

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Diario di un vizio</b>
Author(s)	Deborah Young
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1993 Feb 22
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Diario di un vizio (Diary of a maniac), Ferreri, Marco, 1993



Variety  
2-22-1993

## DIARIO DI UN VIZIO (DIARY OF A MANIAC) (ITALIAN)

An Italian Intl. Film release (in Italy) of a SOI/Società Olografica Italiana production. Produced by Vittorio Alliata. Directed by Marco Ferreri. Screenplay, Ferreri, Liliana Betti. Camera (color), Mario Vulpiani; editor, Ruggero Mastroianni; music, Gato Barbieri; art direction, Tommaso Bordone; costumes, Maria Camilla Righi. Reviewed at Anica screening room, Rome, Feb. 5, 1993. (In competition at Berlin Film Festival.) Running time: **88 MIN.**

Benito . . . . . Jerry Calà  
Luigia . . . . . Sabrina Ferilli  
Chiominto . . . . . Valentino Macchi

**A**nguishing, exalting, tender and pathetic, Marco Ferreri's "Diary of a Maniac" is probably one of this idiosyncratic director's finest works. Its black humor traces the life of a lonely salesman as he follows a doomed love around an imaginary yet intensely real Rome. It may prove too offbeat to go wide in Italy, despite a cast aimed at drawing in local comedy fans, but pic's original modernity should capture arthouse audiences offshore.

Made on a low budget, pic overflows with a feeling of stylistic freedom. The story is told in short flashes, which the hero reads from his diary.

Benito (played with unsuspected candor by popular comic star Jerry Calà), the "maniac" of the title, lives in cheap rented rooms and makes a humiliating living peddling toilet-bowl detergent to hotels. Despite having a sexually insatiable girlfriend, Luigia (Sabrina Ferilli), Calà can't resist constant, casual affairs with women of all types and ages.

At pic's center is Calà's madcap, neurotic diary, full of entries about heart palpitations, stomach acidity and other effects of meeting females who "provoke" him on trams. Its grotesque observations faithfully chronicle the life of a little man on the skids.

A knock-out beauty of humble origin and few scruples, Ferilli rises from hotel maid to striptease artist and bit parts in the movies. She loves Calà, and he loves her, though she drops him the minute a guy in a sports car turns up. They fight, make love and break up frequently, —material for his growing obsession.

Calà's dreams — recorded in his sick childish scrawl, but sometimes chillingly visualized by the camera — are filled with Ferilli, his mother and sexual fantasies. The diary takes up more and more space, while Calà's life becomes more impoverished. At last he disappears altogether, and only words remain.

Instead of the usual snotty Milanese wisecracks from the average-Joe characters he has played, here Calà is perfectly deadpan in delivering bizarre one-liners and off-the-wall diary entries. He makes Benito both surreal and achingly human.

This may be the breakthrough

film for Ferilli, who throws herself into the role of the oft-disrobed sexpot with irrepressible *joie de vivre*.

One of "Diary's" most winning qualities is its affection for life's rejects and "ordinary" people who form a chorus in praise of the average man and woman.

In contrast to Calà's high-pitched anxiety, film's rhythm is pleasantly relaxed. It's a visual pleasure, thanks to Mario Vulpiani's modernistic, precision camerawork and Tommaso Bordone's slumming-chic art direction.

Gato Barbieri's sax solo (shades of "Last Tango in Paris") works surprisingly well in this completely different context.

If traces of Fellini peek out of "Diary," it may be thanks to Ferreri's co-scripter, Liliana Betti, a longtime Fellini aide-de-camp. — *Deborah Young*