

FERNANDO SULICHIN PRESENTS
A ROBERTO DE NIGRIS - CENTRAL FILMS - ASSOCIATED FILMMAKERS PRODUCTION



MARY

BY ABEL FERRARA

JULIETTE BINOCHÉ
FOREST WHITAKER MATTHEW MODINE
& HEATHER GRAHAM



venezia 62
concorso

TORONTO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
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2005

International Press

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Cast and Crew

Marie Palesi: Juliette Binoche

Ted Younger: Forest Whitaker

Tony Childress: Matthew Modine

Elizabeth Younger: Heather Graham

Gretchen: Marion Cotillard

Brenda Sax: Stefania Rocca

Director: Abel Ferrara

Screenplay: Simone Lageoles, Abel Ferrara,
Mario Isabella

Producers: Fernando Sulichin, Roberto De Nigris

Co-producers: Mario Isabella, Giuseppe Bonzi,
Thierry Klemeniuk, Jean-Pierre Marois, Frank DeCurtis

Line producer: Riccardo Neri

Executive producers: Massimo Cortesi,
Andrea Groppero, Jean Cazes, Angelo Arena

Associate producers: Lewis Saul,
Francesco Di Silvio, Marco Consonni

Photography: Stefano Falivene

Sound Mixer: Davide Magara

Editors: Fabio Nunziata, Langdon F. Page

Production designer: Frank DeCurtis

Art director: Monica Sallustio

Costume Design: Frank DeCurtis & Silvia Nebiolo

Music: Francis Kuipers

Casting (US): Fern Cassel

Casting (Italy): Stefania De Santis

Make-up artist: Roberta Petrini

Hair stylist: Elisabetta De Leonardis

Still photographer: Romolo Eucalitto

Special photographer: Rose Serra

SYNOPSIS

Independent, auteur director Tony Childress (Matthew Modine) casts himself as Jesus Christ in "This is my Blood", the film within Abel Ferrara's resonant and revelatory new film, MARY. With the gifted Marie Palesi (Juliette Binoche) as his Magdalene, all seems well until the shoot wraps and she refuses to accept that filming is over. Instead of returning with Tony to New York, she travels alone to Jerusalem to continue her spiritual journey inspired by her role.

A year later in Manhattan we find the final member of our trinity, Ted Younger (Forest Whitaker), a superstar network journalist, in the midst of a prime time week long, special, investigating the life and times of Jesus Christ. While his show is receiving high ratings, he and his wife (Heather Graham) are about to face a personal crisis which they are unprepared for spiritually.

Moving from New York to Rome to Jerusalem, Ferrara brings the mystery and legend of Mary Magdalene out from the shadows of antiquity in a new post 9/11 style.

FAITH, REDEMPTION AND CINEMA

With MARY, Abel Ferrara adds a new work to a filmography already deeply marked by an essential spirituality. A work even more blatant in its spirituality as Ferrara deals directly for the first time with one of the Apostles: Mary Magdalene. "MARY is faithful to the Gospels", says producer Fernando Sulichin. "We wanted to correct a number of misconceptions about Mary Magdalene, not only that she was a prostitute".

MARY also displays other Ferrara preoccupations: the artist losing his way, the unadorned depiction of film making behind the scenes, themes he has already treated in SNAKE EYES and BLACKOUT. "It's a very risky genre, but it's the subject I know best. I always ask myself how an actor can get back into everyday life after finishing a film". Hence the character of Marie, an actress haunted by the figure of Mary Magdalene after having portrayed her on screen. Marie (Juliette Binoche) is the central figure of a trinity completed by Tony (Matthew Modine) director of the film, in which he also takes the role of Jesus, and Ted (Forest Whitaker), a TV journalist who is himself going through a serious personal crisis. Two ambitious men on whom Marie's journey will have a profound and indelible effect.

"Marie decides to visit the sites of the Evangelists because her role has touched things in her of which she was unaware, feelings she has previously failed to nourish", says Juliette Binoche.

Binoche spent eight days in Jerusalem before shooting, to immerse herself in the role which she had particularly taken to heart: "Jean-Yves Leloup, who translated the Gospels of Mary Magdalene and was working on a film adaptation, had already offered me the role, but the film didn't happen. That this character came knocking at my door a second time could not have been a coincidence... Although it might be what we've been taught for centuries, Mary Magdalene (Myriam de Magdala) was never a prostitute, she was described as a "fisher woman"; in the context of her era, she could have been seen as troubled as she was neither a wife nor a mother. It's also said that Jesus exorcised her of seven demons which were tormenting her. When I studied the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, I was surprised to discover her description of the tormented soul crossing through different levels of emotions and consciousnesses. It's also interesting to read the Gospel of Philip to get another view, another testimony to the life of Jesus: "There were three who walked always with the Lord: Mary, his mother; his mother's sister, and Myriam de Magdala who was as his companion, for Myriam was for Him a sister, a mother and a wife". She's an inspiring character. It seemed to me necessary, most of all today, to take part in a film which put the feminine back into universal discourse, belonging to no religion if not that of the heart".

"What does it mean to have faith? Why believe? Who was Jesus? Why is there such dissent between denominations? Some of the questions that MARY tackles", adds Sulichin. Questions that Ferrara explores with his trademark moral sense as he handles the coming and going between past and present, as well as between reality, fiction and fantasy.

FROM NEW YORK TO ROME

"Making a film like MARY is like climbing Everest", admits Fernando Sulichin. "Everything is against you". It would take more than that to discourage Sulichin, a veteran of challenging projects (Spike Lee's MALCOLM X and SHE HATE ME, Oliver Stone's ALEXANDER) who had already worked with Ferrara on THE ADDICTION. "Ferrara is a purist. He fights to survive while remaining faithful to himself and his vision, in a media-saturated world where the superficial cult of celebrity and fashion rules. It's not at all easy for directors like him".

As always, Ferrara had to work with a tight budget and a limited shooting schedule. Beginning in New York, and culminating in the Ancient City of Jerusalem, the majority of filming took place in Rome, where Ferrara had recently decided to live. "In New York, things have been crazy since September 11", confides the Italian-American director. "I took some time to get back into the swing of things. I needed to make a break, so I decided to make a film in Europe. But wherever I am, I always make films about New York".

BINOCHÉ-FERRARA: THE MEETING

Despite challenging shooting conditions, Abel Ferrara has once again gathered around him an impressive cast, drawn by his personality and the ambition of his project. Juliette Binoche says she thought long and hard before committing herself to the venture: "I asked myself whether it was possible to tackle the question of Jesus and Mary Magdalene in a film where, knowing Ferrara's reputation, there would be a lot of improvisation and last minute changes. I simply think you have to have faith! (laughs). Then I talked to Harvey Keitel about Abel. Harvey adores him. He talked to me from the heart. That's when I said to myself, "OK, let's go!" Afterwards, I heard that Abel was even more scared than me by the idea of us working together!"

Both Binoche and Ferrara benefitted enormously from each others radically opposed methods of working, as Fernando Sulichin explains: "It was a real challenge for Abel to work with Binoche".

In turn, Binoche's fears were swiftly transformed into creative stimuli. "Filming with Abel really demands that you have to be in sync with him, with his energy", the actress explains. "For an actor, sometimes it's very difficult. You really feel the absence of marks. You can't get on set and ask him: "Tell me exactly what you want". You need a lot of trust, you need patience, and to understand what he's doing. Abel expects actors to bring their own worlds with them". Ferrara continues: "I'm not a jazz fan, but that's what shooting a movie makes me think of. You have to grab the moment when it's happening. When everything comes together so it works. You can redo things forever, it's no good if the thing isn't there". It's a way of working that enables the film maker to draw from the actors some of their most intense performances (Christopher Walken in KING OF NEW YORK, Harvey Keitel in BAD LIEUTENANT).

The osmosis between Abel Ferrara's very singular perception and the performances of Juliette Binoche, Marion Cotillard, Heather Graham, Forest Whitaker and Matthew Modine (working with the director again, after THE BLACKOUT) make MARY a unique cinematic experience. One of a kind. Inhabited. As only Ferrara can deliver.

INTERVIEW WITH ABEL FERRARA (director, co-screenwriter) AND FRANK DeCURTIS (production designer, co-producer)

What was the genesis of your film MARY?

Abel Ferrara: What came first was the story of a journalist doing a talk-show about the Christ. When I watch TV newsmen, I always wonder what else is going on in their lives, how much a TV personality feels and cares about faith. Then, I was also inspired by actors that I've worked with and their feelings when the movie is finished. All of a sudden, they feel as if the movie was leaving them and the world they were living in was gone. Also, I've always wanted to do a film about Mary Magdalene. She was just a character that I found very interesting. But I didn't know why.

Why a movie about faith today? Do you think it especially fits the time?

Abel Ferrara: There are two genres in MARY: it's a religious film and a film about making films. The religious movie is a genre: from KING OF KINGS (Nicholas Ray, 1961) to THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST (Martin Scorsese, 1988) and THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964). Whenever you depict Jesus Christ, you're part of this genre. We were told for four, five years that no one wanted to see a film about religion. Today, no one says this anymore. But if Mel Gibson's THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST hadn't been a huge success, MARY would never have got financed. Mel Gibson had to finance and distribute his film himself. And now they're talking about 'Passion dollars! (laughs).

Frank DeCurtis: When you're depicting somebody who means so much to so many people, you want to give that belief a fair shake. Whether you believe or not.

When did you discover the Gospel of Mary Magdalene? Did it change your vision of faith?

Abel Ferrara: It opened up my eyes. Just the fact of looking at The Last Supper and thinking, "Is that a woman sitting there"?. I was raised a Catholic and when you're raised a Catholic, they don't teach you to think for yourself, to question the Gospels. When you go to church on Sunday, The Bible is read to you. They read what they want to read, they discuss what they want to discuss with you. And that's it. You're taught not to think too deeply about things.

In most of your movies, men are lost and women are their saints, their saviours. In MARY, it's obvious. In fact, showing that Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' closest disciples reassesses the role of woman in our history and, as Juliette Binoche puts it, "brings back the sense of femininity to our collective consciousness".

Abel Ferrara: The story of Mary Magdalene is a feminist tale. It's about feminism from Day 1. Besides, the re-evaluation of Mary Magdalene really began with the birth of feminism in the 70s.

Frank DeCurtis: When a spiritual leader dies, whoever it is, there are disputes among the followers. They are in competition to know who bears more gifts from the leader. That's how Mary Magdalene and James disappeared from the pages of the Gospels.

Abel Ferrara: For 2000 years, Mary Magdalene was first depicted as a disciple of Christ, then as a hooker. They tried to divide her into three other characters. It was a conscious

attempt. So, if they found that jar in Egypt in 1945 (which contained essential parts of the Gospels of Peter, Philip... and Mary, thanks to which there have been re-evaluations of their role), what else is going to be found? Or what else has already been found?

In MARY, you show the scene from the Gnostic Gospels where Peter is fighting against Mary and you draw a parallel between Ted fighting against his wife, Tony against his actress Marie and Israelis against Palestinians. You question the sense of responsibility of each one of us, on different levels.

Abel Ferrara: That's the basic teaching of Jesus. "Love your neighbour as yourself".

There is also this interesting shot of Ted (Forest Whitaker) having an argument with his wife on the phone while, behind him, the TV is showing images of Israelis fighting against Palestinians.

Frank DeCurtis: It puts things into perspective. While he's arguing with his wife, people are getting killed. He doesn't even glance at it. It's part of his life, he's used to those images. Then, for some reason, he calls his wife back and apologises.

You approach the issues of Jesus and the Gospels from a human, everyday-life perspective. Jesus is never shown as a divine iconic figure.

Abel Ferrara: That's the only way we can make films. I can't imagine or direct people as anything but human beings. As Saint Thomas says, "The divine light is in everybody".

Frank DeCurtis: That's a pretty good message. When in doubt, look within, by yourself, 'cause you're the best arbiter of who you are, what you're doing and how you affect other people. Psychiatrists say, "If you've had ten divorces in your life, ask yourself, who's the common denominator? You".

MARY gave you the opportunity to go to Jerusalem for the first time. You went there for the last two days of shooting. What did it bring to you?

Abel Ferrara: This film couldn't have existed if we hadn't gone there. Movies that take place in Jerusalem are never shot there. They are shot in Morocco or Matera in Italy. If we didn't go, who would?

How did you choose the theologians who are interviewed in MARY?

Abel Ferrara: Juliette Binoche came with Jean-Yves Leloup. He represents the Gnostic side. Leloup, who is a friend of Juliette Binoche, translated the Gospel of Mary Magdalene. Binoche and Leloup even tried to do a movie about her. So, when we met Binoche, she was already on the same trail we were on. It was really fantastic. Amos Luzzatto represents the Jewish side. He is awesome, a brilliant guy. He's an Italian Jew, at the cross of two great cultures. We used Elaine Pagels' work for the research that's the reason why she's in the movie talking about the sources of Mary Magdalene story. Then I wanted someone from the Church side. So, we asked a regular country priest, not the Vatican.

You seem to have put together a terrific cast.

Abel Ferrara: We had someone like Binoche who was really deep into Mary Magdalene. We saw actresses who didn't even know who Mary Magdalene was. And then you have her who had already made the film in her mind. We had Forest Whitaker whose grandfather was a big minister in Texas, a great preacher. Matthew Modine, who plays a director, is a director himself and grew up around a drive-in theatre where his father was a projectionist. All these people brought a lot to the tale.

Matthew Modine's character seems close to you. You could give the same speech he's giving about "tits & ass and horror movies".

Abel Ferrara: He plays the director we wish we were. A real prick. An arrogant asshole who doesn't give a fuck! (laughs)

Why did you choose this music?

Abel Ferrara: We chose a music centered on guitar. The composer, Francis Kuipers, is a great blues guitar player. He started in the 60s, played for the Beat poets, worked with Philip Glass...

In the past few years, your movies have been more peaceful and cerebral, less violent and visceral. As is MARY. You also seem to be more and more optimistic. In MARY, there's even a kind of happy end. You're not turned to self-destruction anymore.

Abel Ferrara: When you do it in life, you don't have to do it on screen! (laughs) Seriously, we are actually showing a nine-year-old kid getting killed. But that's true. I'm not going to make THE DRILLER KILLER all my life. THE ADDICTION was also a cerebral movie. The end of "R XMAS" was also optimistic. I think it's just the approach I chose for those particular films. But the movies I'm preparing, like GO-GO TALES and the prequel to KING OF NEW YORK, are different".

Are you getting wiser?

Abel Ferrara: I don't think so. It's just the brain cells that are degenerating. (laughs) Seriously, after September 11th, we basically asked ourselves, "What are we gonna do?". It changed our attitude towards making films. Making film now seems more important than it used to. And it became very hard to make films in New York. I wanted to do a film about September 11th but nobody wanted to. I also wanted to participate to the 11'09'01 film but they didn't want me to.

The way you shoot New York in MARY is very interesting. You show it as a ghost city where Ted seems like a lost soul.

Abel Ferrara: It's Ted vision. Ted doesn't exist in New York. He's a wealthy guy who goes from his work to his home, outside the city, in his limousine. He doesn't take the subway. He sees the world through his computer, through TV. He's not bound to it. Until that rock comes through his window, everything is outside.

Has the fact that you left New York to live in Rome had an impact on your cinema?

Abel Ferrara: Obviously.

BIOGRAPHIES

ABEL FERRARA - DIRECTOR & CO-WRITER

Born in the Bronx in 1952, Abel Ferrara began filming on super 8 as a teenager stalking the streets of New York City and its ghettos, and made his feature film directorial debut in 1979 with *THE DRILLER KILLER*, under the name of Jimmy Laine. Ferrara plays the lead character, a young New York painter who goes violently crazy.

In 1981, Ferrara created the character of a young blind rape victim who decides to take revenge on her assailants, in *MS. 45*. In *CHINA GIRL* (1987) Ferrara told a story of impossible love set against a backdrop of ethnic conflicts between gangs in Manhattan. Abel Ferrara had established himself as a genuine American auteur, with a jet-black vision of his country.

In the late 1980s, Ferrara directed a number of episodes of *MIAMI VICE*, in addition to two TV movies, *THE GLADIATOR* and *CRIME STORY*. 1990 saw him achieving true international recognition for the bloody, nerve-shredding thriller *KING OF NEW YORK* in which he unforgettably portrayed Christopher Walken as a one-time drug lord. *BAD LIEUTENANT*, with Harvey Keitel as a corrupt police officer in need of redemption, *BODY SNATCHERS* (a remake of paranoid sci-fi classic *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*), and *SNAKE EYES*, in which Madonna portrays a movie star doing battle with her tyrannical director, followed swiftly. Off-kilter, deeply strange, Ferrara's films brutally betrayed a world seemingly without hope.

In 1995, *THE ADDICTION*, a black and white vampire movie starring Christopher Walken, Lili Taylor and Annabella Sciorra, won first prize at Sundance. The following year, *THE FUNERAL*, with Christopher Walken, Chris Penn, Isabella Rossellini, Vincent Gallo and Benicio Del Toro took audiences on a trip into the violent and oppressive world of a Mafia family. This intense piece of work was followed in 1997 by *THE BLACKOUT*, with Claudia Schiffer, Beatrice Dalle and Matthew Modine, a sex, drug and alcohol-soaked love story between an actor and two women. Ferrara was reunited with Christopher Walken for *NEW ROSE HOTEL* (1998), a psychological thriller co-starring Asia Argento and Willem Dafoe. In 2001, *'R XMAS* told the story of Christmas spent with a drug-trafficking immigrant.

For *MARY*, Abel Ferrara has once again gathered around him a premiere league cast. Remaining faithful to the themes that have characterised his oeuvre, the director presents one of his most personal films to date.

Selected Filmography

2001	'R XMAS
1998	NEW ROSE HOTEL
1997	THE BLACKOUT
1996	THE FUNERAL
1995	THE ADDICTION
1993	DANGEROUS GAME (aka SNAKE EYES)
1993	BODY SNATCHERS
1992	BAD LIEUTENANT
1990	KING OF NEW YORK
1989	CAT CHASER
1987	CHINA GIRL
1984	FEAR CITY
1981	MS. 45 (aka ANGEL OF VENGEANCE)
1979	THE DRILLER KILLER
1976	NINE LIVES OF A WET PUSSY

BIOGRAPHIES

FERNANDO SULICHIN - PRODUCER

Fernando Sulichin is a producer who embodies the spirit of free and independent film making, his tendency to make challenging and audacious artistic choices leading him to work with talented and demanding auteur-directors such as Abel Ferrara or Spike Lee.

In 1995, he produced Abel Ferrara's *THE ADDICTION*, which earned him a nomination for an Independent Spirit Producer of the Year Award. The following year he was selected as one of the Hollywood Reporter's Top Ten Talents to Watch. Since then, he has developed projects with Sean Penn, Marlon Brando, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Spike Lee, Oliver Stone and Martin Scorsese, among others.

Sulichin was born in Argentina and trained as an architect before emigrating to the United States in 1988 to attend film school. In Paris, in 1990, he organized the Court-Circuit (Short Circuit) film festival, through which he met and began a long-term relationship with Spike Lee, later serving as associate producer on Lee's Academy Award-nominated *MALCOLM X*.

In 1999, Sulichin created the independent feature film company Black List Films with producer Chris Hanley. The first fruit of this partnership was Larry Clark's critically acclaimed *Bully* (Official Selection, Venice, 2001; Deauville Film Festival). The company also produced *LOVE LIZA* starring Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Oscar winner Kathy Bates; *SPUN* with Mickey Rourke, Jason Schwartzman, Brittany Murphy; and *TIPTOES*, starring Gary Oldman and Matthew McConaughey.

Sulichin extended his activities with the production of a series of commercials, with Nelson Mandela, Marlon Brando, Leonardo Di Caprio, Tony Scott, Spike Lee, Chris Cunningham, Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese and Oliver Stone.

In 2001, he established his own production company Rule 8 Productions Ltd. through which he developed and produced three political documentaries by Oliver Stone. Films one and two of the triptych - *COMANDANTE* and *LOOKING FOR FIDEL* - presented an intimate portrait of Fidel Castro and his Cuba. The third, *PERSONA NON GRATA*, offered Stone's unique take on the Middle East conflict.

In 2003, Fernando Sulichin produced Spike Lee's *SHE HATE ME*, and served as executive producer in Oliver Stone's *ALEXANDER*. In 2004 he relocated to France and created Central Films, a feature film production company. A second collaboration with Abel Ferrara followed swiftly, Sulichin serving as producer on *MARY*, starring Juliette Binoche, Forest Whitaker, Matthew Modine, Heather Graham and Marion Cotillard. He is currently readying several feature projects, including *I COME WITH THE RAIN*, to be directed by Tran Anh Hung (*THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA*; *CYCLO*).

BIOGRAPHIES

JULIETTE BINOCHÉ - MARIE PALESI / MARY MAGDALENE

Juliette Binoché occupies a unique place in cinema, and remains one of the very few French actresses to have attained true international stardom. She made her stage debut at the age of 16. Notable secondary roles in Godard's *HAIL MARY* and Doillon's *FAMILY LIFE* led to her first big-screen lead, in André Techiné's *RENDEZ VOUS* (1984), for which she received a Best Actress César nomination. Her performance opposite Daniel Day-Lewis in Philip Kaufman's *THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING* brought Binoché to the attention of critics and audiences world-wide. She consolidated this burgeoning international reputation with remarkable work for Louis Malle (*DAMAGE*), Leos Carax (*LES AMANTS DU PONT NEUF*) and perhaps most notably Krzysztof Kieslowski, in his *THREE COLOURS* trilogy. Her role opposite Ralph Fiennes in Anthony Minghella's *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* won her both the Berlin Silver Bear and the Best Supporting Actress Oscar - Binoché is only the second French actress to have been honoured with this award in the Academy's history - and cemented her position in the very top rank of international stars.

Selected Filmography

2005 *BREAKING AND ENTERING* - Anthony Minghella
2005 *QUELQUES JOURS EN SEPTEMBRE*
- Santiago Amigorena
2005 *CACHÉ* (aka *HIDDEN*) - Michael Haneke
2004 *BEE SEASON* - David Siegel and Scott McGhee
2003 *COUNTRY OF MY SKULL* - John Boorman
2002 *DÉCLAGE HORAIRE* (aka *JET LAG*)
- Daniele Thompson
2000 *CHOCOLAT* - Lasse Hallstrom
2000 *CODE INCONNU* - Michael Haneke
2000 *LA VEUVE DE SAINT-PIERRE* (aka *THE WIDOW OF SAINT-PIERRE*) - Patrice Leconte
1999 *LES ENFANTS DU SIÈCLE* (aka *THE CHILDREN OF THE CENTURY*) - Diane Kurys
1998 *ALICE ET MARTIN* - André Techiné
1996 *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* - Anthony Minghella
1995 *UN DIVAN A NEW YORK* - Chantal Akerman
1995 *LE HUSSARD SUR LE TOIT* (aka *THE HORSE MAN ON THE ROOF*) - Jean-Paul Rappeneau
1993 *THREE COLOURS: BLUE* - Krzysztof Kieslowski
1993 *THREE COLOURS: WHITE* - Krzysztof Kieslowski
1993 *THREE COLOURS: RED* - Krzysztof Kieslowski
1992 *DAMAGE* - Louis Malle
1991 *LES AMANTS DU PONT NEUF* - Leos Carax
1998 *THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING*
- Philip Kaufman
1986 *MAUVAIS SANG* (aka *BAD BLOOD*) - Leos Carax
1985 *LA VIE DE FAMILLE* (aka *FAMILY LIFE*)
- Jacques Doillon
1984 *RENDEZ-VOUS* - André Techiné
1985 *'JE VOUS SALUE, MARIE'* (aka *HAIL MARY*)
- Jean-Luc Godard
1983 *LIBERTY BELLE* - Pascal Kané

FOREST WHITAKER - TED YOUNGER

Forest Whitaker is one of Hollywood's most accomplished actor/director/producers, with a career embracing big and small screen. In 1988, he was named Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival for his incendiary portrayal of jazz legend Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood's *BIRD*, a role for which he also received a Golden Globe nomination. Whitaker earned widespread recognition for his performance as 'Jody' in Neil Jordan's Academy Award-winning *THE CRYING GAME*.

In 2000, Whitaker played the title role of a spiritual gangster in *GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI*, directed by Jim Jarmusch. The film premiered at the 1999 Cannes Festival, screened at the 1999 Toronto Film Festival to widespread acclaim, and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Feature. Whitaker made his feature film directing debut with the critically-vaunted box-office hit *WAITING TO EXHALE*, starring Angela Bassett, Whitney Houston, Lela Rochon and Loretta Devine. His most recent film as director film was *HOPE FLOATS*, starring Sandra Bullock.

Selected Filmography as Actor

2002 *PHONE BOOTH* - Joel Schumacher
2002 *PANIC ROOM* - David Fincher
1999 *BATTLEFIELD EARTH: A SAGA OF THE YEAR 3000* - Roger Christian
1999 *GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI*
- Jim Jarmusch
1995 *SMOKE* - Wayne Wang
1995 *SPECIES* - Roger Donaldson
1994 *PRÊT-À-PORTER* - Robert Altman
1994 *BLOWN AWAY* - Stephen Hopkins
1993 *BODY SNATCHERS* - Abel Ferrara
1992 *THE CRYING GAME* - Neil Jordan
1991 *A RAGE IN HARLEM* - Bill Duke
1989 *JOHNNY HANDSOME* - Walter Hill
1988 *BIRD* - Clint Eastwood
1987 *GOOD MORNING VIETNAM* - Barry Levinson
1987 *STAKEOUT* - John Badham
1986 *PLATOON* - Oliver Stone
1986 *THE COLOUR OF MONEY* - Martin Scorsese

as Director

2004 *THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT*
1998 *HOPE FLOATS*
1995 *WAITING TO EXHALE*

BIOGRAPHIES

MATTHEW MODINE - TONY CHILDRESS/ JESUS

Matthew Modine starred in Alan Parker's *BIRDY*, Jonathan Demme's *MARRIED TO THE MOB*, Stanley Kubrick's *FULL METAL JACKET*, Mike Figgis' *THE BROWNING VERSION*, John Schlesinger's *PACIFIC HEIGHTS*, Oliver Stone's *ON ANY GIVEN SUNDAY*, and Merchant/Ivory's *LE DIVORCE* opposite Kate Hudson and Naomi Watts, to name a few. This fall, he will star in *BEDFORD DIARIES*, a series produced by Tom Fontana (*OZ*, *HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREETS*) and HBO Independent. He will next be seen opposite Jason Statham in *TRANSPORTER 2* produced by Luc Besson.

Modine was a recipient of the 1993 Venice Film Festival's Volpi Cup for Best Ensemble Cast in Robert Altman's Golden Lion Award-winning *SHORT CUTS*. He earned Golden Globe and Emmy Award nominations for his performance in HBO's critically-acclaimed drama *AND THE BAND PLAYED ON*, and a Golden Globe nomination for his performance in *WHAT THE DEAF MAN HEARD*. Modine has directed three short films, *WHEN I WAS A BOY*, *SMOKING* and *ECCE PIRATE*. All debuted at the Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim, and have played in major film festivals worldwide. He wrote, directed and starred in his feature directorial debut *IF...DOG...RABBIT*, opposite John Hurt, Kevin J. O'Connor, Bruce Dern, Lisa Marie and David Keith. Modine also directed the play *12 ANGRY MEN*, starring F. Murray Abraham, Wallace Shawn and Seymour Cassel at the New Mercury Theater.

Selected Filmography

2003 *LE DIVORCE* - James Ivory
2001 *THE SHIPMENT* - Alex Wright
2000 *BAMBOOZLED* - Spike Lee
1999 *ANY GIVEN SUNDAY* - Oliver Stone
1999 *IF... DOG... RABBIT...* - Matthew Modine
1997 *THE REAL BLONDE* - Tom DiCillo
1997 *THE BLACKOUT* - Abel Ferrara
1995 *CUTTHROAT ISLAND* - Renny Harlin
1993 *SHORT CUTS* - Robert Altman
1992 *EQUINOX* - Alan Rudolph
1992 *WIND* - Carroll Ballard
1990 *PACIFIC HEIGHTS* - John Schlesinger
1990 *MEMPHIS BELLE* - Michael Caton-Jones
1988 *MARRIED TO THE MOB* - Jonathan Demme
1987 *ORPHANS* - Alan J. Pakula
1987 *FULL METAL JACKET* - Stanley Kubrick
1985 *VISION QUEST* - Harold Becker
1984 *MRS. SOFFEL* - Gillian Armstrong
1984 *BIRDY* - Alan Parker
1984 *THE HOTEL NEW HAMPSHIRE* - Tony Richardson
1983 *STREAMERS* - Robert Altman
1983 *BABY IT'S YOU* - John Sayles

HEATHER GRAHAM - ELIZABETH

Born in 1970, former model Heather Graham was nominated for an Independent Spirit Best Supporting Actress Award for her early performance in Gus Van Sant's *DRUGSTORE COWBOY*. Early career highlights include roles in David Lynch's *TWIN PEAKS*, Fred Schepisi's *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* and Alan Rudolph's *MRS PARKER AND THE VICIOUS CIRCLE*. A prolific, gifted and hugely versatile actress, she is equally at home with comedy, genre or dramatic roles, as witnessed by her filmography.

Selected filmography

2004 *CAKE* - Nisha Ganatra
2004 *45* - Gary Lennon
2002 *KILLING ME SOFTLY* - Chen Kaige
2002 *AUSTIN POWERS - GOLDMEMBER* - Jay Roach
2001 *SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK* - Edward Burns
1999 *AUSTIN POWERS - THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME* - Jay Roach
1999 *BOWFINGER* - Frank Oz
1998 *LOST IN SPACE* - Stephen Hopkins
1997 *BOOGIE NIGHTS* - Paul Thomas Anderson
1997 *SCREAM 2* - Wes Craven
1994 *MRS PARKER AND THE VICIOUS CIRCLE* - Alan Rudolph
1993 *EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES* - Gus Van Sant
1993 *SIX DEGREES OF SEPERATION* - Fred Schepisi
1992 *TWIN PEAKS, FIRE WALK WITH ME* - David Lynch
1990 *I LOVE YOU TO DEATH* - Lawrence Kasdan
1989 *DRUGSTORE COWBOY* - Gus Van Sant
1988 *TWINS* - Ivan Reitman

BIOGRAPHIES

MARION COTILLARD - GRETCHEN

The child of performers, Marion Cotillard acted from a very early age. In 1994 she took First Prize at the Orleans Conservatoire, and made her big-screen debut in Philippe Harel's bittersweet comedy L'HISTOIRE D'UN GARCON QUI VOULAIT QU'ON L'EMBRASSE.

Stand out early performances include those she gave for Arnaud Desplechin in COMMENT JE ME SUIS DISPUTE... (MA VIE SEXUELLE) and Coline Serreau in LA BELLE VERTE.

Wider recognition came with her appearance in the Luc Besson-produced smash hit TAXI (for which she won the Most Promising Female Newcomer César in 1998). A second César nomination followed for her double role in LES JOLIES CHOSES, adapted from the novel by Virginie Despentes (BAISE-MOI). Cotillard's international career was consolidated when Tim Burton cast her in BIG FISH (2003). Recent films of note include Jean-Pierre Jeunet's A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT, and Lucile Hadzihalilovic's INNOCENCE.

Selected Filmography

2005 LA MOME - Olivier Dahan
2004 MA VIE EN L'AIR - Rémi Bezançon
2004 UN LONG DIMANCHE DE FIANCAILLES (A Very Long Engagement) - Jean-Pierre Jeunet
2003 INNOCENCE - Lucile Hadzihalilovic
2003 BIG FISH - Tim Burton
2002 TAXI 3 - Gérard Krawczyk
2001 UNE AFFAIRE PRIVEE - Guillaume Nicloux
2001 LISA - Pierre Grimblat
2000 LES JOLIES CHOSES - Gilles Paquet-Brenner
1999 TAXI 2 - Gérard Krawczyk
1998 TAXI - Gérard Pirès
1996 L'AMOUR EST A REINVENTER
- François Dupeyron
1996 LA BELLE VERTE - Coline Serreau
1996 COMMENT JE ME SUIS DISPUTE. (MA VIE SEXUELLE) - Arnaud Desplechin
1996 LA MOUETTE - Nils Tavernier
1994 L'HISTOIRE DU GARCON QUI VOULAIT QU'ON L'EMBRASSE - Philippe Harel