

## Document Citation

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**Tuttobenigni**  
(All Benigni)  
(ITALIAN-DOCU-COLOR)

A Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori presentation of a C.E.I.A.D. release, produced by Ettore Rosbach for Best Films Intl. Directed by Giuseppe Bertolucci. Stars Roberto Benigni. Camera (color), Renato Tafuri; editor, Jannis Christopoulos. Reviewed at Ariston Cinema, Rome, March 7, 1986. Running time: 88 MINS.

**Rome** — The funniest stand-up comic in Italy is Roberto Benigni, a diminutive Tuscan mumbler in ill-fitting clothes and uncombed hair, whose stage appearances play to packed houses all over the country. "All Benigni" was shot by Giuseppe Bertolucci as a tv special, but blown up to grainy 35m after a belated decision was made to release it theatrically.

Though the material is irreverent and addresses figures ranging from Prime Minister Craxi to God, it is handled with such a gentle touch that the theatrical run may be assumed to pave the way for eventual small screen airing. It is breaking b.o. records in Florence, and doing well in other situations where it is in release.

Basically, film is a record of the comic on stage in some of his best moments and routines. Editing by Jannis Christopoulos is lightning fast (like its subject), rarely cuts away to audience reaction, but intercuts a few hilarious interviews by journalists and some footage shot in a car. As a docu it is a model of concise, no-frills filmmaking. From a pre-credits opener with Benigni running down village streets in some kind of blindfolded race, to his final bravura improvisation on stage, there is a rarely a dull moment in which audiences are not laughing.

Unfortunately, the only public able to appreciate this mile-a-minute talker whose words pour out on top of each other in garbled Tuscan dialect will be Italian speaking. Benigni's comedy, though also gestural, is so rooted in lightning-fast puns and word play it defies translation of any sort. This is particularly a shame because those who have seen him in feature films, like Giuseppe Bertolucci's "Berlinguer I Love You," Marco Ferreri's "Chiedo Asilo," his own "You Bother Me," or "Nothing Left To Do But Cry," which he co-directed with Massimo Troisi, have only glimpsed the lesser part of this dynamic wordsmith. Less an actor able to perform pre-written dialog than a masterful improviser, Benigni is at his best when he asks the audience to call out a few nonsense phrases, which he then instantaneously works into side-splitting routines.

Freely leaping from one thought to another, he somehow gets from the Pope ("the greatest living Pope in Italy") to Poland, and thence to the Mideast and Khomeini, until he explains how Italy could solve its economic problems with the conquest of Switzerland. When an interviewer calls him the Italian Woody Allen, Benigni very seriously suggests he'd rather be thought of as "the Swiss Anna Magnani."

—Yung.