

## Document Citation

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### Film Subjects

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Besieged, Bertolucci, Bernardo, 1998

# **BESIEGED**

## **(Synopsis)**

An old house in the centre of Rome - a refuge for two lonely people. He's a withdrawn and eccentric Englishman, while she's a young African woman in her early 20's, burdened with worries about the past yet full of hope for the future.

Kinsky (David Thewlis) hides behind his piano, with music as his only companion: Bach, Mozart, Grieg. Shandurai (Thandie Newton) comes from far away, and finds refuge in Kinsky's house - which she cleans in exchange for a room while she studies to be a doctor. Their lives interlink in a game of attractions and refusals, of secrets and allusions, while on the spiral staircase Mozart collides with Papa Wemba.

An old house, a man, a woman, and a piano. And through the window, a glimpse of a stormy springtime at the end of the century.

## **PRODUCTION AND CAST LIST**

DIRECTOR  
SCREENPLAY

Bernardo Bertolucci  
Bernardo Bertolucci  
Clare Peploe

BASED ON A STORY BY  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
EDITOR

James Lasdun  
Fabio Cianchetti  
Jacopo Quadri

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY:  
ARRANGED AND PERFORMED BY  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER  
SET DRESSER

Alessio Vlad  
Stefano Arnaldi  
Gianni Silvestri  
Cinzia Sleiter

COSTUME DESIGNER  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
PRODUCER  
PRODUCTION COMPANY

Metka Kosak  
Clare Peploe  
Massimo Cortesi  
Fiction Films & Navert  
Film, in association with  
Mediaset.

## **CAST**

SHANDURAI  
Mr. KINSKY  
AGOSTINO

Thandie Newton  
David Thewlis  
Claudio Santamaria



# **BIOGRAPHIES**

## **BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI**

**(Director and Screenplay)**

Born in Parma in 1941, and originally inspired to work as a poet, Bertolucci was introduced to the film maker Pier Paolo Pasolini and in 1961 abandoned his studies at Rome University to become Pasolini's assistant on 'Accattone'. The following year he wrote the screenplay for his own first film 'The Grim Reaper' ('La Commare Secca'), which was acclaimed at the Venice Film Festival and which was followed in 1964 by 'Before the Revolution'.

In 1967 Bertolucci was asked by Sergio Leone to write the storyline for 'Once Upon a Time in the West'. In 1969 he directed 'The Spider's Stratagem', and then 'The Conformist' -- an adaptation of the Alberto Moravia novel. In 1973 he encountered enormous international critical and commercial success with the release of the controversial 'Last Tango in Paris', starring Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider, which was for a time banned in his native Italy. In 1976 he directed the modern epic '1900', exploring the battle between the left and the Fascist movement over two generations, which starred Robert de Niro and Gerard Depardieu. This was followed by 'La Luna' and 'Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man'.

In 1985, after four years of laborious preparation, Bertolucci embarked on his most ambitious project, directing 'The Last Emperor' -- the true story of Pu Yi, China's last emperor -- on location in Beijing's Forbidden City. The film went on to become a worldwide hit, and won nine Academy Awards, including Best Director and Best Film. In 1990 Bertolucci went on to adapt Paul Bowles' celebrated bohemian novel 'The Sheltering Sky', which was filmed in the Sahara Desert, starring Debra Winger and John Malkovich. In 1992 Bertolucci returned to the East to film 'Little Buddha', on location in Nepal and in the monasteries of the remote Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Three years later, he returned to Italy to shoot 'Stealing Beauty', starring Jeremy Irons, Liv Tyler, Donal McCann, and Sinéad Cusack.

Bertolucci's latest film 'Besieged', which he describes as 'a piece of chamber music for the cinema', was filmed on location in Rome and Kenya during the spring of 1998.

## Filmography

|      |                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1955 | LA TELEFERICA                        |
| 1956 | MORTE DE UN MAIALE                   |
| 1962 | THE GRIM REAPER                      |
| 1964 | BEFORE THE REVOLUTION                |
| 1966 | LA VIA DEL PETROLIO (TV Documentary) |
|      | IL CANALE (short documentary)        |
| 1967 | AGONIA (episode of Amore e Rabbia)   |
| 1968 | PARTNER                              |
| 1970 | THE SPIDER'S STRATEGEM               |
|      | THE CONFORMIST                       |
| 1971 | LA SALUTE E MALATA                   |
| 1972 | LAST TANGO IN PARIS                  |
| 1976 | 1900                                 |
| 1979 | LA LUNA                              |
| 1981 | TRAGEDY OF A RIDICULOUS MAN          |
| 1987 | THE LAST EMPEROR                     |
| 1990 | THE SHELTERING SKY                   |
| 1993 | LITTLE BUDDHA                        |
| 1995 | STEALING BEAUTY                      |
| 1998 | BESIEGED                             |



**CLARE PEPLOE**  
**(Co-Writer and Associate Producer)**

Clare Peploe, who was born in Tanzania and studied French and Italian at the Sorbonne and Perugia Universities, got her first break in feature films with the legendary Italian director Michaelangelo Antonioni on "Zabriskie Point". Following that she worked with Bernardo Bertolucci as assistant director on "1900" and "La Luna".

Peploe's first film as director was the short "Couples and Robbers", which she also wrote, and which received both Oscar and British Academy nominations. Peploe's feature film debut came with the romantic drama "High Season" which won a Silver Shell at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Her thriller "Sauce for the Goose", based on the Patricia Highsmith novel, won the Prix du Public at the Festival de Cognac.

More recently, Peploe directed her third film, "Rough Magic", starring Bridget Fonda and Russell Crowe.

**JAMES LASDUN**  
**(Author)**

James Lasdun, the author of the haunting story from which 'Besieged' is drawn, was born in London in 1958, and has lived for many years in the USA, teaching creative writing courses at Columbia, Princeton, and New York universities. He has published two collections of short stories (The Silver Age, and Three Evenings) and two books of poetry, as well as co-editing the anthology After Ovid: New Metamorphoses. With his wife Pia Davis he also wrote Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria.

Lasdun has been awarded numerous prizes for his writing, including the Dylan Thomas Award and a Guggenheim Award for poetry, and his work has appeared in publications as diverse as the New Yorker, Grand Street, and the Los Angeles Times. Most recently he co-scripted the film 'Sunday', adapted from his own short story and directed by Jonathan Nossiter, which won the Best Film and Best Screenplay prizes at the Sundance Festival in 1997, as well as Best Film and Critics' Prize at the Deauville Film Festival.



## **BIOGRAPHIES -- CAST**

### **THANDIE NEWTON**

**('Shandurai')**

In 'Besieged', Thandie Newton plays a determined but bewildered young African woman, working her way through medical school while keeping house for the eccentric Mr Kinsky. Born to a Zimbabwean mother and English father, Thandie spent her youth in Zambia and then in Britain, where she studied dance for seven years, before a back injury put a premature end to her budding career as a dancer. While still an undergraduate at Cambridge University, she achieved international acclaim for her first film performance in John Duigan's 'Flirting'. After graduating in anthropology, she went on to play opposite Brad Pitt in 'Interview with the Vampire', and to co-star in James Ivory's 'Jefferson in Paris'. Most recently she starred in Jonathan Demme's \$60m adaptation of Toni Morrison's celebrated novel about American slavery, 'Beloved'.

1998 -- 'Beloved', dir. Jonathan Demme  
1997 -- 'Gridlock'd', dir. Vondie Curtis Hall  
1996 -- 'The Leading Man', dir. John Duigan  
1995 -- 'The Journey of August King', dir. John Duigan  
1995 -- 'Jefferson in Paris', dir. James Ivory  
1994 -- 'Interview with the Vampire', dir. Neil Jordan  
1994 -- 'Loaded', dir. Anna Campion  
1993 -- 'The Young Americans', dir. Danny Cannon  
1991 -- 'Flirting', dir. John Duigan

### **DAVID THEWLIS**

**('Mr Kinsky')**

In 'Besieged', David Thewlis plays the reclusive Mr Kinsky, a pianist who leads a life of shy abstraction, until he falls in love with the young African woman who works as his housekeeper. Born in Blackpool, David moved to London at the age of 18 to study at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He worked extensively in television and theatre, and went on to appear in 'Vroom' and 'Life is Sweet', before achieving international acclaim for his extraordinary performance as the neurotic bully in Mike Leigh's 'Naked', which won him the Best Actor prize in Cannes. Since then he has starred in films for the Cohen Brothers, Jean-Jacques Annaud, and Agnieszka Holland (playing the poet Verlaine opposite

Leonardo DiCaprio's Rimbaud in 'Total Eclipse'). Later this year he will direct his first feature film, 'Cheeky', from his own screenplay, and he is currently completing his first novel, to be published by Picador Books.

- 1998 -- 'Divorcing Jack', dir. David Caffery
- 1998 -- 'The Big Lebowski', dir. Cohen brothers
- 1997 -- 'Seven Years in Tibet', dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud
- 1997 -- 'The Island of Doctor Moreau', dir. John Frankenheimer
- 1996 -- 'Dragon heart', dir. Rob Cohen
- 1995 -- 'Total Eclipse', dir. Agnieszka Holland
- 1995 -- 'Restoration', dir. Mike Hoffman
- 1994 -- 'Black Beauty', dir. Caroline Thompson
- 1993 -- 'Naked', dir. Mike Leigh
- 1993 -- 'The Trial', dir. David Jones
- 1990 -- 'Life is Sweet', dir. Mike Leigh
- 1989 -- 'Little Dorrit', dir. Christine Edzard
- 1988 -- 'Vroom', dir. Beeban Kidron

**CLAUDIO SANTAMARIA**  
**('Agostino')**

In 'Besieged', Claudio Santamaria plays Agostino, a fellow medical student, who befriends Shandurai (Thandie Newton) as she agonises over the fate of her husband, a political prisoner in Africa, and over the attentions of Mr Kinsky (David Thewlis), her employer and landlord. Born in Rome, Claudio studied at Beatrice Bracco's acting school before appearing in his first professional role, the stage production of 'Herod's Ring', directed by Furio Andreotti, in 1996.

- 1997 -- 'L'Ultimo Capodanno', dir. Marco Risi
- 1997 -- 'Fuochi d'Artificio', dir. Leonardo Pieraccioni
- 1997 -- 'Dead Train', dir. Davide Marengo
- 1997 -- 'Ama il Tuo Nemico', dir. Damiano Damiani
- 1997 -- 'Ecco Fatto', dir. Gabriele Muccion



## **BIOGRAPHIES -- CREW**

### **FABIO CIANCHETTI**

**(Cinematographer)**

#### **Filmography**

1997 -- 'Viola Bacia Tutti', dir. Egidio Eronico  
1997 -- 'Nel Profondo Paese Straniero', dir. F. Carpi  
1996 -- 'L'Amore Necessario', dir. F. Carpi  
1994 -- 'Troppo Sole', dir. Giuseppe Bertolucci  
1992 -- 'Sabbato Italiano', dir. L. Manuzzi  
1991 -- 'La Domenica Specialmente', dir. Giuseppe Bertolucci  
1990 -- 'I Divertimenti della Vita Privata', dir. Christina Comencini  
1989 -- 'Amori in Corso', dir. Giuseppe Bertolucci  
1988 -- 'I Cammelli', dir. Giuseppe Bertolucci  
1987 -- 'A Fior di Pelle', dir. Gianluca Fumagalli  
1983 -- 'Come Dire', dir. Gianluca Fumagalli

### **GIANNI SILVESTRI**

**(Production Designer)**

Production designer Gianni Silvestri has worked with Bertolucci on several of his films including 'La Luna', 'Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man', 'Sheltering Sky', and 'Stealing Beauty'. For many years Silvestri worked with the legendary Fernando Scarfiotti, whose production design credits include 'The Last Emperor'. Among his other credits Gianni Silvestri was production designer for 'Troppo Sole', directed by Giuseppe Bertolucci, and 'Pasolini, Un Delitto Italiano', directed by Marco Tullio Giordana.

### **METKA KOSAK**

**(Costume Designer)**

Metka Kosak started her training in design as a child, while playing in the studio of her mother, the well-known Slovenian artist Boza Kosak. She went on to work as assistant costume designer for Roberto Rossellini on his trilogy 'Lotta per la Sopravvivenza' ('Battle for the Afterlife'). Subsequently she has worked for directors as diverse as Glauber Rocha, Paolo Cesar Saraceni, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Gianni Amico, Marco

Tullio Giordana, Roberto Benigni, and Clare Peploe. She has been working with Bertolucci since 1989.

**CINZIA SLEITER**  
**(Set Dresser)**

Born in Edinburgh, Cinzia Sleiter went on to study at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome, before graduating in architecture. Early in her career she worked as an assistant to Giantito Burchiellaro and Fernando Scarfiotti, and has worked on several of Bertolucci's films including 'The Last Emperor', 'Sheltering Sky', and 'Stealing Beauty', as well as art directing the Paris and Venice segments of Woody Allen's 'Everybody Says I Love You'.

**ALESSIO VLAD**  
**(Composer)**

Alessio Vlad was for many years the assistant to Leonard Bernstein, and has conducted with many of Europe's leading orchestras including the Saint Cecilia Chamber Orchestra, the RAI Turin Orchestra, the Schleswig-Holstein Philharmonia, the Dresden Philharmonic, and the Capitol Orchestra of Toulouse. His output includes numerous recordings of the classics (from Puccini to Bach and Vivaldi) with the Chamber Orchestra of Saint Cecilia. As a stage and cinema composer Vlad has worked with many directors, including Andrea Barzini, Cristina Comencini, Maurizio Zaccaro, and Franco Zeffirelli.

**JACOPO QUADRI**  
**(Editor)**

Jacopo Quadri edited three films for Mario Mortone ('Morte di un matematico Napoletano', 'l'Amore molesto', and most recently 'Teatro di Guerra'). He also directed the short film 'Statici', and in association with Antonietta de Lillo and Patrizio Esposito co-directed 'Voci distanti del Mare'.



## Source Music

|                                                                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| W.A. Mozart Fantasy in D minor K 397                                               | Performed by<br>Stefano Arnaldi |
| E.G. Grieg Sonata second movement<br>from op. 7 in E minor                         | Performed by<br>Stefano Arnaldi |
| J.S. Bach Prelude in E flat minor                                                  | Performed by<br>Stefano Arnaldi |
| A. Scriabine Study op.8 n. 12<br>in D sharp major                                  | Performed by<br>Stefano Arnaldi |
| L. Van Beethoven 32 variations<br>in C minor                                       | Performed by<br>Stefano Arnaldi |
| F. Chopin Waltz in E major                                                         | Performed by<br>Andrea Quercia  |
| "Africa"<br>(J.C. Ojwang)                                                          | Performed by<br>J.C. Ojwang     |
| "Maria Valencia"<br>(P. Wemba-S. Mutela-C.Polloni)<br>Edition Cobalt Sarl          | Performed by<br>Papa Wemba      |
| "Le Voyageur"<br>(P.Wemba-M.Munan)<br>Edition Cobalt                               | Performed by<br>Papa Wemba      |
| "Sina"<br>(Salif Keita)<br>Edition Polygram Italia S.r.l.<br>For Island Music Ltd. | Performed by<br>Salif Keita     |
| "Mambote na nje"<br>(Coro Bondeko)                                                 | Performed by<br>Coro Bondeko    |

"My favorite things"  
(R.Rodgers- O. Hammerstein)  
EMI Publishing Italia

Performed by  
J. Coltrane  
Courtesy of  
Atlantic Recording Corp.  
By arrangement with  
Warner Special Production

"Diaraby"  
(Ali Farka Toure, Ry Cooder)  
Produced by Ry Cooder  
Courtesy of World Circuit Ltd.

Performed by  
RY Cooder and  
Ali Farka Toure

"Africa II"  
(J.C. Ojwang)

Performed by J.C. Ojwang

"Full option"  
(Pepe Kalle)  
Ediction Baby Production

Performed by  
Empire Bakuba

"Cuore matto"  
(A.Ambrosino-G. Savino)  
Ediction Chappel s.r.l

Performed by Little Tony

Music Ediction Turkana Melody  
Organized and coordinated by EMI Music Publishing Italy S.r.l.