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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 26, 1991

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**AY CARMELA! SWEEPS SPANISH OSCARS, WINS 13 GOYAS**  
**NOW PLAYING AT LUMIERE THEATRE IN SAN FRANCISCO**

**AY CARMELA!**, a darkly humorous tale of a vaudeville duo during the Spanish Civil War, starring Carmen Maura, walked away with a record breaking thirteen Goyas at the Spanish Academy of Film Arts and Sciences' recent awards ceremony. The film is now playing at the Lumiere Theatre, 1572 California St. (at Polk).

**AY CARMELA!** swept the top four categories, winning Best Film for producer Andres Vicente Gomez, Best Director for Carlos Saura, Best Actress for Carmen Maura, and Best Actor for popular Spanish comedian Andres Pajares. Gabino Diego's touching portrayal of the young guitar player earned Best Supporting Actor. **AY CARMELA!**'s unprecedented showing at the "Spanish Oscars" included awards for Art Direction, Editing, Sound, Wardrobe, Make-up and Hair, Special Effects, Production Management, and Adapted Screenplay.

**AY CARMELA!**, for which Ms. Maura was awarded Best Actress at this year's European Film Festival and Mr. Pajares won the award for Best Actor at the Montreal Film Festival, is distributed by Prestige Films, a new division of Miramax. The full list of awards follows:

Best Film	<b>AY CARMELA! - Andres V. Gomez</b>
Best Director	<b>Carlos Saura</b>
Best Actress	<b>Carmen Maura</b>
Best Actor	<b>Andres Pajares</b>
Best Supporting Actor	<b>Gabino Diego</b>
Best Adapted Screenplay	<b>Rafael Azcona and Carlos Saura</b>
Best Art Direction	<b>Rafael Palmero</b>
Best Production Management	<b>Victor Albarran</b>
Best Editing	<b>Pablo Del Amo</b>
Best Sound	<b>Gilles Orthion</b>
Best Wardrobe	<b>Rafael Palmero and Mercedes S. Rau</b>
Best Make-Up and Hair	<b>Jose A. Sanchez and Paquita Nunez</b>
Best Special Effects	<b>Reyes Abades</b>

For showtimes or more information, please call the Lumiere at 415 885 3200.

###

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CARMEN MAURA

# AY, CARMELA!

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# AY, CARMELA!

## CAST

Carmela.....	CARMEN MAURA
Paulino.....	ANDRES PAJARES
Gustavete.....	GABINO DIEGO
Lieutenant Ripamonte.....	MAURIZIO DI RAZZA
Interrogating Lieutenant.....	MIGUEL A. RELLAN
Polish Officer.....	EDWARD ZENTARA
Bruno.....	MARIO DE CANDIA
Artillery Captain.....	JOSE SANCHO
Artillery Subaltern.....	ANTONIO FUENTES
Local Boss.....	MARIO MARTIN
Mayor.....	CHEMA MAZO
Woman Prisoner.....	SILVIA CASANOVA
Peasant Prisoner.....	ALFONSO GUIRAO
Republican Doctor.....	FELIPE VELEZ
Corporal Cardoso.....	EMILIO DEL VALLE
Second Soldier CTV.....	FELIX PARDO
Sentry.....	RAFAEL DIAZ
Corporal.....	MANOLO MILLAN
Officers.....	VICTOR MENDOZA
	FRANCISCO FERRER
	GABRIEL MORENO

CREDITS

Producer.....	ANDRES VICENTE GOMEZ
Director.....	CARLOS SAURA
Production Coordinator.....	VICTOR ALBARRAN
Director of Photography.....	JOSE LUIS ALCANE
Screenwriter.....	RAFAEL AZCONA
Camera Operator.....	JULIO MADURGA
Assistant Camera.....	MIGUEL A. MUÑOZ
Assistant Director.....	SALVADOR PONS
2nd Assistant Director.....	INA LUDERS
3rd Assistant Director.....	ARANCHAGUIRRE
Auxiliary.....	JUAN FERNANDEZ
Continuity.....	CARMEN SORIANO
Choreography.....	ALBERTO PORTILLO
2nd Production Assistant.....	CARMEN MARTINEZ
Production Auxiliaries.....	MARCO GOMEZ
	JOSE LOPEZ
	ALFONSO LOPEZ
Accountant/Paymaster.....	FRANCISCO AMARO
Production/Direction Trainee.....	JORGE CARRASCO
Auxiliary Camera.....	PANCHO ALCANE
Production Stills.....	FEDERICO GRAU
Sound Engineer.....	GILLES ORTION
Sound Recordist.....	ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ
Sound Trainee.....	CARLOS BONNATI
Art Director.....	RAFAEL PALMERO
Assistant Decorator.....	CARLOS DORREMOECHEA
Wardrobe Assistant.....	MERCEDES SANCHEZ RAU
Props Buyer.....	TEDDY VILLALBA, JR.
Make Up.....	JOSE A. SANCHEZ
Hair Styles.....	PAQUITA NUÑEZ
Make Up Assistant.....	SUSANA SANCHEZ
Editor.....	PABLO G. DEL AMO
Assistant Editor.....	LUIS CASTANON
Auxiliary Editor.....	NURIA C. GALAN

## CREDITS

Dressmakers.....MARIA LUISA DURAN  
JOAQUIN MONTERO  
PABLO ESPINOSA  
Props.....FELIX GARCIA  
PABLO ARROYO  
FRANCISCO CALONGE  
Standby Props.....JOSE IGNACIO ETXANIZ  
Stagehand.....JAVIER ARSUAGA  
Carpenter.....JUAN CARRION  
Gaffer.....MIGUEL A. RODRIGUEZ  
Electricians.....JOSE L. TORRECILLA  
JOSE ANTONIO GARCIA  
JOSE ALBERTO ARNAL  
TEODORO ORTEGA  
Key Grip.....RAMON MUÑOZ BRAVO  
Grip.....ANSELMO VILLALBA  
Camera Crane.....EDMUNDO SAN RODRIGUEZ  
Special Effects.....REYES ABADES  
Set Construction.....RAMON MOYA  
Catering.....RAFAEL GARCIA  
Cameras.....CARMARA RENT  
Laboratory.....FOTOFILM  
Sound Recording.....E. EXA  
Transport.....ANGEL MEGINO  
Genny.....UMESA  
Electrical Material.....GECISA  
Cranes.....CINEGRUA  
Prop Supplies.....MENGIBAR-MATEOS  
Wardrobe.....CORNEJO  
Negative.....KODAK  
Attorneys.....LEGISCINE  
Press and Promotion.....CHARO EMA

Running time: 1h 35 min

A co-production by Iberoamericana Films, S.A. (Madrid) and ELLEPI  
(Rome) in collaboration with TVE, S.A.



## **AY, CARMELA!**

### **SYNOPSIS**

The year is 1938. In a battle-scarred village at the Republican front, the principal players of Carmela and Paulino's Elegant Variety Show are doing their enthusiastic best for freedom and a pitifully meager paycheck. As Franco's planes buzz overhead, Carmela (Carmen Maura) and Paulino (Andrés Pajares) sing, dance, orate and even fart, for the amusement of the Republic's weary, starving soldiers. But the bombs are close, the food scarce. It's year two of the Spanish Civil War and vestiges of the country's first democratically elected government have been all but wiped out by the tremendous force of Hitler and Mussolini financed fascism. With dreams of something more to eat than a few scraps, Carmela and Paulino, along with their assistant Gustavete (Gabino Diego), a mute shocked into silence by war, decide to flee the front for the relative safety of Republican-controlled Valencia.

That evening, while Paulino and Gustavete siphon gasoline out of an army truck into the troupe's truck, Carmela serves as a decoy, diverting the attention of a nearby guard with a warm smile, some idle chatter and a hasty, chaste fumble in the dark. With a full tank, the joyful trio departs, stealing away from danger and, they hope, into safety. But night and fog and lack of sleep conspire to keep the group from their destination, and the next morning finds them face to face with the enemy. After a Republican flag, a prop from their last show, is found among their belongings, the performers are dragged off to the nearby fascist stronghold. There they are accused of collaboration, stripped of their possessions, and imprisoned in a dilapidated schoolhouse with what seems like most of the local population.

Among the many other prisoners are the town mayor and a number of Polish soldiers from the International Brigade. Using a map and hand signals, Carmela wastes no time in striking up an acquaintance with a handsome Polish brigadier (Edward Zentara) and teaching the delighted officer how to give her first name its proper Castillian lilt. In the face of his wife's innocent flirtations, Paulino's eternal jealousy threatens to emerge. But petty emotions dissolve when the fascists burst in, pick out a number of prisoners including the hapless mayor and execute them, shooting them in front of a schoolyard wall. The actors are on the verge of despair, and when they hear their names called out one gray afternoon, they fear the

worst. Suddenly, to their great surprise, the troupe members find themselves being spirited away from prison instead of standing in front of a bullet-ridden wall. Surprise turns to amazement, when Carmela, Paulino, and Gustavete are brought before a Lieutenant Ripamont (Maurizio di Razza) and informed by this former theater director that they've been recruited for an evening of morale-boosting entertainment.

Carmela auditions for the lieutenant with a glimpse of her breast; Paulino offers him a tremulous fascist salute—the troupe is back in show business. Fortified on generous portions of pasta, the three begin to organize a show that has been mapped out by the lieutenant. Because everything the group owns has been confiscated, they're even brought to a comfortable, bourgeois house to scavenge for materials. As their affable Italian guard naps, Gustavete fashions a dress for Carmela from splashy upholstery material and Paulino stumbles upon a bedroom. After endless days and nights of discomfort, his ardor is inflamed by the sight of a clean, plush bed and he attempts to seduce Carmela, even after she makes the queasy discovery that the bedroom belonged to the doomed mayor.

Back at the local playhouse, the performers frantically prepare for the lieutenant's program, memorizing bad poetry and even worse jokes. Although repulsed by the fascists, Paulino is convinced that the troupe's cooperation is their guarantee of survival and possible freedom. Carmela is less certain, and has only agreed to cooperate in exchange for a promise from Paulino to fulfill her one dream: after it's over they'll be married again, but this time properly—in a church. Backstage, as the minutes pass, Carmela grows increasingly agitated by the part she must play, in particular her role in a vulgar, anti-Republican sketch. But discomfort turns to certain rage when she discovers that the group is to perform not merely for the fascist troops, but for prisoners scheduled for execution the following day.

As Paulino races about, trying to memorize lines, Carmela practices her dance steps and begins a slow, deep burn. Confronting her husband, she vows not to collaborate with the fascists. Must the show go on in the face of such barbarism? she demands. Paulino pleads for Carmela's cooperation, reminding her that above all, they're entertainers, not politicians.

Gustavete tunes his guitar, the other musicians toot into key. Suddenly, the curtain is up and the show begins. Behind the lights in the orchestra section is the fascist command, in the balcony, members of the International Brigade including Carmela's new-found friend, the Polish officer.



The scene is set, the script is written. Carmela steps onstage. The show begins.

## CARMEN MAURA

(Carmela)

Born in Madrid on September 15, 1945, Carmen Maura is the second of four children, and the daughter of an ophthalmologist. Until the age of sixteen, she attended a Catholic school run by French nuns in Madrid. Even though she had hopes of becoming a journalist, Maura's conservative family urged her to pursue a more traditional career, and she graduated from Madrid's Catholic Institute with a degree in French and the plan to work as a translator. Then, at the age of twenty, Maura took the first of many personal detours and became the director of a Madrid art gallery, a position she held for the next five years.

Although she never studied acting professionally, while in college Maura participated in numerous amateur theater productions, something she continued sporadically throughout the late sixties. It wasn't until 1970, however, when she received an encouraging mention in a newspaper review that Maura actually decided to become an actress, this despite a lack formal training, contacts, money, and the support of family and friends.

Much of the next ten years was a struggle. Maura worked everywhere at everything. She appeared in bit parts in "cafe teatro" (supper-club theater), performed in bullrings across Spain, and in musical comedies in local cabarets and halls. She did radio, voice-over recordings, film dubbing, and appeared in several short films by unknown directors, all while earning extra money as a translator.

After she attracted something of a following on the club circuit, in the mid-seventies Maura got her first big break as the lead in a production of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Dirty Hands*. Subsequently, she appeared in plays such as Buero Vallejo's *La Carta Boca Abajo* (*Cards Face Down*), Anouilh's *The Savage Woman*, and Moliere's *Tartuffe*. She joined the National Drama Center and went on to perform in productions of Rafael Alberti's *Noche de Guerra en el Museo del Prado* (*A Night of War in the Prado Museum*), Zorrilla's *Abre el Ojo* (*Open Your Eye*), and Kafka's *The Trial*.

It was during the run of *Dirty Hands* that one of Spanish cinema's most notable partnerships was born: Maura met and befriended fellow cast member Pedro Almodóvar. She became his muse, starring in a number of his Super 8 adventures. She was among those friends who encouraged him to make the leap into 35mm production, and was right there for each step into fame. All told Maura and Almodóvar made six features together, finding great international success throughout the eighties with critical and commercial hits such as *Law of Desire*, *What Have I Done to Deserve This*, and most recently, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*.

Although Maura is still best known to American audiences for her acclaimed work with Almodóvar, little is known on this side of the Atlantic of her other successes. Between 1972 and 1976 she had small parts in films by José Luis García Sánchez, Pilar Miró, and M. Angel Díez, while her first major role was in Fernando Colomo's *Tigres de Papel (Paper Tigers)*, for which she won the Best Actress Award at the La Coruña Comedy Film Festival.

It was as a relative unknown, however, that Maura was tapped to host a popular weekly talk show on Spanish television called "*Esta Noche*," a move that won her legions of fans, as well as virtually every Spanish television award. In 1983, the same year she made Almodóvar's *Dark Habits*, Maura gained further prominence on the Spanish landscape by becoming spokeswoman for General Foods' "Monky" coffee, a winning strategy that resulted in the brew's soaring sales over the following five years.

Ever busy, throughout the eighties Maura appeared in a number of films for Spanish television, including adaptations of works by Balzac, Noel Coward, and Tirso de Molina, and appeared in films by directors such as Fernando Colomo, Miguel Picazo, and Fernando Trueba. However, it was her star turn as Gloria, the harassed housewife and mother in Almodóvar's 1984 *What Have I Done to Deserve This?*, that finally brought Maura her first taste of international recognition. Shown at film festivals in Montreal, Miami, Los Angeles and at the 1985 New Directors/New Films series in New York, it earned rave reviews for the actress and was the first of Almodóvar's films to receive theatrical distribution in the United States.



Although she had only a small part in Almodóvar's next film, *Matador*, it was her performance as Tina, the flamboyant and heart wrenching transsexual in Almodóvar's 1986 *Law of Desire*, that proved to be Maura's breakout role. An enormous commercial success in Spain, *Law of Desire* left critics and audiences cheering at festivals around the world. Maura was compared to everyone from Anna Magnani, Sophia Loren, and Jeanne Moreau to Lucille Ball and Bette Midler.

It was in the wake of this enormous success that Almodóvar decided, for the first time in their fruitful collaboration, to write a role specifically for Maura. The result was *Woman on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, a film for which she was awarded the CIAK Prize for Best Actress at the 1988 Venice Film Festival. That same year Maura also received the Spanish Ministry of Culture's 1988 National Cinema Prize, the only woman ever to be so honored.

After completing *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* Maura and Almodóvar announced they were "taking a rest from each other," a decision that freed Maura to explore roles outside the Almodóvar mold. Always enthusiastic about working with talented new directors, Maura went on to star opposite Antonio Banderas and Victoria Abril in *Baton Rouge*, a first feature by Rafael Monléon in 1988. The following year she again worked with Banderas in *The Happy Woman*, a one-hour film for Spanish television directed by newcomer Pepe Ganga, as well as starring in the French feature *Mieux Vaut Courir*, directed by Elizabeth Rapponeau.

By far, however, Maura's most important role in the past two years - for which she was named European Actress of the Year - is that of eponymous star of Carlos Saura's profoundly moving historical drama, **AY, CARMELA!** For non-Spanish audiences this is a new Maura, one firmly center stage and undistracted by comic-melodramatic excess. It may just be that Carmen Maura is the actress who will bridge the generational expanse between Spain's great, contemporary filmmakers, between the sensibility of Saura and that of Almodóvar, between the New Spanish Cinema and the cinema of the post-Franco era.

Currently, Maura divides her time between an apartment in Madrid and a country home with many animals. She has two children, a twenty-one-year-old daughter and an eighteen-year-old son.



Among the works Maura has performed in café teatro (supper clubs), one of the most notable is *The Last Tango of Rudolph Valentino and Marilyn Monroe*.

Vaudeville: *Mi chica la minifaldera. Supergolpe en Navalcarnero.*

Theater: Theater tours in Europe, three performances a day, with works such as *Ninette and a Gentleman from Murcia, The Three Et Ceteras of Don Simon, Letters Face Down, The Day They Killed the Pope, Forget the Drums, Life Is a Dream*. Maura's first performance in Madrid's Eslava Theater was in Sartre's *Dirty Hands*, with José Luis Alonso and Pellicena. Adolfo Marsillach saw her in the play and decided to bring her to the National Theater. From that point, she appeared in: *Abre el Ojo* by Zorilla; *Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado* by Alberti; Moliere's *Tartuffe*; Kafka's *The Trial*; *La mujer salvaje* by Anouilh; *Cabaret para tiempos de crisis*; *La Reina del Nilo*.

Television: Pilar Miró gave Maura her first starring role in *Eugenie Grandet*. She went on to work in *La Calderona* with Josefina Molina and Antonio Gala; *Los tres maridos burlados* with Pilar Miró; *El malvado Carabel*, and many other productions until she was hired by Fernando García Tola for *Esta Noche*, the program for which she received both the Fotogramas prize and the Ondas prize.

Presenter for the New Year's Eve program *Super 88*, directed by Pilar Miró.

*La mujer feliz*, part of the series *La mujer de tu vida*, directed by J. Ganga.

#### Notable

Short Films: *Ir por lana*, by Miguel Angel Diéz  
*Pompurutas Imperiales*, by Fernando Colomo

## MAURA'S FILMOGRAPHY

1970	<i>EL HOMBRE OCULTO</i> (Alfonso Ungría)
1972	<i>EL LOVE FERROZ</i> (José Luis García Sánchez)
1976	<i>LA PETICION</i> (Pilar Miró)
1977	<i>TIGRES DE PAPEL</i> (Fernando Colomo)
1978	<i>QUE HACE UNA CHICA COMO TU EN UN SITIO COMO ESTE?</i> (Fernando Colomo)
1980	<i>PEPI, LUCI, BOM AND OTHER GIRLS LIKE MOM</i> (Pedro Almodóvar)
1983	<i>EL CID CABREADOR</i> (Angelino Fons) <i>DARK HABITS</i> (Almodóvar)
1984	<i>WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?</i> (Almodóvar)
1985	<i>EXTRAMUROS</i> (Miguel Picazo) <i>SE INFIEL Y NO MIRES CON QUIEN</i> (Fernando Trueba) <i>MATADOR</i> (Almodóvar)
1986	<i>TATA MIA</i> (José Luis Borau)
1987	<i>LAW OF DESIRE</i> (Almodóvar) <i>WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN</i> (Almodóvar)
1988	<i>BATÓN ROUGE</i> (Rafael Moleón)
1989	<i>LA MUJER FELIZ</i> (José Miguel Ganga) Episode of <i>LA MUJER DE TU VIDA</i>
1989	<i>MIEUX VAUT COURIR</i> (Elizabeth Rapponeau)
1990	<i>AY, CARMELA!</i> (Carlos Saura)



## ANDRES PAJARES (Paulino)

Born in Madrid in 1945, Andrés Pajares was a bright student who nevertheless preferred to amuse school friends with his lively imitations of celebrities, than spend time hitting the books. In this case precocious talent didn't go to waste, and it was his early predilection for mimicry that let Pajares to join different amateur theater/comedy groups, traveling and performing in villages throughout Spain.

Despite years of living on the edge, Pajares' enthusiasm for performance never wavered. Determined to make a name for himself, he moved back to Madrid, where he initially found work in a dance hall working as an emcee, comedian and a singer. After a time his dedication and hard work began to pay off; he joined the Antonio Machín Company and later the Manolo Escobar Company. Pajares was becoming a familiar name on the comic/theater circuit. He was signed up with Tony Leblanc's Revue Company and soon found himself commanding top billing. He was critically lauded as a consummate "showman," and his name loomed up in huge letters on the marquee of the Zarzuela Theater in Madrid, where he co-starred with such celebrated figures as Rocio Jurado and Sara Montiel.

It's no surprise that the multi-talented Pajares was able to make a smooth transition from the stage to television, a medium for which he created a gallery of characters who became primetime favorites, including "El currante," "Madame Gigi," "El pregonero." Along the way Pajares also recorded a series of successful albums for major labels and since 1979 has appeared in films directed by Rafael Gil, Juan de Orduña, Tito Fernández, Alfonso Paso, among others.

Still, despite his successes in television, film and music Pajares' stardom rests in revue. It's there that the company he formed Andrés Pajares Company in 1970 found great success with productions like *Que majas son*, *Mas vale pájaro en mano*, *Del coro al café*, and *La risa esta servida*, all of which topped box-office records each time they were performed. Pajares has also created a series of popular, comic productions for cafe-theater, including *El embarazado*, *Los hijos del pecado*, *Yermo*, and *Burrus*.

Some of Pajares' greatest cinematic triumphs have been in a string of movies directed by Mariano Ozores, all of which were box

office boffo in the otherwise difficult national market. Among his many achievements, in 1975 Pajares was granted the prize of "Best Spanish Speaking Comic Actor" by the Critics' Association of Miami. In addition, he has received high praise for his role in *La hoz y el martínez*, a film directed by Alvaro Sáenz de Heredia that received an award from the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

In 1987 Pajares starred in a production of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* that was directed by José Osuna and opened in the Calderon Theater in Madrid. It was a huge success, with receipts that added significantly to the greatest financial boom-year in the history of Spain's comic theater. On the basis of this new accomplishment, Pajares presented a company of outstanding talent for *The Foreigner* under the direction of José Osuna, in the Reina Victoria Theater in Madrid.

In light of his history in popular theater, Andrés Pajares initially seems an almost curious choice for a lead role in a Carlos Saura film. Yet the role is a casting coup - and, for his performance, Pajares was named Best Actor at the 1990 Montreal World Film Festival. As Paulino, Pajares brings a soulful, tragicomic dimension to this down-and-out vaudevillian, the moral dilemma of collaboration etched deep in his sad eyes and gentle buffoonery. Paulino is at once a gentleman, a clown, and a failure. More than any stage role, Paulino's greatest triumph rests in his overwhelming love for his wife Carmela, a woman whose stronger moral courage he must face, and finally accept.



## PAJARES' FILMOGRAPHY

- 1971      *UN ADULTERIO DECENTE* (Rafael Gil)  
            *EL MARINO DE LOS PUNOS DE ORO* (Gil)
- 1974      *ME HAS HECHO PERDER EL JUICER* (Juan de Orduna)
- 1978      *LOS BINGUEROS* (Mariano Ozores)  
            *LOS ENERGETICOS* (Ozores)
- 1979      *LOS BUNGUEROS* (Ozores)  
            *LOS CHULOS* (Ozores)
- 1980      *YO HICE A ROQUE !!!* (Ozores)  
            *PADRE NO HAY MAS QUE DOS* (Ozores)  
            *EL LIGUERO MAGICO* (Ozores)
- 1981      *AGITESE ANTES DE USARSE* (Ozores)  
            *BRUJAS MAGICAS* (Ozores)
- 1982      *LA LOLA NOS LLEVA AL HUERTO* (Ozores)  
            *EL CURRANTE* (Ozores)
- 1983      *QUE GOZADA DE DIVORCIO* (Ozores)  
            *TODOS AL SUELO* (Ozores)
- 1984      *EL DONANTE* (Ozores)  
            *CRISTOBAL COLON, DE OFICIO DESCUBRIDOR* (Ozores)
- DESMADRE MATRIMONIAL* (Andrés Pajares)  
            *EL EMBARAZADO* (Pajares)
- 1987      *LA HOZ Y EL MARTINEZ* (Avaro Sáenz de Heredia)
- 1988      *MOROS Y CRISTIANOS* (Luis Garcia Berlanga)
- 1989      ***AY, CARMELA!*** (Carlos Saura)



## GABINO DIEGO

(Gustavete)

Gabino was born in Madrid in 1966. An admittedly unruly child, Diego was the despair of his parents, relatives, teachers until he hit eleven and wrote, directed and starred in a school play. School may have been nothing but a headache for this precocious boy, but this first taste of the stage sealed his future.

Repeatedly expelled from Madrid's most prestigious institutions, Diego ended up in a school for dropouts where ironically, for the first time in his life, the teachers understood him and he made an attempt to understand them. This didn't always translate into regular attendance, of course, and at the age of thirteen, Diego would often spend, along with a friend, entire days at a time playing the guitar and singing in the subway. When he did attend school, however, he found that his popularity had soared among classmates and friends, all of whom appreciated his gift for mimicry.

Diego's first experience with the movies came by way of a friend who told him that the director Jaime Chavárri was on the lookout to cast teenage boys for his next film. Diego did some tests and was picked out for Chavárri's feature *Las Bicicletas son para el verano*. It was while shooting this 1984 release that Diego realized that the only thing he cared about was becoming a good actor. He began to study drama in an acting workshop run by Cristina Rota, working hard to become one of Spain's leading young film actors.

With several years of study and a number of roles behind him, Diego finally got the opportunity to prove his development as an actor when he appeared in *El viaje a ninguna parte*, directed by Fernando Fernán Gómez in 1986. With his interpretation of the character Carlitos, Diego received the recognition he coveted. Now, four years later Diego is again proving himself in his co-starring role as a mute performer in Carlos Saura's **AY, CARMELA!** As Gustavete, a young man frozen into silence by the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, Diego must communicate a world of emotions not through spoken words, but in a language of gesture, expression, and the occasional, chalkboard scribble. It's a performance that speaks volumes.



**CARLOS SAURA**  
(Director)

*The Spanish Civil War has been a decisive influence not only for those of us who lived through it, even if we were children at the time—I was four years old when the war began—but also for later generations of Spaniards, for people born well afterwards but who, without experiencing the war directly, have lived under its consequences.*

—Carlos Saura

Carlos Saura was born in January 1932 in Huesca, a province abutting the Spanish-French border. Saura's father was a lawyer, his mother, a pianist; young Carlos was the second of their four children. During the terrible years of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) Saura lived in the Republican-held cities of Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia, even though his mother's family supported Franco.

Following the end of World War II, Saura attended a high school run by Augustinian Friars, but finished his studies in a secular school in Madrid. After graduating from high school he enrolled in a program to study industrial engineering, but soon realized that his real love was photography. In 1951, at the tender age of nineteen, he had his first one-man exhibition. Such was his commitment to his art that he also participated in a number of prestigious exhibitions and competitions, and roamed Spain snapping pictures of the countryside for a collection of photographs that, sadly, was never published.

Abandoning his studies in engineering, Saura joined the Institute of Cinematographic Investigation and Experiment (ICIE) in 1952 on the advice of his brother Antonio, a celebrated abstract expressionist. In 1957 Saura qualified as a director, the only student to do so; one year later the ICIE hired Saura as a professor of "scenic practices."

After collaborating on various cinematic projects, Saura directed his first film in 1958, a documentary entitled *Cuenca*; he followed this up a year later with his first feature, *The Hooligans*. By the late fifties Saura's early love for Lana Turner and Hollywood adventure films had been supplanted by a deep appreciation of the cinema of Italian neo-realism. The international world of film was undergoing seismic changes; it was rapidly becoming clear the Franco's isolationist policies could no longer preserve Spain from foreign influence. Beyond neo-realism, by the time Saura directed his first feature, ground-shattering films like

Godard's *Breathless* and Cassavetes' *Shadows* (both 1959) as well as the important influence of *cinéma vérité* (Jean Rouch) and direct cinema (David and Albert Maysles) were making an impact. None of these works would escape the attention of the emerging New Spanish Cinema or its most significant director, Carlos Saura. Ironically, it was in France, at the 1960 Cannes Film Festival (Saura was presenting *The Hooligans*) that he met the director he claims has had the greatest impact upon his own work, the great Spanish exile, Luis Buñuel.

Between 1962 and 1964, Saura taught at the National Film School, while simultaneously directing his second feature, *Lament for a Bandit*. In 1965, he had his first big international success with *The Hunt*, the film that marked the beginning of a fifteen year association with producer Elías Querejeta. By this time, Saura had already defined himself as an auteur, complete with a distinct style and a sizable group of regular collaborators—including screenwriter Rafael Azcona, cameraman Luis Cuadrado (later, Teo Escamilla), musician Luis de Pablo, film editor Pablo del Amo, art director Emilio Sanz de Soto and especially the actress—and Saura's future wife—Geraldine Chaplin.

Saura met Chaplin at the Berlin Festival, embarking on a professional and personal relationship with her that over time would result in eight films and a son, Shane, born in 1975. The films he made with Chaplin mark a turn in Saura's work toward a cinema of heightened lyricism and eroticism, films that explored the personal realm, while never ceding the director's sociopolitical concerns.

Despite the obstacle of state and ecclesiastical censorship (implemented during the Civil War and not abandoned until after Franco's death), as well as tremendous economic difficulties, during the sixties and seventies Saura managed to complete the most coherent body of work of his generation. He opened up international markets for the very limited Spanish cinema, was often the country's only director to gain world distribution and won scores of awards: *The Hunt* (Silver Bear at the Berlin Festival), *Cousin Angelica* (Special Jury Prize in Cannes), *Cria* (Special Grand Prize for acting in Cannes), *Mama Turns a Hundred* (nominated for an Oscar).

In 1980 Saura's relationship with Chaplin ended and his career took another turn as he returned to the direct social realism of his early fifties films with *Faster, Faster*. That same year, he also received the National Film Prize, awarded to him by the Spanish government.



A year later Saura began his collaboration with celebrated dancer and choreographer, Antonio Gades, with whom he made the renowned musical trilogy, *Blood Wedding*, *Carmen*, and *El amor brujo*, the film that became his greatest commercial success in the international market. In 1986 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences paid tribute to Saura.

In 1987 Saura began shooting *El Dorado* in Costa Rica. One of his most ambitious productions, the story centers on the journey along the Amazon of the legendary captain Lope de Aguirre during the reign of Philip II. Two years later, Saura again took up the extraordinary personality from Spain's Golden Century, the mystical poet Saint John of the Cross.

Now, with **AY, CARMELA!** Saura again returns to the chapter in Spain's history he has lived with since childhood.

Despite his youth, the Civil War had a deep effect on Saura and it has greatly influenced his evolution as a director; in each of his films there is a trace of that profound legacy. Although many of his films make some reference to this traumatic period, **AY, CARMELA!** is the first Saura film to confront so directly the tragedy of a nation cut in two, in a war that literally found brother fighting brother, and over a half million dead.

In order to return to the Spanish Civil War, Saura needed a script with a understanding of both the grand sweep of war and the minutiae of everyday life during wartime. Most of all, Saura needed to look at the past with a clear eye, and sometimes even a laugh; more than anything, he could not be overwhelmed or defeated by the past.

**"AY, CARMELA!"** says Carlos Saura, "has poignancy, tremendous color, scale, and—most importantly—humor. **AY, CARMELA!** is the film I have been searching for."

## SAURA'S FILMOGRAPHY

1957	<i>SUNDAY AFTERNOON</i> (Graduation film)
1958	<i>CUENCA</i>
1959	<i>THE HOOLIGANS</i>
1963	<i>LAMENT FOR A BANDIT</i>
1965	<i>THE HUNT</i> (Silver Bear, Berlin)
1967	<i>PEPPERMINT FRAPPE</i> (Silver Bear, Berlin)
1968	<i>THREE IS STRESS</i>
1969	<i>THE DEN</i>
1970	<i>THE GARDENS OF DELIGHT</i>
1972	<i>ANA AND THE WOLVES</i>
1973	<i>COUSIN ANGELICA</i> (Special Jury Prize, Cannes)
1975	<i>CRIA</i> (Special Grand Prize, Cannes)
1977	<i>ELISA MY LOVE</i> (Acting Prize, Cannes)
1978	<i>BLINDFOLDED</i>
1979	<i>MAMA TURNS A HUNDRED</i> (Nominated for the Oscar)
1980	<i>FASTER, FASTER</i> (Golden Bear, Berlin)
1981	<i>BLOOD WEDDING</i> (Critic's Prize, New York) <i>SWEET PAST</i>
1982	<i>ANTONIETA</i>



- 1983      *CARMEN*  
(Special Grand Prize from the Superior Technical  
Commision, Cannes  
Prize for the Best Artistic Contribution, Cannes  
Nominated for the Oscar, USA  
Nominated for the Globe, USA  
Nominated for the Cesar, French  
Best Foreign Film, England  
Best Foreign Film, Japan  
Best Foreign Film, Germany)
- 1984      *THE STILTS*
- 1985      *EL AMOR BRUJO*
- 1988      *EL DORADO* (Official Selection, Cannes)
- 1989      *DARK NIGHT* (Official Selection, Berlin)
- 1990      ***AY, CARMELA!***

## ANDRES VICENTE GOMEZ

(Producer)

Another Madrid native, Andrés Vicente Gómez was born in the Spanish capital in 1943. He began his film career at the age of seventeen, under the tutelage of Niels Larsen. Only two years later he joined with Michael and Alexander Salkin and became involved in a number of major Spanish projects including, among others, *Cervantes*.

For two years he also worked with long-time Saura associate, the producer Elías Querejeta, taking responsibility for foreign sales. In 1965, at the age of twenty-two, Gómez established his own production company and produced *White Comanche*. In addition, he also set up a distribution company for films in their original version, the most important company of its kind until the end of the Franco dictatorship, at which point the need for this kind of structure disappeared.

In 1971 Gómez produced *Treasure Island*, which was directed by John Hough and starred Orson Welles. During the production Gómez established a close friendship with the famous, but tragically neglected, Welles, and the two went on to co-produce the little-known classic *F for Fake*, which Welles shot both in Spain and France. In 1974 production began on *The Other Side of the Wind*, with Gómez co-producing and Welles directing. But, as with many of Welles' post-Hollywood projects, this film was doomed because of a lack of financing and was never completed.

On a more happy note, that same year saw Gómez named the market director of the San Sebastian Film Festival, a role that he carried out for the next three years. In 1975 he produced *La Loba y la Paloma*, directed by Gonzalo Suárez, *The Sky Falling* by Silvio Narizzano, and *La Querida* by Fernando Fernán Gómez. From that point onward, Andrés Vicente Gómez had the distinction of producing a film each year.

In 1979 Gómez produced *The Truth About the Savolta Case*, a film directed by Antonio Drove and, at the time, the most expensive and complex production in the history of Spanish cinema. It was both a critical and commercial success. In 1981 Gómez produced *Black Arrow*, with John Hough again directing, as well as the television series "*Los pazos de Ulloa*," directed by Gonzalo Suárez. In 1985 Gómez also produced *Se infiel y no mires con quién*, directed by Fernando Trueba, a film which topped the box-office records for that year.



The following year Gómez produced Pedro Almodóvar's controversial *Matador*, the film that confirmed the young director's reputation as a public favorite, both inside and outside Spain. That same year Gómez also produced *The Year of Enlightenment*, directed by Fernando Trueba, a film which set box office records and won the Silver Bear at the 1987 Berlin Festival.

The year 1987 was especially important for Andrés Vicente Gómez. Not only was he financing *El Dorado*, the film directed by Carlos Saura that recounts the adventures of a handful of conquistadors, he was also co-producing, in collaboration with Camera One in Paris and 23 Giugno in Rome, *Y'a bon les blancs*, the last film by Marco Ferreri. In addition Gómez was also involved in "*The Most Dangerous Man in the World*," a series directed by Gavin Millar for the BBC.

As if that wasn't enough, 1987 was also the year Gómez produced *Rowing with the Wind*, a film for which its director, Gonzalo Suárez, was awarded the Golden Shell at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Gómez rounded out his busy schedule in Costa Rica, producing *Miss Caribe* for director Fernando Colomo.

In 1988 and 1989, Gómez continued his activities by finishing up *Miss Caribe*; co-producing *Pasodoble*, by José Luis García Sánchez; co-producing Richard Lester's *The Return of the Musketeers*; producing *Love's Doing* by Jaime Chavárri; producing *Dark Night* by Carlos Saura, a film selected for the 1989 Berlin Film Festival; as well as producing the most recent film directed by Fernando Trueba, *The Mad Monkey*, which was selected for last year's Venice Film Festival.

## GOMEZ FILMOGRAPHY

- 1965      *WHITE COMMANCHE* (Gilbert Kay)
- 1971      *TREASURE ISLAND* (John Hough)
- 1973      *EL LOBO Y LA PALOMA* (Gonzalo Suárez)
- 1974      *THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIND* (Orson Welles)
- 1975      *THE SKY IS FALLING* (Silvio Narizzano)  
            *LA QUERIDA* (Fernando Fernán Gómez)
- 1976      *LA RAULITO ESTA EN LIBERTAD* (Lautaro Murua)
- 1977      *POR QUE PERDIMOS LA GUERRA* (D. Santillán & L. Galindo)
- 1978      *LA VIUDA ANDALUZA* (Francesco Betriú)
- 1979      *THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SAVOLTA CASE* (Antonio Drove)
- 1981      *THE BLACK ARROW* (Hough)  
            *"LOS PAZOS DE ULLOA"* (Gonzalo Suárez), television  
            series
- 1985      *SE INFIEL Y NO MIRES CON QUIEN* (Fernando Trueba)
- 1986      *MATADOR* (Pedro Almodóvar)  
            *EL AÑO DE LA LUCES* (Trueba)  
            *LA INTRUSA* (Jaime Chavárri)  
            *LA ESTANQUERA DE VALLECAS* (Eloy de la Iglesia)
- 1987      *LA VIDA ALEGRE* (Fernando Colomo)  
            *EL DORADO* (Carlos Saura)  
            *EL PECADOR IMPECABLE* (August Martínez-Terres)  
            *Y'A BON LES BLANCS* (Marco Ferreri), Gómez was co-  
            producer  
            *THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN THE WORLD* (Gavin Millar),  
            a BBC television series  
            *ROWING WITH THE WIND* (Gonzalo Suárez)



1988      *MISS CARIBE* (Colomo)  
            *THE RETURN OF THE MUSKETEERS* (Richard Lester), Gómez  
            was co-producer  
            *DARK NIGHT* (Saura)  
            *LOVE'S DOING* (Chavárri)  
            *PASADOBLE* (José Luis García Sánchez), Gómez was co-  
            producer  
            *THE MAD MONKEY* (Trueba)

1990      ***AY, CARMELA!*** (Saura)

## RAFAEL AZCONA

(Screenwriter)

An indispensable scriptwriter for many important European and Spanish movies, Rafael Azcona was born in Logrono in 1926. A poet during his youth, Azcona moved to Madrid in 1951 at the age of twenty-five. That year, while sitting the Cafe Varela, he met Antonio Mingote, who in turn later introduced Azcona to novelist Alvaro de la Inglesia.

Shortly thereafter, Azcona began to write for the *Cordoniz*, a political satire magazine which during those years of state-enforced censorship remained a bastion of literary liberty. During that same period Azcona began to write for the daily *Pueblo*, the newspaper for which he created a character who looms large not only in the Spanish imagination, but abroad as well: the repellent Vicente boy.

Azcona's first novel, *When the Bull is Called Felipe*, wasn't published until after a number of his other books. He followed that with *The Dead Do Not Touch Themselves, Babe*, an ingenious work that had a profound effect on the course of his life. One result of Azcona's growing reputation was a request from the Italian director Marco Ferreri, who at the time was living in Spain, that he write a script. Unfortunately, the final draft never made it onto celluloid, the victim of state censorship. Refusing to give up, Ferreri proposed to Azcona that they try something else, and together they wrote *A Haven For Loving*.

In 1958, Azcona published his most acclaimed novel *The Dreamers*. In 1960 he wrote *Poor, Paralytic and Dead*, a novel composed of three separate stories, one of which, "*Paralytic*," became the basis of yet another of Ferreri's films.

That same year Azcona wrote his last novel, *The Europeans*. Although he continues to publish short stories, among them "Life in the Family," "Avoid Those Shores" (the basis for the script *The Anacoreta*), Azcona has yet to write another novel. And while the literary world has had to make do with that much less Azcona, the film world has undoubtedly benefitted.



## **JOSE LUIS ALCaine**

(Director of Photography)

José Luis Alcaine was born in Tetuan, Morocco, in 1938 to Spanish parents. Alcaine first became interested in image-making through his father, who was an amateur filmmaker and liked to experiment with his 16mm camera. During his adolescence in Tangier, Alcaine built a color film laboratory, a remarkable feat for any teenager and one he believes taught him a great deal about cinema. At the age of twenty-three, Alcaine entered the Madrid School of Film, where he studied with many of Spain's most celebrated directors including Victor Erice, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, and Josefina Molina. He completed his studies in 1966, having learned much of what he knew "by the simple act of 'burning' an enormous quantity of film in a wide range of situations."

In 1967, Alcaine filmed his first picture, *The Bone*, with director Antonio Gimenez Rico. Since then, Alcaine has worked on more than seventy movies and had been awarded numerous prizes in both Spain and Latin America.

## Carlos Saura on...

### ...Testimony

I was only a child during the war. What I most remember is fear. Bombs, hunger and death were a part of everyday life, and it inevitably left a profound mark on me. In some way or another, I've always tried to capture in my films what it was I saw and heard during the war. For me it's a way to try to exorcise the violent images that stamped my childhood. Consequently, in many of my films there are certain gestures, attitudes, voices, songs, and places that speak to me of that period—but never to the extent that they do in **AY, CARMELA!**

For those terrible years, our cities, towns and countryside were turned into a battlefield where the world powers rehearsed their tactics and perfected their weapons. It was a rehearsal for World War II, but it was real Spanish blood that flowed. Today in Spain, even years after the death of Franco, there are still wounds to heal and questions to resolve...

Too little has been said about this important moment. There are some novels and books of history, but only a few films have dared to confront this painful memory.

### ...Forgetting

Amnesia is a favorite pastime in my country. People actually believe we should try to forget our recent history. They wonder: why should we bother with a war that no longer interests anyone? For them it is enough to try to live with our everyday problems.

Thousands of writers, poets and philosophers have said it better than me: nothing starts from nothing. I'll explain. For me the present is but an epilogue to the past. Our Civil War is still alive for us. It awakened in us great hatred and desire for revenge—resentment, humiliation and jealousies were settled by violence, through both guns and betrayal.

Suddenly your cousin, your friend—the most adored people in your life became your enemies. All because of ideology. I can think of nothing worse than the hatred among brothers; it can become so



extreme, evolve into such fanaticism, that the inevitable resolution can be only death, "I'll kill you before you kill me."

Why must we forget that in this country, only fifty years ago, nearly a million people died through the violence of the Civil War and its aftermath?

I believe the story I tell in **AY, CARMELA!** isn't specific to Spanish history. I believe it's a story of universal truth, one that asks the questions we have always asked. This is a story about how people survive. Carmela's great tragedy is that, unlike Paulino, she is incapable of adapting to her changing circumstances. She is so passionate, so committed to truth and justice, that she must speak, she must rebel, even if it means her downfall.

### ...Adapting the play

José Sanchís Sinisterra is a talented writer from Valencia, who wrote a play called *Carmela*. It's a story of austere simplicity, and it met with great success in our country. The title comes from a song that was very popular in the Republican zone during the Civil War.

It's a brilliant play. In a tragicomic tone, it tells of Carmela's and Paulino's last performance in their "Tip Top" variety show during the Civil War. Both frightening and very entertaining, it recounts the action by means of a flashback. Carmela, who has suffered a violent death, comes back from the dead to speak to her husband, Paulino. Both reconstruct scenes from their lives, in particular the event that led to Carmela's brutal murder by Franco's troops.

Although it was inspired theater to have Carmela return from the dead, when I started to work on the adaptation, I realized it wasn't necessary for the story I wanted to tell. Not only wasn't it essential, it would distract from the emotional core of the film. The cinema has its own language and is capable of recounting many things—events and emotions—that are impossible to achieve on stage.

Therefore, dispensing with the flashback, Rafael Azcona and I decided to develop a linear story. Because the film is linear, we can now follow a forty-eight-hour period of time step by step. Because of this, we were required to flesh out characters, such as Gustavete



and the Italian lieutenant, who were only referred to in passing in the original play. In addition, we also had to invent new characters and situations in order to give the narrative greater depth.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that most attracted me to the play in the first place is its tragicomic tone. Years ago, I wouldn't have been able to approach the Civil War with the kind of humor that a number of Italian directors have used in their films about the Second World War. Yet, it's different now. Enough years have passed for me to have developed a broader perspective. I can even use humor to say the things that at one time wouldn't have been possible to even mention.

### ...The Actors

From the very beginning we knew no one else but Carmen Maura could be Carmela. No one could interpret the role as well, no question about it. We had more doubts about who could play Paulino and we tossed around a number of possibilities. Finally, it was the producer, Andrés Vicente Gómez, who suggested Pajares for the role. I immediately thought it was a great idea. We got in touch with Gómez, who in turn contacted Pajares. Together we dined and talked over the idea and the part of Paulino was cast. I know it was the right choice. Although I've gotten wonderful results with a number of actors, rarely have I worked with such an intelligent and pliant actor as Andrés Pajares. I have to add that I'm also greatly pleased with Gabino Diego (Gustavete), for even though I'd seen him before in Fernando Gómez' films, in **AY, CARMELA!** he was a complete revelation.

I also have to applaud the other terrific actors, most of whom had small but very important parts. In particular, there are the two Italian actors Marizio di Razza and Mario de Candia, both of whom brought perfection to their roles. Add to this glowing list, Edward Zentara, the Polish actor, who with his transparent stare, precise gestures and movements brought great emotional subtlety to this small, but key character. It really is unusual to find actors as intelligent, quick, sensitive, and skillful as the ones I found for **AY, CARMELA!**. It's easy to know if a film is well acted or not; all you need to do is pick out a scene, one scene and analyze it. I'm certain that the rich performances in this film—the work of actors like Carmen Maura, Andrés Pajares, Gabino Diego, and the rest—would stand up to that test.



### **...Carmen Maura**

I feel like I am related to Carmen Maura. She's vivacious, intelligent, wide-eyed, sensitive, sentimental, practical and when necessary, even stern. She's also a determined fighter, one whose willfulness can even border on fanaticism.

The way in which Carmen gives herself over to a role seems almost supernatural. There were moments during the shoot, such as the ending, that were agonizing for everyone involved, but I never once saw Carmen weaken. She remained completely there: untiring, methodical, orderly, brilliant. I wonder just how it is that she can possess all of those qualities at once? Carmen was always able to find the right movement. She possesses an authentic innocence that continues to reflect the Spanish middle-class woman. In many ways Carmen is Everywoman—the employee, the hairdresser, the secretary.

I remember the first day we met. She looked at me with eyes that asked: "Who is this?" We immediately understood each other. I've always said that my greatest pleasure is my work with actors. They are us, they represent us. They embody our characters and our emotions, they speak our language, voice our ideas. They give everything of themselves to create characters who may become real for only a fleeting moment. Yet as characters they live in our imaginations forever. What an incredible miracle!

### **...Andrés Pajares**

There are many wonderful actors in Spain. Unfortunately, because the industry is so limited, very few of them have the opportunity to prove their talent. Most of the actors work in variety shows, comedies, the circus, or the Spanish absurd. Despite the limited opportunities, some have gone through long, extensive training for the stage. Pajares, for example, sings, dances, acts, and does comedy—all with great ability.

One would think that with all of his success, Pajares would be self-assured; it's not true. Pajares is timid, even fragile, he's sentimental, family oriented, needs to be protected and feels easily dejected. In "real life" he speaks like a machine gun; it's his way of discharging all the tension he keeps inside. Pajares is a great actor. He's sensitive and gentle, an actor who needs to be treated with tenderness, and is always surprising you with the subtlety of his performance. He's a real inventor, a creator of situations, gestures and phrases. Pajares could even become our greatest actor—as long as he isn't typecast.

### ...Crew Cooperation

The movies depend on the cooperation of different artists and technicians, and at times, such collaboration isn't always easy. Happily, in the case of **AY, CARMELA!** the difficult situations that cropped up—as much in pre-production as in the actual shooting—dissolved. In fact, despite the painful subject matter, I've never experienced such harmony while making a film. Of course, in the end this can mean very little, since there are movies where the filming was a pleasure, but the result was unsatisfactory, as well as vice-versa. In this case, however, I believe the film reflects the process.

### ...Rafael Azcona, screenwriter

Before **AY, CARMELA!** Rafael and I hadn't worked together for almost two decades. Our last film together was *Cousin Angelica*, which we made in 1973. Rafael is a very special person; he's gentle, aggressive, violent, iconoclastic... he's a difficult person to describe, or for that matter "fit in" with. Over the course of our past collaboration, I had seen both his good and bad sides. Looking back today, I can see that many of our so-called differences were actually a matter of stubbornness. During this new period of collaboration—something which I would very much like to continue—I found it stimulating and entertaining to work with him. We met every morning at the bar of the hotel in the Chamartín train station. We sat in uncomfortable chairs under light more suitable for romance than for brainstorming. I've said it before, and I don't



usually repeat myself, but without Rafael I would never been able to make **AY, CARMELA!**

...**Rafael Palmero**, art decorator

Rafael Palmero is an old friend of mine. We worked together on *Cria* and *Blood Wedding*.

Overall, the kind of set designs that have been used for films about the Civil War have never been very convincing. Whether it was a question of style or a lack of detail, I've always regarded this kind of set to be false, more of a distraction than an asset.

I think the sets, the scenery and the costumes in **AY, CARMELA!** perfectly reflect the period. We worked very hard to achieve this verisimilitude. For months, Rafael Palmero and his team intensively studied the war in its most minute detail—uniforms, posters, medals, everyday objects—everything was scrutinized.

As it so happened, the war-destroyed areas of the town in which we shot had been reconstructed by Television of Spain for the series *La Forja de un Rebelde*, directed by Mario Camus. Palermo had actually built this set and was able to adapt it according to the needs of our film.

Palermo was at my side every step of the way, advising me, tending to and perfecting even the smallest detail. I'm deeply grateful for his contribution and the quality of his work as art director, the importance of which isn't always recognized.

...**José Luis Alcaine**, cinematographer

Since I had worked with Teo Escamilla on so many of my films, changing the director of photography almost seemed like an act of betrayal. Yet, I also say it as a challenge as well as something of an adventure. In the past I'd thought that if Teo—for whatever reason—couldn't shoot my films I'd like to work with José Luis Alcaine.

My collaboration with Alcaine has been intense, amiable, and productive. **AY, CARMELA!** has the photography it needs, a study of both harsh and warm tones. In some scenes we were actually able to re-create images of the war that I carry in my own memories. A ray of sun streams through a window, flooding the rooms of a bourgeois home; streets overflow with soldiers and trucks; people eat in a truck, illuminated by a weak carbide light; above all, the war—a terrible war that destroyed our nation. It's this atmosphere of desolation and destruction that the photography captures in every frame of the film.

...**Julio Madurga**, camera operator

Julio Madurga is from Aragón, as am I, perhaps that is one of the reasons we get along so well. Julio did an exceptional job on a number of my other films, including *Carmen*, *Cria* and *El amor brujo*. He's extremely well-educated, quiet, and polite.

Most of the scenes in **AY, CARMELA!** were shot with a wide-angle lens; it's a look I favored when I was a photographer. In my films I like to get close to the characters, but also leave them ample space to interact with other people and things. I think that wide-angle shots are appealing; you can feel the actors breathing that way. I don't like to surprise actors. I want them to know that the camera and their director are as close to them, closer than any theater audience could hope to be.

...**Alejandro Masso**, composer

My friendship with Alejandro Masso began on *El Dorado*.

Although **AY, CARMELA!** is a musical film, it's not like an American musical.

For a long time I've wanted to do a musical where the plot revolves around the vicissitudes of a Spanish theater company from the fifties and sixties. The Spanish people who frequented these shows came to see beautiful, opulent women, comedians, and "refined" homosexuals. It was world that in some ways was reminiscent of



the *fin de siècle*, a time in which chorus girls were kept by rich men and adultery was common.

Some of the musical numbers, such as "My Pony" and "Sighs of Spain," come from the original play. But as for the rest—"Faccetta Nera," "Uruguay," the other songs and hymns—those were incorporated into the script only after extensive research by Alejandro Masso and myself. We submerged ourselves in that time, selecting only those pieces we found most appropriate.

Carmen Maura and Andrés Pajares both sang and danced their own numbers. With enviable tenacity, Carmen practiced the traditional style of Spanish song and dance for three months under the direction of our choreographer Alberto Portillo.

Masso composed several pieces that serve to highlight the film's military ambience. For the finale he composed a powerful work of obsessive rhythms that mirrors the film's dramatic crescendo.

## Carmen Maura on **AY, CARMELA!**

Andrés Pajares, Gabino Diego and myself were all very nervous about the prospect of working with Carlos Saura. Well, that quickly disappeared. To lift our spirits he told us that eighty percent of this film was about the acting, and that he was sure he had chosen the right cast.

At first what frightened me most about the role was having to sing. But I'd told Carlos I could sing the numbers, and I knew he was relying on me. I delved into the party obsessively, and with the help of Professor Anedillo and the unconditional support of Alejandro Masso, I lost all my fear—even about singing! In addition, I spent hours with Alberto Portillo, the choreographer, perfecting the gestures and the style of Carmela's movements.

Because I know my limitations as a dancer and a singer, I knew I would have to depend on Carmela's enthusiasm and dedication. Carmela received love from her audience because she gave so much love on stage. Everything she knew as an artist had been taught to her by Paulino, but she was able to give him a lot in return. She found the best in him, and from that love that she drew her strength and sense of security.

Initially, I had difficulty with Carmela's simplicity, her authenticity, her faith in life. In order to get this across, I needed to think back to the best times I'd known, I needed to set aside all my bad habits. What I tried to do was create the sense that there's a direct link between Carmela's heart and her face; it's a face that expresses everything she feels. Carmela does things and says what she feels, she doesn't really think too much about the consequences.

I really don't know what **AY, CARMELA!** means for my career. But one thing I know for certain: whether it's because of the role itself, the crew, Saura, or my dear Andrés and Gabino, or maybe because of everything together, I'll always remember that the nine weeks we spent shooting the film. **AY, CARMELA!** was a complete joy.