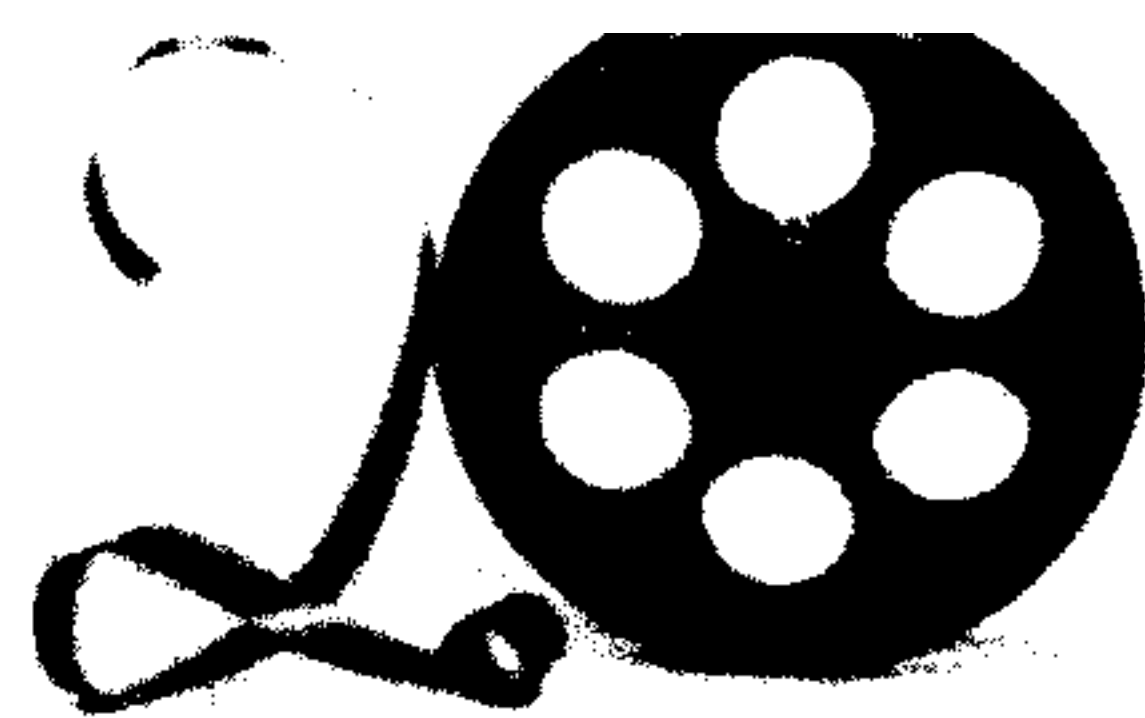


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20th London Film Festival
Programme Notes



SALO, OR THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM (Salo, o Le Centiventi Giornate Di Sodoma)

Director: Pier-Paolo Pasolini
Producer: Alberto Grimaldi
Screenplay: Pier-Paolo Pasolini, Sergio Citti
Based on the book: Les 120 Journees de Sodome by
Donatien-Alphonse-Francois, -
Marquis de Sade.
Photography: (colour) Tonino Delli Colli
Editor: Nino Baragli
Design: Dante Ferretti
Music Adviser: Ennio Morricone

CAST:

Duke Paolo Bonacelli
Bishop Giorgio Cataldi
Magistrate Umberto P. Quintavalle
Mme. Vaccari Helene Surgere
Mme. Maggi Elsa de Giorgio
Mme. Castelli Caterina Boratto
Piano Virtuoso Sonia Saviane

with

Sergio Fascetti, Giuliana Melis.

1975 Italy/France PEA (Rome)/Artistes Associes (Paris).

Bio-filmography of Pier-Paolo Pasolini:

Pasolini was born in Bologna, 5 March, 1922. Childhood in various parts of Northern Italy; wrote poetry from the age of 7. Began University Studies at Bologna. Briefly a member of the Italian Communist Party, but did not renew his membership when he moved to Rome in 1950, penniless. Began publishing his writings (novels, poetry, essays, etc) from 1952, and found work as a scriptwriter in the Rome film studios Cinecitta from 1954. After numerous collaborations on scripts for others, directed his own first feature in 1961, from which point most of his energies were devoted to film-making. He was found murdered on a piece of wasteland near Ostia on 2 November, 1975.

1961: ACCATONE. 1962: MAMMA ROMA, ROGOPAG (episode LA RICOTTA only). 1963: LA RABBIA (first episode only), SOPRALUOGHI IN PALESTINA PER 'IL VANGELO SECONDO MATTEO'. 1964: IL VANGELO SECONDO MATTEO/THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, COMIZI D'AMORE (short). 1966: UCCELLACCI E UCCELLINI/HAWKS AND SPARROWS, LE STREGHE (episode LA TERRA VISTA DALLA LUNA only). 1967: EPIDIO RE/OEDIPUS REX, AMORE E RABBIA (episode LA FIORE DI CAMPO only), CAPRICCIO ALL'ITALIANA (episode CHE COSA SONO LE NUVOLE only). 1968: TEOREMA/THEOREM, APPUNTI PER UN FILM INDIANO (short). 1969: IL PORCILE/PIGSTY, MEDEA, APPUNTI PER UN ORESTIADE AFRICANA (short). 1970: APPUNTI PER UN ROMANZO NELL'IMMONDISNI (short), IL DECAMERONE/THE DECAMERON. 1971: I RACCONTI DI CANTERBURY/THE CANTERBURY TALES. 1974: IL FIORI DELLE MILLE UNA NOTTE/THE ARABIAN NIGHTS. 1975: SALO, O LE CENTIVENTI GIORNATE DI SODOMA/SALO, OR THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM.

Preamble:

This film is nothing but a cinematic transposition of de Sade's novel The 120 Days of Sodom. I want to stress that I have been absolutely faithful to the characters' psychology and to their actions, and that I have added absolutely nothing of my own. Even the narrative structure is identical: it is obviously highly synthesised. To arrive at this synthesis, I had recourse to an idea that de Sade undoubtedly had in mind: the model of Dante. In a Dante-esque way I was able in certain speeches and certain exemplary 'days' to reduce de Sade's immense catalogue. There is a sort of 'Pre-Inferno' (an antechamber to hell), followed by three circles of hell: the 'Circle of Madness', the 'Circle of Excrement' and the 'Circle of Blood.' Consequently de Sade's four storytellers are reduced to three in my film: the fourth has become a 'virtuoso' who accompanies the others' speeches at the piano.

-P.T.O.-

However, in my absolute fidelity to de Sade's text, I have brought in one new element, which is equally absolute: instead of taking place in the France of the 18th century, the action transpires more or less in our own time - specifically, in Salo, around 1944.

That means that the whole film, with its monstrous, almost unspeakable atrocities, is offered as a huge Sadian metaphor for the Nazi/Fascists' 'detachment' in their 'crimes against humanity.'

Curval, Blangis, Durcet, L'Eveque, these are de Sade's characters (who clearly prove themselves to be the S.S. in plain clothes) and they behave towards their victims exactly as the nazi-fascists did to theirs: they think of them as objects in their possession and from the outset destroy all possibility of establishing a human relationship with them.

This does not mean that I make all this explicit in the film. No, I repeat, I have not added a word to those which de Sade's characters say nor any extraneous details to the actions they perform. The only reference to real events are the ways they dress, behave, the setting: in short the material world of 1944.

Naturally there are differences in proportion between de Sade's four protagonists who have become nazi-fascists themselves (those who are historically real): psychological and ideological differences. Differences and also some inconsistencies. But this serves the function of stressing the dream-like atmosphere, the unreal nightmare, of the film. The film is an insane dream, it cannot be explained in terms of what happened in the 1940's; a dream more logical in its entirety than it is in its details.

- Pier-Paolo Pasolini -

(Written in 1974, some months before filming commenced).

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THE COFFEE BAR IS OPEN FROM 12.30 TO 2.30pm ON EVERY WEEKDAY AFTERNOON.

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THE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE DATES WILL BE 24, 25 AND 26 DECEMBER, OPENING FOR TWO EVENING PERFORMANCES ON 27 DECEMBER (NO MATINEE). ON 3 JANUARY THERE WILL BE TWO EVENING PERFORMANCES (NO MATINEE).

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