main focus of the script. "Part of the attraction was to do something very observational about family life. I liked the idea of a family being re-located to a new place, where since they don't really know anyone they are thrown together. For me the film is about a father's love for his children and the children's relationship with each other, the death of the mother is just a starting point, I was more interested in looking at how they get on with the rest of their lives, to the extent that they can and the repetition of those daily things that is at the heart being in a family and at the heart of getting over their grief."

At this point Winterbottom involved co-writer Laurence Coriat, who he had previously worked with on *Wonderland* and *Me Without You*. "Laurence is very easy to work with, she's very collaborative. So once I had a rough framework of the film I started working with her on the script."

When Eaton read the finished script he noticed how personal it seemed. "If you look at all of Michael's films, he's always interested in dealing with family and displaced people and of people in situations of stress and danger and examining how they deal with that. The first thing that struck me when I read this script was how much of Michael's life was in there. He has two daughters not dissimilar in age to the two girls in this story and there seemed to be echoes of Michael's own life in it."



The filmmakers next turned to casting the film. Winterbottom explains the idea behind casting an English actor to play the father, with his children being played by American actors. "I liked the idea that the father was a different nationality to his children partly to serve the story, as being British in America it would be a natural thing that he would want to leave the US and return to Europe after the death of his wife. But also because these days more and more parents have a different nationality to their children so they have a cultural gap and I wanted to reflect that. So we were looking for an English actor and I wanted him to be sympathetic, and Colin's a really great actor and he perfectly fit the bill."

Andrew Eaton adds. "The story always began in America and I think Michael liked the idea of displacement. The father is already living in a culture where he's displaced, it's not his normal setting and going from the UK to Italy is not a massive change like coming from the US which is a bigger culture shock which helps to make the children feel uncomfortable. It was important for Michael that the father be English as he's English, as a director it was easier for him to tell that story. He also had to be in his 40's to be believable and Colin fulfills those criteria. Colin is also a father himself and he brings all the right qualities to the part."

For his part Firth was keen to work with Winterbottom as an admirer of his films. "I think all actors want to work with Michael because his films are bold and exciting and I've never seen a bad performance in any of them. I think there is an immediacy to his films, I like the honesty of them and the fact that they never take an obvious approach. They're never trying to hit the usual buttons and tick the usual boxes. This film gives you a look at certain aspects of life that are very hard to tell stories about honestly. It's hard to tell a story about family love, it's hard to tell a story about grief, it's hard to tell a story about people trying to find their way out of sorrow that come from a tragic incident and I love the way that he never takes any easy routes. You think you're going down a familiar emotional path, but it tends not to lead to where you think it's going to lead its actually something else, if you think people are going to be open with each other well they can touch on that, but they don't really resolve anything that way. There are moments when people really connect that are surprising, they come out of adversity or even banality, humour comes at surprising moments and I feel the film constantly offers that. It has endless twists and turns and shades of light and dark, rather like the geography of the town that are never what you expect."

Firth was also drawn to the script's emotional subtleties. "It's so much to do with trying to navigate your way through a family, its obstacles and disappointments and the hopes that you have for your children that I found myself more focused on that than what's going to happen in drama terms. One of the things that fascinated me was how all those enormous issues are woven into the everyday. It's not so much the mother's death is the big elephant in the room that no one ever talks about, it's just life does have to go on. Joe is a single father and he has things to get on with. One of the hardest things to adjust to is the banalities are not obliterated, in still matters what time they get in, what they are going to have for dinner, life almost brutally goes on as normal. And the feel of the film is very much to do with that. These huge issues don't play out like huge issues they play out in the ordinary details of life. And it's also about how a family has to operate whether something like that has happened or not. There is so much in it that I recognise. We all understand the territory, Michael, Andrew and I all have children even though all our experiences are different and don't reflect precisely this family, there's an endless amount to draw on as a parent."

Catherine Keener was cast as Barbara. She was an easy choice as Winterbottom and Eaton had been trying to work with her for a while. Winterbottom explains. "We'd met Catherine a few years ago when we were planning another film that never happened. I think she's a great actor and has been in some amazing films. She's such a good actor that you very quickly understand what's going on with her character. You get the sense that Barbara would like to be emotionally involved with the family over and above the practical help she gives them, but that's not what they want, the children don't want another mother and Joe doesn't want another wife."

For Keener it was a combination of the script and the opportunity to work with Winterbottom that attracted her to the project. "The script is beautifully written, I've loved Michael's movies along with everybody else that I know and this opportunity came up. I thought the story was beautiful. The script seemed very personal. I don't know to who, but it is."

Keener was also delighted by her co-stars. "I've always loved Colin. I too have been sort of in love with Colin along with everyone else, he seems like such a romantic guy. He's a fierce actor and a tremendous intellect. Willa just sort of floats around ethereally, so smart and incredibly talented. Perla is destined to be one of the greats, she comes from nature, if you're lost in the process you just zero in on her to find out where you are."

Hope Davis was then cast to play Marianne. "Hope needed no persuasion to play the role," says Winterbottom. "She liked the script and she liked the role of the ghostly mum. She worked well with Willa and Perla, she was able to convey the sense that this family worked together."

Andrew Eaton adds, "Actresses were queuing up to be in the film. Especially actresses with children. They could connect with the idea of the mother, or in Catherine Keener's case in the part of Barbara of someone who would like to be a mother. I think Catherine and Hope are two of the best actresses in the world and we were lucky to get them. But it's a testament to the quality of the script that we had actresses so keen to be in the film."

"It wasn't the part so much as the script." Says Hope Davis. "The story was so moving to me, I'm the mother of two young daughters and I thought it was a beautiful story of a family trying to deal with something that we all dread will happen to us which is that a parent will be taken away. The script is so restrained and so moving without any kind of sentimentality I was just very, very moved by the story."

Finding young actresses to play the two girls was a slightly longer process. Winterbottom explains how he came to cast Perla Haney-Jardine and Willa Holland as Mary and Kelly. "We were originally going to make *Genova* before *A Mighty Heart* and a couple of years ago I was sent a tape of Perla doing the scenes in the car in the beginning and I thought she looked very interesting, but felt she was a bit young, so when we finally met her a year and a half later she was the right age. She is incredibly natural, very intelligent and very subtle. Although she'd already been in a few films, she didn't come from LA and didn't seem like an acting child, she seemed very normal and believable. We'd also met Willa the year before and she was our first choice then and remained our first choice. We wanted someone who was just at that age where in some ways they seem incredibly grown-up, but in other ways they are still child-like. When we first met her she was 14 and seemed incredibly grown-up for her age. I wanted the dynamic in the family that the children were relatively close in age, but the older one is at the age where she wants to go out and do things by herself, so Mary is left by herself and is almost an only child. And with her father the relationship is that he still wants to look after her, but she is old enough to go out on her own, so it's the conflict of wanting to behave responsibly but allowing her her freedom."

Eaton adds, "We started looking for the two girls before we started looking for anyone else, as we knew that would be a longer search. Michael was keen for the girls to be American as it's a fact of life that there is more choice in America as it's a bigger industry. We meet a lot of kids, but the two that we found are both incredibly experienced considering their age. Willa had been in *"The O.C."* for quite a few seasons and Perla had already done *Kill Bill 2* and *Spiderman 3*, which is not bad for someone who is only 10 years old!"

Willa Holland liked the story. "There's never really any good stories about a father and his daughters and their relationship. There's Disney, but there are no really heart-warming films like this. It was very different from all the scripts that I've read, it was heart touching and it hits a strong point."



Michael Winterbottom began making documentaries in England in the late 1980's and moved into dramatic features a few years later. With his 1997 film *Welcome to Sarajevo*, he began shooting dramatic stories in documentary style. To heighten the sense of reality and truth, he kept his crews small and unobtrusive, and encouraged his actors to improvise. His preferred subjects, from the political docudrama *The Road to Guantanamo* to the lighter but still provocative *24 Hour Party People*, were well-suited to this approach.

Filming of *Genova* proceeded in typical Winterbottom style: director of photography Marcel Zyskind, who has worked on many films with Winterbottom, operated a hand-held camera. There were no rehearsals, and no master shots or attendant series of close-ups. Most takes ran the full length of a scene, and scenes were shot in sequence. Winterbottom didn't call "action" or tell anyone where the camera would be. That was decided in the moment, sometimes with Winterbottom gripping the back of Zyskind's shirt to steer him.

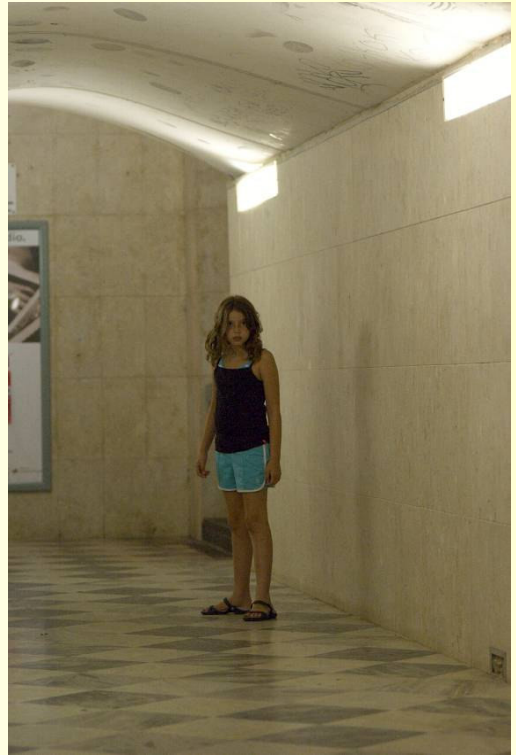
Natural light was used whenever possible to allow actors and camera freedom of movement. Winterbottom creates an environment which feels as little like a film-set as possible. He explains why he prefers this working method. "Working with a small crew is more relaxed and it's more enjoyable to work that way."



The way we worked on this and the way I like to work is technically hand-held with minimal lighting and to allow the actors to improvise a little bit around the script, although in this case there was minimal improvisation in that sense. It allows for a more informal relationship between the actors and the camera and makes it more free. We used the locations that were there, as the whole purpose was to capture the atmosphere of Genoa. Having a smaller crew gets rid of the more exhausting aspect of film-making and just makes everyone more relaxed."

Filming in the city was also straight-forward. "Genoa doesn't have much of a film industry, so everyone who helped us were incredibly helpful to us and very excited and enthusiastic which made it very easy."

For Colin Firth, Winterbottom's way of working was very different from what he was used to. "The small crew lent an intimacy to the experience. In some ways it couldn't be more different. If you are making a big film you can be in a very, very impersonal and mechanical environment, surrounded by a lot of hardware and people who operate hardware, hundreds of people doing things, endless background artistes and it can take hours and hours to shoot some tiny fragment of the story. So the pace is dictated by that, it's inevitably shot out of sequence and the energy that's required to do that is a very strange one, because you are fighting against the dangerous effects of downtime, which can suck you dry."



A film like this one with a small camera, no lights, four walls and very little crew couldn't be more different. It means that you have the benefit of momentum and you are all part of the process together and you can see it unravelling together and you're discovering it as it goes along. And if you're working with children it's a huge advantage because you can suspend disbelief much more easily. Michael doesn't say action or cut, things just start so an awful lot of the interaction between myself and the two young girls was very natural and spontaneous and came quite naturally out of the relationship that we found with each other. You are thrown together with people who you are expected to assume a whole history of suggested intimacy, with people you didn't know a week ago, but this way of working was conducive to that and it never felt difficult in that respect."

In order to speed up the 'getting to know each other' process before filming began, Winterbottom sent Firth on a shopping expedition with Willa and Perla. Firth explains how this worked. "Michael introduced the three of us to each other and sent us shopping to buy some stuff to make lunch. It was one of those bonding exercises that because you are aware of it, the danger is you resist it slightly, but it really worked. We knew each other much better at the end of a two hour shopping expedition than we would otherwise likely have done in any other two hour situation if we'd been sitting around reading from the script or if we'd been sitting around making polite conversation. Michael tries to make things as immediate and as truthful as possible and knowing there is very little time to do that he's basically found a way of fast-tracking the relationship where you can just put a camera on it. We also went shopping for props for the flat and had an argument about what to buy on our limited budget, Willa wanted to buy clothes for her character while I wanted things for the kitchen, it played into a dynamic which was absolutely real."

For Keener, Winterbottom's working process was not unfamiliar. "When I got the crew list, I turned the page over expecting more, but that was it, literally about ten names. I've worked with Spike Jonze who works a little bit in the same way, so you never quite know what you're doing. It shows me that you don't really need a lot of the extra stuff to make a movie, you really don't, it comes down to story, the director and some actors and somebody who can operate camera and sound and it doesn't take that much equipment. But it takes a lot of work and sensitivity and preparation combined with luck. Michael takes advantage of luck when it presents itself and that's when the indescribable magic things that happen with his movies occur."

Hope Davis also loved the working method. "There's none of the normal stuff that comes with making a film, which is hours and hours of waiting while all the equipment is set up. Michael seems to really capture something that is real, that looks real and sounds real and he's not interested in any of the artifice that is around filmmaking. For actors it's great as none of the artifice is interesting to us, it's all just waiting around and it's not really fun to have your hair fussed with the moment you're supposed to be doing something when you're trying to concentrate, so for us it's an actors dream, it's not about looking right it's about something else."

For Willa Holland, Winterbottom's working method had a more practical advantage. "It is a blessing. It's so nice to be working with such a small crew, as you can remember everyone's names and you don't have to feel bad that you don't and you build relationships with the people you are working with who become like family."





COLIN FIRTH – Joe  
CATHERINE KEENER – Barbara  
HOPE DAVIS – Marianne  
WILLA HOLLAND – Kelly  
PERLA HANEY-JARDINE – Mary  
MARGHERITA ROMEO – Rosa  
MONICA BENNATI – Elena  
GHERARDO CRUCITTI – Mauro  
DANTE CIARI – Fabio  
ALESSANDRO GIUGGIOLI – Lorenzo

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **COLIN FIRTH - Joe**

A classically trained British theatre actor, Colin Firth is a veteran of film, television and stage.

Most recently, Firth starred in Stephan Elliot's *Easy Virtue*, the box office smash-hit *Mamma Mia*, alongside an all-star cast including Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan and Stellan Skarsgard, as well as *And When Did You Last See Your Father* alongside Jim Broadbent.

Firth also starred in *Then She Found Me*, directed by and starring Helen Hunt, the romantic comedy *The Accidental Husband* co-starring Uma Thurman and directed by Griffin Dunne, and featured in *St Trinian's*, directed by Oliver Parker, and will also be seen in the soon to be released sequel.

Other notable films in which Firth has appeared include *Nanny McPhee*, written by and starring Emma Thompson; Atom Egoyan's controversial *Where the Truth Lies* opposite Kevin Bacon; international hits *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* opposite Renee Zellweger and Hugh Grant, which broke numerous box office records internationally.

In 2004, Firth portrayed the 17th century artist Johannes Vermeer in the critically-acclaimed *Girl With A Pearl Earring* which was based on the best selling novel by Tracy Chevalier. Firth was nominated for a European Film Award for his performance in the film.

Prior to this Firth had roles in Richard Curtis' *Love Actually*, which broke box office records as the highest grossing British romantic comedy opening of all time in the UK; *The Importance of Being Earnest*; the Academy Award nominated *Shakespeare In Love* and *The English Patient*.

On the small screen, Firth is infamous for his breakout role in the BBC's 1995 adaptation of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*. He played Mr. Darcy for which he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor. Firth has also appeared in the critically-acclaimed BBC television movie *Born Equal* (2004), hosted NBC's legendary series *Saturday Night Live*, HBO film *Conspiracy* (2001) earning him a Emmy nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actor, and has also received the Royal Television Society Best Actor Award and a BAFTA nomination for his work in *Tumbledown*. His other television credits include *Donovan Quick*, *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*, *Deep Blue Sea*, *Hostages*, and the mini-series *Nostromo*.

His London stage debut was in the West End production of *Another Country* playing Benett, and went on to play the Judd in the 1984 film adaptation opposite Rupert Everett.

Firth is an active supporter of Oxfam International, an organisation dedicated to fighting poverty and related injustice around the world. He is a co-director of Oxfam's Café Progresso, a chain of coffee bars founded with the intention of creating fair trade opportunities for coffee cooperatives in Ethiopia, Honduras and Indonesia.



## CATHERINE KEENER – Barbara

An actress with an innate ability to be both a potent force and a grounded presence in her films, Catherine Keener has recently starred in Charlie Kaufman's *Synecdoche, New York*; she joined an all star cast in the satirical *What Just Happened*; and will feature in the big-screen adaptation of Maurice Sendak's *Where The Wild Things Are*, directed by Spike Jonze.

Keener has featured in Sean Penn's *Into The Wild*, Nicole Holofcener's *Friends With Money*, Judd Apatow's smash hit comedy, *The 40 Year Old Virgin*; Sydney Pollack's *The Interpreter* with Sean Penn and Nicole Kidman, and Rebecca Miller's *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*, co-starring Daniel Day Lewis.

She also starred as author Harper Lee in the critically acclaimed biopic, *Capote* starring Philip Seymour Hoffman. For her work in this film, Keener received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress as well as a nomination from the Screen Actors Guild Awards. She was awarded Best Supporting Actress by the Toronto Film Critics Association. In 2003, Keener received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Actress for her performance in Nicole Holofcener's *Lovely & Amazing*, which also starred Brenda Blethyn, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emily Mortimer and Dermot Mulroney. In 2000, Keener also received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich*.

Keener's other film credits include Jonze's *Adaptation*, Andrew Niccol's *Simone*, Steven Soderbergh's *Full Frontal* and *Out of Sight*, Danny DeVito's *Death to Smoochy*, Neil LaBute's *Your Friends and Neighbors*, Holofcener's *Walking and Talking* and the screen adaptation of Sam Shepard's *Simpatico*. She also appeared in four films by Tom DiCillo: *Box of Moonlight*, *Johnny Suede*, *Living in Oblivion* and *The Real Blonde*.

For television, Keener co-starred in HBO's critically acclaimed anthology, *If These Walls Could Talk*, directed by Nancy Savoca, and made a notable guest appearance on acclaimed sitcom *Seinfeld*.

On stage, she starred opposite Edward Norton in the Signature Theater Company's critically acclaimed off-Broadway revival of Langford Wilson's *Burn This* (2003).

## HOPE DAVIS – Marianne

Hope Davis first garnered critical attention for her work in a trio of independent hits – Greg Mottola's *The Daytrippers*, Bart Freundlich's *The Myth of Fingerprints* and Brad Anderson's *Next Stop Wonderland*. Her filmography includes Douglas McGrath's Truman Capote piece *Infamous*; the black comedy *The Matador*, with Greg Kinnear and Pierce Brosnan; Gore Verbinski's *The Weatherman*, opposite Nicolas Cage; John Madden's adaptation of David Auburn's Pulitzer and Tony award-winning play *Proof* opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, Anthony Hopkins and Jake Gyllenhaal; *Duma*, with Campbell Scott, for director Carroll Ballard, a delicious turn as Jack Nicholson's daughter in Alexander Payne's *About Schmidt* (Los Angeles Film Critics' Best Picture of 2002); *Hearts in Atlantis* opposite Anthony Hopkins; Campbell Scott's *Final* with Denis Leary; Stanley Tucci's *Joe Gould's Secret* and *The Imposters*; the political thriller *Arlington Road* with Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins; and Lawrence Kasdan's *Mumford*.

Davis was named 2003 Best Actress of the Year by the New York Film Critics Circle for her work in two of the year's most critically acclaimed independent features -- *American Splendor*, directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, and Alan Rudolph's *The Secret Lives of Dentists*.

Davis also received a Golden Globe nomination for her role in *American Splendor* - a film which received Best Film Un Certain Regard in Cannes, LA Film Critics' award for Best Picture, and the Grand Jury Prizes at Sundance and Montreal's Just for Laughs Festival – as well as an IFP Spirit Award nomination for her performance in *The Secret Lives of Dentists*.

Most recently, Davis' credits include *The Hoax*, directed by Lasse Hallström, *The Nines* with Ryan Reynolds and *Charlie Bartlett* with Robert Downey Jr. She also stars in David Ondaatje's adaption of *The Lodger* opposite Alfred Molina; *Driving Lessons* with Dermot Mulroney; and *Synecdoche, New York*, along with co-star Catherine Keener.

She has also performed *Hope Leaves the Theatre*, part of the radio plays *Theatre of the New Ear*, written by Charlie Kaufman and performed alongside Meryl Streep and Peter Dinklage for Sirius Radio. In addition to *Camino Real* at the famed Williamstown Theatre Festival, her other stage credits include Lincoln Center productions of Rebecca Gilman's *Spinning Into Butter*, *Ivanov*, and *Two Shakespearean Actors*. Off-Broadway, Davis has appeared in *Pterodactyls*, *The Food Chain*, *The Iceman Cometh* and David Mamet's *Speed the Plow*.

## WILLA HOLLAND – Kelly

Willa is well-known from playing Katlin Cooper (Mischa Barton's younger sister) on "The OC". She recently starred in John Stockwell's *The Middle of Nowhere*, opposite Susan Sarandon, Anton Yelchin and Justin Chatwin.

Additionally, Willa has modelled for such campaigns as Gap, Ralph Lauren, Guess and Abercrombie & Fitch.



## PERLA HANEY-JARDINE – Mary

Perla made her feature film debut in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*. She also featured in Walter Salles' 2005 feature *Dark Water* co-starring with Jennifer Connelly. In 2007 she appeared in Sam Raimi's *Spiderman 3*. She then starred in *Untraceable*, directed by Gregory Hoblit, co-starring with Diane Lane.



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**MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM – Director/Writer**  
**ANDREW EATON – Producer**  
**MELISSA PARMENTER – Composer/Line Producer**  
**LAURENCE CORIAT – Writer**  
**MARCEL ZYSKIND – Director of Photography**  
**MARK DIGBY – Production Designer**  
**PAUL MONAGHAN – Editor**  
**CELIA YAU – Costume Designer**

## **ABOUT THE CREW**

### **MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM - Director/Writer**

In just a dozen years, Michael Winterbottom has travelled the world, delivering 14 incredibly diverse and often provocative films.

Winterbottom was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, England in 1961. He first made his mark as a director on British television with projects including the 1993 BBC mini-series, *Family*, written by novelist Roddy Doyle. In 1994, he made his first feature, the offbeat crime drama *Butterfly Kiss*, then directed *Go Now* for the BBC. After collaborating on *Family*, he and producer Andrew Eaton founded their production company, Revolution Films, in 1994.

Adapting his favourite Thomas Hardy novel 'Jude The Obscure', Winterbottom's 1995 film *Jude*, starring Christopher Eccleston and Kate Winslet, premiered at the Directors Fortnight in Cannes and won The Michael Powell award for Best Film at the Edinburgh Film Festival. A year later he was in competition at Cannes with *Welcome To Sarajevo*, a drama set during the siege of the Bosnian capital and based on British journalist Michael Henderson's true story.

Rachel Weisz and Alessandro Nivola starred in Winterbottom's moody *I Want You*, which competed at the Berlin Film Festival in 1998. After which he made the light-hearted sex comedy, *With or Without You*.

The realistic drama *Wonderland* marked a turning point in style and technique. Selected for competition at the 1999 Cannes and Edinburgh festivals, *Wonderland* won the British Independence Film Award for Best Film and was nominated for Best British Film at the 2000 BAFTAs.

Winterbottom based 2001's *The Claim* on another Hardy novel, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', but set it during the California gold rush. An official selection at the Berlin and Paris film festivals, it starred Milla Jovovich, Peter Mullan, Wes Bentley, Nastassja Kinski and Sarah Polley.

*24 Hour Party People* (2002) was a witty homage to Manchester's legendary 1980's music scene, the film stars Steve Coogan as Factory Records founder Tony Wilson. It was in competition at Cannes in 2002 and won Best Achievement in Production at the British Independent Film Awards.

Winterbottom made *In This World* (2002), the story of two Afghan refugees who entrust their fate to people smugglers, to raise the level of public debate about refugee issues. Shot in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the film won the Golden Bear, the Ecumenical Jury Prize and the Peace Prize at the 2003 Berlin Film Festival, and the BAFTA for Best Film Not in the English Language. Winterbottom won the Directors Guild of Great Britain's award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in British Film.





In 2003 he took a cast including Tim Robbins and Samantha Morton to Shanghai, Dubai and Rajasthan, India to film the futuristic *Code 46*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival. The following year, he cast unknowns in *9 Songs*, which marks the stages of a young couple's relationship through their sexual encounters and the concerts they attend.

In 2006, audiences saw two strikingly different movies from the director, *The Road To Guantanamo* and *Tristram Shandy: A Cock & Bull Story*. A bold docudrama, *The Road To Guantanamo* tells the story of "the Tipton Three," three young men held without charges for two years in the notorious American prison in Cuba. Interviews with the three are inter-cut with dramatisations of their hellish journey. The film won the Silver Bear for Best Direction at the Berlin Film Festival, and was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary. Winterbottom indulged his playful side in *A Cock & Bull Story*, his adaptation of Laurence Sterne's 18th century mock autobiography, "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy". Steve Coogan stars as himself, playing the actor who plays Tristram Shandy and his father Walter in the film within the film. After premiering at the Toronto Film Festival, *A Cock & Bull Story* was nominated for BAFTA's Alexander Korda Award for Best British Film, and for five British Independent Film Awards.

Most recently released was his film *A Mighty Heart* (2007), starring Angelina Jolie and based on Marianne Pearl's book about the kidnapping and murder of her husband Wall Street journalist Daniel Pearl.

Next from Winterbottom is *The Killer Inside Me*, based on the novel by Jim Thompson and starring Jessica Alba, Kate Hudson, Simon Baker, Casey Affleck and Bill Pullman. And *Seven Days*, which is being filmed over the course of five years.

## ANDREW EATON – Producer

Andrew Eaton was named producer of the year at the British Independent Film Awards in 2000 and was nominated for the Best British Producer award by the London Film Critics Association in 2005. He co-founded Revolution Films with Michael Winterbottom in 1994, after their award-winning collaboration on the BBC drama *Family*.

Since then, the duo have brought a wide range of films to the screen, beginning with the award-winning *Go Now*, followed by *Jude*, starring Kate Winslet, Christopher Eccleston and Rachel Griffiths.

Eaton next produced *The James Gang*, directed by Mike Barker, and *Resurrection*, directed by Marc Evans. He reunited with Winterbottom for *I Want You*, which won a Special Award for Cinematography at the 1998 Berlin Film Festival.

Eaton and Winterbottom also collaborated on *With Or Without You* and *Wonderland*, which they filmed back to back; *The Claim*; *24 Hour Party People*; *In This World*, *Code 46*, *Tristram Shandy: A Cock & Bull Story*; *The Road To Guantanamo*; and *A Mighty Heart*.

Eaton's many executive producer credits over the years include Damien O'Donnell's *Heartlands*, Stephen Fry's *Bright Young Things*, Tracey Emin's *Top Spot* and *Snow Cake* for director Marc Evans.

Having studied classics and law at Cambridge, Eaton began his career in theatre publicity before joining BBC Television as a researcher. He directed and produced documentaries for the BBC's *Arena* and *Omnibus* arts programs on subjects from John Ford to ABBA.



## **PAUL MONAGHAN - Editor**

Paul first worked with Revolution Films in 2001/02 as an Assistant Director & Production Assistant on *24 Hour Party People* and *In This World*.

He worked as an Assistant Editor on Terry Gilliam's *The Brothers Grimm* in 2003, Nick Broomfield's *Ghosts* and Richard Attenborough's *Closing The Ring* and most recently on Michael Winterbottom's *A Mighty Heart*. *Genova* is his first film as a co-Editor.

## **LAURENCE CORIAT - Writer**

Laurence Coriat wrote Winterbottom's *Wonderland* and is currently collaborating with him on the television drama "Seven Days", which charts the relationship between a man imprisoned for drug smuggling and his wife and is being shot over the course of five years, a few weeks at a time.

She also wrote the screenplay for the Sandra Goldbacher directed *Me Without You*, starring Michelle Williams and Anna Friel. She has written and directed three short films: *Being Bad*, *Holiday* and most recently *New Love*

## **MELISSA PARMENTER - Composer/Line Producer**

In 2004 Melissa produced her first feature *Top Spot*, directed by the renowned British artist Tracey Emin. The film was funded by the BBC and was premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2005.

In 2005 Melissa was Associate Producer on Michael Winterbottom's film *9 Songs* and then went on to co-produce *A Road To Guantanamo* in 2006 with Andrew Eaton. *The Road to Guantanamo* won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival (2007) and was nominated for two European Film Awards.

Melissa has composed and performed solo piano music for several feature films including *Top Spot* (Directed by Tracey Emin), *9 Songs* (Directed by Michael Winterbottom) and *A Mighty Heart* (Directed by Michael Winterbottom). Her work on *Genova* is her first film score.

## **MARK DIGBY - Production Designer**

Mark Digby was born in India and moved to London as a baby with his family. *A Mighty Heart* saw him return to his country of birth for only the second time, the first being for the filming of *Code 46*, also with director Michael Winterbottom.

Originally a student of engineering, Digby dallied with retail, accounting and computers before entering the world of theatre. From there, he moved to television drama, and then film. As art director, he has worked with director Danny Boyle on the films *28 Days Later* and *Millions*, and with director Roger Michel on *The Mother*, starring Daniel Craig. Mark Digby was Winterbottom's art director for *24 Hour Party People* and *In This World*, as well as *Code 46*. He was production designer for Winterbottom's *Road to Guantanamo*.

## **MARCEL ZYSKIND - Director of Photography**

Rapidly acquiring a reputation as an innovative young cinematographer in the U.K. scene, Marcel Zyskind is best known for his work with Michael Winterbottom. Their films together include *In This World*, Zyskind's debut feature as DP, and the controversial *9 Songs*, which brought him the Best Cinematography award at the San Sebastian Film Festival in 2004. He was jointly nominated (with Alwin Kuchler BSC) by the European Film Academy for *Code 46*, starring Samantha Morton and Tim Robbins. He also shot *Tristram Shandy: A Cock & Bull Story*, which had its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival, *The Road to Guantanamo* and *A Mighty Heart* for Winterbottom. Zyskind was also DP on the critically acclaimed *Bullet Boy* for director Saul Dibb, and on Harmony Korine's upcoming feature, *Mister Lonely*. Earlier, he was focus puller and camera operator for Lars von Trier on *Dancer in the Dark* and *Millenium Project*. He was camera and steadicam operator on Winterbottom's *24 Hour Party People* and on *28 Days Later* for director Danny Boyle. Born in Denmark, Zyskind started work as a TV camera assistant at the age of 16. He lives in Copenhagen.

## **CELIA YAU - Costume Designer**

Born in Lincolnshire, Yau studied Theatre Design at University of Central England in Birmingham, during which she was awarded Sir Vincent Barry Jackson prize for Theatre Design. Celia started off in theatre and has worked in the film industry as a costume assistant for 10 years. Previously, Celia has designed 4 shorts for the BBC and 2 short films. *Genova* is Celia's first feature film.



... it abounds in the strangest contrasts; things that are picturesque, ugly, mean, magnificent, delightful and offensive break upon the view at every turn.

- Charles Dickens

## **ABOUT THE LOCATION**

### **GENOVA, Italy**

An important seaport on the northwest coast of Italy and capital of the Liguria region, Genova (Genoa) is a city steeped in history, positioned amongst rich and dazzling landscapes.

Set between the Ligurian Sea and the Apennine Mountains, the province of Genoa is the center of the Italian Riviera, neighbored by Imperia, Savona and La Spezia provinces. It boasts picturesque villages, impressive ports, churches, palaces, museums, as well as a historic center which is said to be the largest medieval quarter in Europe. Portofino, Rapallo, and Camogli are three of the most popular destinations in this province.

Nicknamed 'La Superba' (The Proud/Excellent) by the Italian scholar and poet Petrarch in 1358, Genova flourished under the Romans and was established as a chief Mediterranean commercial city. However, its fortunes declined in the 14th and 15th centuries after it lost a century-long struggle with Venice for control of the Levant, the countries along the eastern Mediterranean shores.

Taken by Napoleon in the early 19th century, it later regained its independence and prospered, especially after Italian unification. Although the city was badly damaged in World War II, a number of historic buildings survive and it retains notable examples of medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and Gothic architecture.

The birthplace of Christopher Columbus (1451), Genova is still noted for its maritime tradition, with shipbuilding its major industry. The port of Genova leads all other Italian ports in volume of passengers and freight traffic - it handles imports chiefly of coal, crude oil, and grain and exports mainly of cotton and silk textiles, olive oil, and wine - and is the main source of city income. Genoa also is a major centre for finance and commerce.

Organised forms of higher education in Genova date back to the 13th century when private colleges were entitled to award degrees in Medicine, Philosophy, Theology, Law, Arts. Today the University of Genoa, which was founded in 1471, is one of the largest universities in Italy with approximately 41 000 students and over 3000 teaching, research and administrative staff across 11 faculties, 51 departments and 14 libraries.

The St George flag - a red cross on a lime white field – is the Flag of Genoa, recognising St George as a Patron Saint of Genoa. It is identical to the Flag of England which also incorporates the St. George's Cross.

The cuisine of Liguria has deep roots in the past and close ties to its environment. Traditional Genovese dishes include its famous pesto (basil, pine nuts, garlic, and parmigiano cheese) usually served over trenette or trofia pasta cooked with potatoes and green beans; the fish stew buridda; Focaccia; farinata (chickpea fritters), and stockfish fritters. Vermentino, Rossese and Pigato are some of the local wines.



