

LIONSGATE

DON'T TELL *(La Bestia nel Cuore)*

A Film By
CRISTINA COMENCINI

with

GIOVANNA MEZZOGIORNO
ALESSIO BONI
STEFANIA ROCCA
ANGELA FINOCCHIARO
GIUSEPPE BATTISTON
and
LUIGI LO CASCIO

Rating: Not yet rated
Running time: 120 mins.

CAST

Sabina	GIOVANNA MEZZOGIORNO
Franco	ALESSIO BONI
Emilia	STEFANIA ROCCA
Maria	ANGELA FINOCCHIARO
Director Andrea Negri	GIUSEPPE BATTISTON
Daniele	LUIGI LO CASCIO
Father	VALERIO BINASCO
Anita	FRANCESCA INAUDI
Anne	LUCY AKHURST
Giovanni	LEWIS LEMPERUER PALMER
Bill	JEKE-OMER BOYAYANLAR
Mother	SIMONA

FILMMAKERS

Director	CRISTINA COMENCINI
Screenwriters	FRANCESCA MARCIANO CRISTINA COMENCINI GIULIA CALENDÀ
Based on the novel “La bestia nel cuore” by	CRISTINA COMENCINI
Published in Italy by	FELTRINELLI
Costume Designer	ANTONELLA BERARDI
Production Designer	PAOLA COMENCINI
Sound	BRUNO PUPPARO
Casting	MIRTA GUARNASCHELLI
Music	FRANCO PIERSANTI
Editor	CECILIA ZANUSO
Director of Photography	FABIO CIANCHETTI
Line Producer	MATTEO DE LAURENTIIS
Co-producers	FABIO CONVERSI TERENCE S. POTTER JACQUELINE QUELLA GIOVANNELLA ZANNONI RICCARDO TOZZI GIOVANNI STABILINI MARCO CHIMENZ
Production supervisor	CATTLEYA/ RAI CINEMA
Producers	BEAST IN THE HEART FILMS (UK) ALQUIMIA CINEMA (Spain) BABE (France) SKY
Produced by	01 Distribution
in co-production with	TF1 International
in collaboration with	
Italian distribution	
International sales	

SYNOPSIS

Based upon the celebrated novel *La Bestia nel Cuore*, DON'T TELL is the mesmerizing story of a woman's journey into her past and the aftermath of confronting personal demons long hidden beneath the surface of her psyche. At the heart of the film is Sabina (Giovanna Mezzogiorno- Best Actress, 2005 Venice Film Festival), a beautiful young woman who seemingly has it all- a supportive and loving boyfriend, a comfortable lifestyle, and a promising future.

But when Sabina learns she is pregnant, a normally celebratory occasion is clouded by a succession of haunting nightmares, strange memories, and personal insecurities that send Sabina's world spiraling out of control. While shunning the affections of her boyfriend Franco (Alessio Boni), Sabina flees to America where she seeks comfort from her brother Daniele (Luigi Lo Cascio) and his family. In the arms of her loved ones, Sabina uncovers truths so dark and disturbing that she begins to question her own instincts about life, love, and her future happiness, leading to an intense psychological climax that finds Sabina at a crossroads of redemption or destruction.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

DON'T TELL was shot in eleven weeks in the dead of winter and in a variety of locations from America, England, and Italy including the famed Italian studios of Cinecittà, where most of the visual effects were filmed. Bestselling author-writer-director Cristina Comencini initially hesitated to adapt her last novel. “My books are usually about events that take place over a very long period, but with this novel I was able to bring a short span of time to the screen with the same passion I used in writing the story for the page.”

With extensive rehearsals, the actors were enormously successful in transforming literary characters into autonomous individuals. Each of them read the book and was able to know much more about their respective characters’ worlds than they ultimately had to portray. Changes were made, arcs were condensed, and cinematic liberties were brought to the screen. The result, Comencini states, “is a film full of changes from the novel that still maintains the atmosphere that began this journey—one that really speaks to life’s *chiaroscuro* elements.”

Another important element that brought page to screen was the setting. Comencini worked closely with the creative team to bring the story’s psychological aspects to visual life. Comencini cites the “house of the dead” - Sabina’s childhood home, as an example of a setting that lends itself to a psychological universe. “In Studio 5 of Cinecittà,” Comencini remembers, “we built the house where we shot the nightmares. It was a setting that looked completely unreal because the house takes on different forms according to the memories-- the hallways disappear, the rooms change position, etc.”

Production Designer Paola Comencini created a geography that flirts with reality. Besides shooting in the “house of the dead” as an interior setting, Paola and her team constructed parts of the house on scaffolding for a surreal effect. “What we constructed

in Studio 5 was truly a seemingly simple place—a middle class home that is at first glance harmless but is ultimately a house of nightmares.”

With so much intensity on set due to the subject matter at hand, Comencini recalls the cast and crew’s strong sense of camaraderie. “From the very beginning, we all spent a lot of time together. It reminded me of what takes place in the theater, when a certain solidarity is established with a group of actors, a director, and the crew.” Comencini notes that the intensive rehearsals really helped to put everyone in the same mindset, creating a cohesive filmic world.

SABINA’S JOURNEY

“Sabina is at the heart of the film,” Comencini says, “but the other characters are by no means secondary. All of them are intimately tied to Sabina’s suffering, yet are independent and have their own personal journey within the film.” It is Sabina’s terrible nightmare that serves as a catalyst for the reaction of this cast of characters.

As part of her journey, Sabina heads to the United States to spend time with her brother Daniele (Luigi Lo Cascio) and his wife and two children. Once Sabina is ensconced in this seemingly comforting environment, Daniele reveals a secret that changes her forever. For Comencini, Daniele’s emotional revelation and Sabina’s grasp of the truth provide two of the film’s most important scenes. Says Comencini, “that scene [during the fireworks] required only two takes because Giovanna was so emotionally invested she got it right immediately.”

Adds Mezzogiorno, “The beginning of the shoot was really difficult because we left for the States right away and we had to immediately tackle the film’s nucleus, Daniele’s revelation, which was the most complex scene for me. I was worried, but it went well. I really placed my trust in Cristina because I respect her so much.” Having shot the turning point of the film first in America, Comencini and her cast were able to head back

to Europe and flesh out their characters from a precise vantage point. Comments Mezzogiorno, “I had read Cristina’s book prior to shooting and found it intense, powerful, and complex, but nothing prepared me for the experience of bringing this to the screen with such a wonderful director behind it.”

For *Lo Cascio*, Daniele’s voyage is divided into two essential elements: one that is submerged and one that is evident. “When we see Daniele for the first time he is repressed. He’s unable to have a relationship with his wife and he cannot even touch his children. Sabina’s arrival forces Daniele to face his doubts over whether or not to tell her about their shared past.”

Sabina’s relationship with her caring boyfriend, Franco (Alessio Boni), further complicates her life. Although a loving, supportive presence for her, Franco becomes a source of resentment for Sabina when she first confronts her doubts and flees to America. “Franco is a work in progress,” says Boni, adding that working with Comencini and Mezzogiorno allowed him to get a grasp on what exactly his character’s actions meant to Sabina in her emotional state.

MARIA and EMILIA – A LOVE STORY

For many of the actors, Comencini’s novel played an important part in constructing their characters’ initial base. But for Stefania Rocca (Emilia), additional rehearsals were needed in order to fully comprehend the logistics of her character’s blindness. Emilia is a character that tries to be independent any way she can, but who ultimately ends up falling in love with Maria (Angela Finocchiaro). The result is a touching and humorous foray into unexpected love that gives *DON’T TELL* a balance to the personal tumult that dominates Sabina’s journey.

Rocca recalls spending time with an association of blind people in Paris and working with them by going through the training that children do when they have gone blind. “I would spend two or three hours a day with my eyes closed,” Rocca notes, adding, “I

finally managed to do it for two whole days and gained a different perspective on life after that—on day, on light, on time, on schedules.” After mastering the method, Rocca worked with a teacher to use the loom and acquire the natural dexterity that the blind possess. “It really allowed me to get in touch with a world that was unknown to me, to tap into a condition in which willpower masks a deep inner rage.”

For one of Rocca’s most intense scenes in the film, in which Emilia seduces Maria, Comencini used one long, continuous take to add a sense of tenderness to the film that contrasts nicely with the emotional weight of Sabina’s plight. Comencini adds, “it was such a warm and *real* scene for me to shoot.”

Finocchiaro used Comencini’s novel to get a grasp of what other people might think of Maria. “She is a wounded, embittered woman whose husband left her for their daughter’s friend—the resentment she feels for her husband is palpable.” It is no surprise that Maria finds solace in the arms of another. But the true test of personal introspection comes when Maria realizes that other person is Emilia. Finocchiaro concludes, “the novel was fundamental to me—I used it to recompose and reconstruct Maria’s qualities.”

ABOUT THE CAST

GIOVANNA MEZZOGIORNO (Sabina)

Daughter of famed Italian actors Vittorio Mezzogiorno and Cecilia Sacchi, Giovanna studied her craft in Paris for two years at the Peter Brook Workshop. After earning awards for her theater work in Italy and around Europe, she made her film debut at the age of 22 in 1997's *IL VIAGGIO DELLA SPOSA*, alongside her director and co-star Sergio Rubini, and was recognized with the Targa d'Argento award for New Talent in Italian Cinema and the Italian Golden Globe along with other awards. The next year she worked with another famed Italian director/actor, Michele Placido, in *DEL PERDUTO AMORE*, for which she again won several prizes including one of Italy's most prestigious, the Nastro d'Argento (Silver Ribbon). She began to shift between both film projects and productions for the small screen, where she worked with such directors as Joséé Dayan and stars such as John Malkovich and Gerard Depardieu amongst others. Her face and talent became known throughout Italy and much of the rest of the world in 2001 after her powerful turn as a spurned fiancée in the box office smash *L'ULTIMO BACIO* (The Last Kiss) for director Gabriele Muccino. Moving regularly between Italy and France, she has continued to earn awards, often in socially-conscious films, and in 2003 starred in another smash hit, Ferzan Ozpetek's *LA FINESTRA DI FRONTE* (Facing Windows) for which she won all of Italy's premier national acting awards. The following year she reteamed with Sergio Rubini in his film *L'AMORE RITORNA*. In 2005, Giovanna won the Best Actress prize at the 2005 Venice Film Festival for *DON'T TELL*. She recently wrapped Francesca Archibugi's India-set *LEZIONI DI VOLO* (Flying Lessons).

STEFANIA ROCCA (Emilia)

Raised in Turin, Stefania attended the famed Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome and continued her studies at the Actor's Studio in New York. She began her film career working in various international productions and has continued to work with filmmakers from around Europe and America. Her early work includes Gabriele Salvatores's *NIRVANA* in 1997 and starring roles in Donatella Maiorca's controversial *VIOL@* and Anna Negri's *IN PRINCIPIO ERANO LE MUTANDE* (In the Beginning it was the Underwear). She was chosen by Anthony Minghella for a role in *THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY* and by Kenneth Branagh for his film *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*, was provocatively featured in Mike Figgis's digital film *HOTEL* and starred in Giorgio Treves's *ROSA AND CORNELIA*, for which she won an Italian Golden Globe. In 2001, Stefania starred in the Taviani brothers' mini-series *RESURRECTION*, and in the summer of the following year, she co-starred in Alessandro D'Alatri's *CASOMAI*, the Italian hit of that season, which she followed soon afterwards with *FIVE MOONS PLAZA* alongside Donald Sutherland and Giancarlo Giannini. She has since starred in Dario Argento's *THE CARD PLAYER*, Abel Ferrara's *Mary* and Cristina Comencini's *DON'T TELL*. While working regularly in theater and short films, Stefania's most

recent work is in the just-released feature LA CURA DEL GORILLA and in the title role of the mini-series MAFALDA DI SAVOIA.

ALESSIO BONI (Franco)

After beginning in theater and starring in several Italian television movies, series and miniseries throughout the 1990's, Alessio was "discovered" when he burst onto movie screens around the world as the most unforgettable member of the brilliant cast of director Marco Tullio Giordana's THE BEST OF YOUTH, which won the 2003 Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard and was distributed around the world to extraordinary acclaim. The film won top awards at other international film festivals, including those in Palm Springs, Seattle, Denver and Rotterdam, and in its native Italy dominated the David di Donatello awards and nearly swept the Nastri d'Argento (Silver Ribbons), where Alessio shared the Best Actor award. He worked again with Giordana on the director's next film, ONCE YOU'RE BORN, which enjoyed its international premiere in competition at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. In 2005, he completed work amongst the prestigious cast of Michele Soavi's television project ARRIVEDERCI AMORE, CIAO.

ANGELA FINOCCHIARO (Maria)

Having debuted in the 1970's in the experimental theatrical company "Quelli di Grock" alongside Maurizio Nichetti, Angela wrote and starred in several beloved plays as well as television programs including QUO VADIZ? which she created with Nichetti and Gabriele Salvatores. During the '80's and '90's she became an increasingly familiar face on Italian television. Adored for her wonderful energy and gift for comedy, she is also an accomplished dramatic actress and has worked in various award-winning features, including: Daniele Luchetti's IT'S HAPPENING TOMORROW, Cannes competition film, THE YES MAN and ARRIVA LA BUFERA; Marco Risi's THE INVISIBLE WALL, in competition at the Venice Film Festival; Nichetti's VOLERE VOLARE, winner of two awards at the Montreal Film Festival; and Sergio Castellitto's award-winning DON'T MOVE with Penelope Cruz. Finocchiaro won the Nastro d'Argento (Silver Ribbon) for Best Supporting Actress for DON'T TELL.

LUIGI LO CASCIO (Daniele)

A graduate of the "Silvio d'Amico" National Academy of Dramatic Arts in Rome, Luigi Lo Cascio carries a profound theater background having worked as both an actor and a director. He came to international attention in 2000 with his lead role in Marco Tullio Giordana's THE HUNDRED STEPS, for which he won a David di Donatello award for Best Actor. The film won several other awards at the same ceremony as well as at the Venice Film Festival. The film was also nominated for a Golden Globe as Best Foreign Language Film and was Italy's official entry for the Academy Awards. For his next film,

Giuseppe Piccioni's *THE LIGHT OF MY EYES* with Sandra Ceccarelli, Luigi won two acting awards at the Venice Film Festival and was nominated for a David di Donatello and a European Film Award.

In 2003, he was featured in the choral cast of Cristina Comencini's *THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE* and lead the extraordinary cast of Giordana's award-winning *THE BEST OF YOUTH*, which was an international success with critics and audiences alike. He was next seen in Marco Bellocchio's award-winning *GOOD MORNING, NIGHT* and later experimented with genre in Eros Puglielli's horror/thriller *EYES OF CRYSTAL* and in Sergio Rubini's comedy *MY BROTHER-IN-LAW*. In 2004, he worked again with Piccioni and Ceccarelli on *LA VITA CHE VORREI*, and the following year teamed up again with Comencini in *DON'T TELL*. His next release is Roberta Torre's *BLACK SEA*.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

CRISTINA COMENCINI (Director and Screenwriter)

Daughter of the celebrated Italian filmmaker Luigi Comencini, Cristina Comencini is a multi-faceted talent: a novelist, a screenwriter and a director.

Her film career began alongside her father, first writing with him and then for him. Her directing debut was 1988's *ZOO*, where several of her hallmarks are already apparent: her talent and sensitivity for working with actors and her collaboration with gifted crew members. Her adept use of the motion picture camera are confirmed by *THE AMUSEMENTS OF PRIVATE LIFE* (1990), an effective costume drama, and her follow-up, *THE END IS KNOWN* (1992), based on Geoffrey Hollyday Hall's novel with which another of her trademarks – the relationship between cinema and literature – reveals itself a fundamental aspect of her art.

This is further evidenced by *GO WHERE YOUR HEART TAKES YOU* (1995) based on Italian author Susanna Tamaro's bestselling novel. The film successfully transposes on film the book's themes and settings and displays the director's ability to recount and investigate family dynamics and relations; and not only from a woman's point of view.

With *MARRIAGES* (1988) and *FREE THE FISH* (2000), her study of families is mixed with a comic tone, a very successful combination due in no small part to the work of ever larger, more important casts. It is the excellent alchemy created between the director and her actors that has become a trademark of Comencini's work.

Indeed, her next film, *THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE* (2002), is the natural extension of these characteristics. A hit with both audiences and critics, it won several prizes both in Italy – the Nastro d'Argento (Silver Ribbon) for Screenplay and Ensemble Cast – and internationally – the Montreal Film Festival's Grand Prix des Amériques and the Créteil International Film Festival.

DON'T TELL (2005), is the sum of the qualities that render Comencini's work so interesting and unique – dense and involving thematics about men and women, family ties set against a background reflecting the darkness in each of us. Moving yet entertaining, its tonality moves between drama and comedy.

DON'T TELL is also an organic point of arrival for Comencini's evolving body of work, for it is her first film based on her own novel, already a success in its own right. As it happens, Comencini is a highly-regarded novelist. Her books – *TORN PAGES* (1991), *FAMILY PASSION* (1994), *THE TURK'S OVERCOAT* (1997), *MATRIOSKA* (2002)

and DON'T TELL (2004) – are published in Italy by Feltrinelli, one of the country's most prestigious publishers.

RICCARDO TOZZI (producer)

After beginning his career as a research analyst in the banking industry, in 1975, Riccardo Tozzi began a ten year stint at SACIS, then Italy's leading film sales company, where he oversaw the co-production and sales of some the era's most successful production including the Taviani brothers' PADRE PADRONE (Palme d'Or, Cannes, 1977) and Olmi's THE TREE OF THE WOODEN CLOGS (Palme d'Or, Cannes, 1978) as well as films by Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Marco Ferreri, Francesco Rosi and Nanni Moretti.

Tozzi, then, moved to emerging Italian network Mediaset to head production. He developed and produced over 1,200 hours of domestic and international television programming and executive produced theatrical features including Lina Wertmuller's SABATO, DOMENICA E LUNEDÌ, Franco Zeffirelli's JANE EYRE, Bernardo Bertolucci's BESIEGED and Martin Scorsese's documentary IL DOLCE CINEMA.

In 1997, Tozzi founded his own company Cattleya and produced Cristina Comencini's MATRIMONI, and Franco Zeffirelli's TEA WITH MUSSOLINI (distributed in the U.S. by United Artists). Two years later, former Executive Vice President of Mediaset Giovanni Stabilini and Executive Vice President of Medusa Film Marco Chimenz joined Tozzi as partners. They have since produced a prolific slate of films and have overseen the company's growth into Italy's leading film production company.

Highlights include Zeffirelli's CALLAS FOREVER, Michele Placido's A JOURNEY CALLED LOVE (Venice 2002's Best Actor), Goran Paskaljevic's HOW HARRY BECAME A TREE (Venice 2002), Comencini's THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE (Montreal 2003), Gabriele Salvatores' I'M NOT SCARED (Berlin 2003, distributed in the U.S. by Miramax), Paolo Virzì's Caterina In the Big City, Sergio Castellito's Don't Move, Marco Tullio Giordana's ONCE YOU'RE BORN YOU CAN NO LONGER HIDE (Cannes 2005), Placido's CRIME NOVEL (Berlin 2006, winner of five Nastri d'Argento) and Comencini's DON'T TELL (Academy Award nominee, Venice 2005's Best Actress). Features currently in post-production include Roberta Torre's DARK SEA, Gianni Amelio's THE MISSING STAR, and Paolo Virzì's N. (starring Daniel Auteuil and Monica Bellucci).

Cattleya has recently begun a strong push into television production to parallel its work in features, having produced one series and two miniseries with several other projects in development.

CECILIA ZANUSO (Editor)

Award-winning editor Cecilia Zanuso began her career working for the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institute, PBS, HBO, ABC and independent film directors. Upon returning to Italy, she worked in commercials, television and music videos before beginning to work in film. DON'T TELL is her third collaboration with Cristina Comencini.

FABIO CIANCHETTI (Director of Photography)

With a career spanning almost 30 years, Fabio Cianchetti has worked with Italy's most renowned directors including Bernardo Bertolucci (BESEIGED; THE DREAMERS) and Roberto Benigni (THE TIGER AND THE SNOW). His frequent collaboration with director Cristina Comencini has garnered him most recently Italy's prestigious Nastro d'Argento (Silver Ribbon) award for Best Cinematography for DON'T TELL.

PAOLA COMENCINI (Production Designer)

Daughter of celebrated Italian director Luigi Comencini, production designer Paola Comencini began her career as an architect before segueing in to cinema. She began her career in 1972 as an assistant production designer and costume designer working with Italy's most renowned artists including seven time Oscar nominee/winner Dante Ferretti. In addition to collaborating with Cristina Comencini on all of her films, she has worked with Italy's most famous living director Michelangelo Antonioni. In addition to DON'T TELL, Comencini recently completed Michele Placido's ROMANZO CRIMINALE which is in competition in the 2006 Berlin Film Festival.

ANTONELLA BERARDI (Costume Designer)

Born in Tuscany, Antonella Berardi graduated from the famed State Institute of Art in Florence. Her extensive career includes both television and film where she has worked on all of director Cristina Comencini's movies with the exception of ZOO.

FRANCO PIERSANTI (Composer)

Born in Rome in 1950, he graduated at the Santa Cecilia conservatory in contrabass, composition and conducting. He has written over 60 film and television scores and an equal number of original compositions for the theater. Piersanti is frequently a guest conductor with major orchestras around the world. He has twice received the David of

Donatello award for his work in Gianni Amelio's films (L'AMERICA; STOLEN CHILDREN). This is his second collaboration with Cristina Comencini.