

The Last Kiss

Italy 2001

Director
Gabriele Muccino
Producer
Domenico Procacci
Story/Screenplay
Gabriele Muccino
Director of Photography
Marcello Montarsi
Editor
Claudio Di Mauro
Art Director
Eugenia F. Di Napoli
Music
Paolo Buonvino

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Production Companies
Domenico Procacci presents a film by Gabriele Muccino
A Fandango production in collaboration with Medusa Film
Project Developed by
Laura Paolucci
Production Supervisor
Luigi Lagrasta
Production Co-ordinators
Daniela Appolloni
Fandango:
Giovanni Guardi
Children's Co-ordinator
Oh Baby di R. De Angelis
Production Manager
Gian Luca Chiaretti
Unit Manager
Sandra Bonacchi
Post-production Co-ordinator
Paola Conte

Assistant Directors
1st: Francesco Vedovati
2nd: Laura Muccino
3rd: Alessandro Avataneo
Alessandra Buggenig
Gianluca Soli
Script Supervisor
Maria Vittoria Abbrugiati
Casting
Francesco Vedovati
Steadicam Operator
Sandro De Pascalis
Special Effects
Paolo Ricci
Costumes
Nicoletta Ercole with the collaboration of Alessandra Intini

Make-up
Ermanno Spera
Paola Rubaltelli
Hairstylists
Maurizio Lupi
Augusta De Angelis
Silvana Locatelli
Titles/Opticals
Penta Studio
Music Performed by
Orchestra di Roma
Musicians

Piano:
Gilda Buttà
Violoncello:
Luca Pincini
Clarinet:
Simone Salza
Bass Clarinet:
Gianluca Sulli
Saxophone:
Pasquale Laino
Bassoons:
Eliseo Smordoni
Franco Sugoni
Orchestra di Roma Conducted by
Paolo Buonvino
Music Editor
Gianluca Carbonelli
Digital Editing
Fabio Venturi
Sound Programming
Rocco Petrucci
Music Recording
Fabio Venturi
Rocco Petrucci
Music Consultants
Giovanni Guardi
Luciano Levrone a.k.a. Luzzy L.
Soundtrack
"Blue Angel" – The Squirrel Nut Zippers;
"The Last Kiss", "What Love Can Do", "Watch

the Moon Come Down" – I Piti Bestial che Blues; "The Ride (part II)" – Galexico; "Serpentine" – dEUS; "Plaza Francia" – Alejandro Ruiz, la Hernán Valencia Orquesta; "Lazy Busy", "Hu ha" – Montefiori Cocktail; "La fabula" – Hernán Valencia Orquesta; "A Great Big World" – I Senzabenza; "Sinfonia No. 6 in si minore, op. 74 "La patetica", allegro con grazia" by Pyotr Tchaikovsky – Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yehudi Menuhin; "Tu e l'estate" – Bam Bams; "La voglia la pazzia" – Ornella Vanoni; "The Hip Sheik" – The Karminsky Experience; "For the Damaged" – Blonde Redhead; "Come Hell or High Water" – Barry Adamson; "Se tu non fossi qui" – Mina; "L'ultimo bacio" – Carmen Consoli
Sound Recording
Gaetano Carito
Sound Re-recording
Claudio Chioffi
Sound Editor
Gianluca Carbonelli
GH Sound

Cast
Stefano Accorsi
Carlo
Giovanna Mezzogiorno
Giulia
Stefania Sandrelli
Anna
Claudio Santamaria
Paolo
Giorgio Pasotti
Adriano
Marco Cocci
Alberto
Pierfrancesco Favino
Marco
Sabrina Impacciatore
Livia
Regina Orioli
Arianna
Susanna Javicoli
Luisa
Vittorio Amandola
Uncle Mimmo
Daniela Piazza
Veronica
Lina Bernardi
Adele
Ines Nobili
Gemma
Piero Natoli
Michele
Luigi Diberti
Emilio
Martina Stella
Francesca
Sergio Castellitto
Professor Eugenio Bonetti
Carmen Consoli
woman in bed with Alberto
Giulia Carmignani
Mariposa
Giulia Steigerwalt
girl at the French institute
Silvio Muccino
Mariposa's boyfriend
Elisabetta Rocchetti
Valeria
Vanessa Sanpaolese
Laura
Bianca Cheric
Francesca's mother
Federico Zanchini
boy running
Nino D'Agata
car dealer
Federica Trucchia
Alberto's girlfriend
Bruna Rossi
Emilio's patient
Alberto Alemanno
Arianna's boyfriend

Laura Stella Saporetti
Mariposa's mother
Giorgio Sgobbi
creative director
Gianluca Chiaretti
gynaecologist
Carmelo Barbera
Paolo's father
Emanuele Cincis
Matteo
Luca Zampetti
Carlo and Giulia's son
Eleonora Piacentini
Sveva aged 2
Adelaide Pizzi
Sveva aged 8
Pierino Bertone
priest

Certificate
15
Distributor
Verve Pictures
10,646 feet +5 frames
118 minutes 18 seconds

Dolby Digital
Colour by
Technicolor
[2.35:1]
Subtitles

Italian theatrical title
L'ultimo bacio

Italy, the present. Carlo and Giulia, a couple in their late twenties, tell her parents they are expecting a baby. The news makes Giulia's mother Anna feel old; she realises she's stuck in an unhappy marriage. Carlo also feels trapped. His feelings are shared by his friends Adriano, a new dad miserably married to Livia; Paolo, rejected by the one woman he loves and destined to run his sick father's religious icon business; and Alberto, an inveterate playboy. At a wedding Carlo meets and is smitten with a flirtatious teenager, Francesca.

While his friends plan to buy a camper van to travel across Africa, Carlo feels increasingly oppressed by Giulia, now suggesting they buy a house together. Meanwhile Anna, aching to leave her husband, is set up by her friend with a man looking for companionship. Turning him down she meets Eugenio, her lover from three years ago, but he now has a partner and child. Barging into her husband's psychiatric practice she confesses the affair and tells him she's leaving him. Meanwhile Carlo accepts an invitation from Francesca to a party, lying to Giulia that he is going out with Adriano. That night Paolo's father dies; Paolo's friends rush to his side – only Carlo is missing. Giulia realises he is cheating on her; when Carlo returns home, Giulia throws him out. He spends the night with Francesca. Lonely Anna returns to her husband, while Carlo dumps Francesca and fights to regain Giulia. As Adriano, Paolo and Alberto enjoy their African escapade, Carlo and Giulia are married with their daughter.

The second-highest-grossing film in Italy in 2001, *The Last Kiss* has taken until now to get a British release. Perhaps this is due to its strange plot mechanism, comprehensible only to an Italian. In the first part, two main characters struggle with unimaginable effort to escape their unhappy personal situation. In the second, they then struggle even harder to restore their old trap. Viewers mystified by this *modus operandi* might recall how, when Italy finally rid itself of the one of the most corrupt and embarrassing leaders in the developed world, billionaire trash-TV magnate Silvio Berlusconi, it then re-elected him, unchanged and unrepentant, just a few years later. Do Italians actually wish to live under a repressive social order?

The Last Kiss, despite its faults (among them, an overlong ending) is an accurate portrayal and indictment of the paralysing social conventions

entrenched in that country, wherein satisfying independent life choices are virtually impossible to take without losing your social standing. So strong is the pressure to retain the trappings of family life that even the film's incongruous tack-on epilogue, with its sugary 'the-smile-on-my-baby's-face-made-it-all-worthwhile' message, pays lip-service to the soul-destroying social codes this movie seeks to expose. Nevertheless to any non-Italian either uninterested in or unfamiliar with the territory, *The Last Kiss* comes across mostly as a two-hour screaming match, an incomprehensible (if entertaining) story about a few spoiled, rather nice-looking people hell-bent on complaining incessantly while making themselves and everyone around them miserable.

Skilfully depicting mating rituals more treacherous than those of the wolf-spider, director Gabriele Muccino keeps the story weaving between comedy and tragedy (his last two movies were straight comedies). The acting is engaging too, with a host of talented young actors outshining the veteran Italian players, led by Stefania Sandrelli. Sustaining much of the film's sanguine emotional pitch is impressive newcomer Giovanna Mezzogiorno as Giulia, terrifyingly believable in her fury over the infidelity of Carlo, father to her unborn child. She is especially frightening as we watch her rage mellow into a simmering lifetime of self-righteous revenge.

Like everybody else, Giulia is wholly consumed by the drama of her private life. The only instance when the outside world strays into this claustrophobic circle is when Carlo, momentarily relieved of all the ball-busting women in his life, squanders his one night as a single man watching game shows. Suddenly the plot almost makes sense even to an Anglo-Saxon: better to be stuck in a loveless, sexless relationship than subjected to dire Italian TV, described in Tobias Jones' recent socio-political exposé *The Dark Heart of Italy* as "the worst, most abysmal television on the planet". That book's message was that although one might imagine Italy as a modern and carefree place it is actually "incredibly hierarchical and formal... conservative and obedient". *The Last Kiss* is primarily for movie-goers keen to observe this subtle form of oppression at work in contemporary, middle-class Italian family life. *Paradiso* it is not.

Gilda Williams



Parent trap: Mezzogiorno, Accorsi