



DESTINY
AND
SURVIVAL
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BEYOND
THE CANALS
OF
VENICE

ISLAND
OF THE
GONDOLIERS

GONDOLIER PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS "ISLAND OF THE GONDOLIERS"

A GUIDO MUZZARELLI FILM STARRING ALI ALLIE

MATTEO TRONCONE STEPHAN SMITH COLLINS

LARISSA KASIAN GLEN CASPILLO THOMAS SEPE

MUSIC BY MARK GROWDEN ART DIRECTION BY SCOTT NORDLUND

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GUIDO MUZZARELLI COPYRIGHT © 2009



ISLAND OF THE GONDOLIERS

Written and Directed

by

Guido Muzzarelli

Art Direction - Scott Nordlund

Director of Photography - Robert Donald

Director of Photography - David Walter Lech

1st Camera Assistant - Zach Lipson

Editor - Penelope Krueger, Guido Muzzarelli

Sound Design - Jen Covens

VFX - Kent Matheson, Ben Von Zastrow

Original Score - Mark Growden

Cast

Ali Allie

Matteo Tronccone

Stephan Smith Collins

Larissa Kasian

Glen Caspillo

Thomas Sepe

Frank Turco

Steve McMoy

Ceili Samundra

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Leo Ghianti

Santo Essenzo

Bruno Brunelli

Gia Essenzo


Luka the Gondolier

Tigerball

Lancero

Father Jorge

Carlo Essenzo



Synopsis:

1921, Venice, Italy.

A mysterious paper airplane flies through a window and lands in the lap of a young orphan named Carlo. The cryptic writing on the paper plane reveals the author to be Leo Ghianti, the boy's long-lost godfather. Through the letter, Leo tells Carlo the story of how he met Carlo's parents 10 years earlier. It begins with Leo's search for the last survivors of a genocide on an island called Floracha, whose people and culture were wiped out by the Venetian army.

Rumors of Florachans hiding in the underground lead Leo to the last known survivor, an old gondolier named Luka. This old man has been forced to perform in a circus, retelling through puppetry a bastardized version of the genocide of Floracha that glorifies Venice and vilifies the Florachans.

As Leo makes arrangements to meet Luka, the old gondolier escapes from the circus prison through Gia, his granddaughter. Events intensify as Leo aids Gia, her husband Santo, and Luka to escape the pursuing circus leader Bruno Brunelli. Leo's letter to Carlo describes the tragic aftermath of the final confrontation with Bruno, and the narrow escape by Leo and Gia.

In the end of the letter, Leo tells Carlo that he will be waiting for him in Floracha. The film ends with the introduction of Carlo's new father, Bruno Brunelli.



Director's Bio:

Guido Muzzarelli is a San Francisco-based filmmaker and animator. He has worked on many feature films over the past decade, for directors such as Robert Zemeckis, Guillermo Del Toro, The Brothers Wachowski, and Shane Acker. His animation work can be

seen in a variety of feature films ranging from blockbusters to smaller independents. He is a first-generation Italian-American, the son of a doctor in a family of doctors from the Adriatic coast of Italy near Fermo. Guido's journey into filmmaking began at age 10 with creating Super-8mm animated short films.

After graduating from the prestigious U.C.L.A. School of Film, Theater, and Television, Guido spent much of his 20s travelling through far-flung places around the globe. He saw first-hand the manner in which modern society has increasingly eaten at the roots of indigenous dispossessed cultures, particularly in his journey to Tibet in 2002, where he was inspired by the resilience of the spirit of the Tibetans in the villages dotting the countryside against the encroachment of the Chinese oppressors. These observations became the foundation of the central theme of "Island of the Gondoliers", and it is a theme he intends to pursue in future projects.

Lead Cast:



Ali Allie - Leo Ghianti

Along with his work as an actor, Ali Allie is an independent filmmaker, freelance editor, and director of photography based in Los Angeles. His film "Spirit of My Mother" explores the Garifuna culture, and has screened at many festivals.



Matteo Troncone - Santo Essenzo

A versatile actor of the stage and screen, Matteo brings a unique passion to his craft. He truly grounds himself under the skin of the role and whole-heartedly explores every aspect of that character. His stage and screen work includes "Small Tragedy" and "Darwin Awards".



Stephan Smith Collins - Bruno Brunelli

Originally hailing from Chicago, Stephan has been rapidly gathering accolades for his diverse range and powerful presence both on stage and on camera. This is a powerhouse actor who gives his all and can do it all. His credits include "Darwin Awards" and "Tenderloin."



Larissa Kasian

A focused actress who brings a strong intensity both physically and emotionally to her performance, Larissa is also accomplished behind the camera as well. Her extensive list of credits includes "Pathogen" and "Homeworld".

Supporting Cast:



Glen Caspillo - Luka the Gondolier

As Luka, Glen brings a sense of mystery and desperate nobility to the role. He is an actor dedicated to living in the moment and making that moment real. His long list of credits includes "Nash Bridges".



Frank Turco - Lancero the Mime Guard

A brilliant physical performer and an actor with impeccable timing and technique, Frank brings an absorbing pathos to the doomed mime guard Lancero.



Tom Sepe - Tigerball the Mime Spy

The very definition of a renaissance man, Tom is gifted in many artistic disciplines. He is involved in a variety of performance arts, video productions, design, photography, and fabrication.



Steve McMoy - Father Jorge

With his piercing eyes and urgent delivery, Steve carves a sharp portrait of a haggard soul for Father Jorge's appearance in the final scene.



Ceili Samundra - Carlo Essenzo

In his first featured role, Ceili plays the orphaned son of Santo and Gia Essenzo.

Core Production Team:



Scott Nordlund - Art Direction

Scott is a professional animator and director who has worked on a variety of shows such as "The P Js" and Weird Al Yankovic music videos. He excels at art direction and the fabrication of sets, props, and puppets of the highest caliber under tight deadlines.



Robert Donald - Director of Photography

Robert is a painter and a cinematographer from Dublin, Ireland. Robert filmed several of the live action scenes along with the miniature visual effects shots for the film. His previous credits include "Winter's End".



David Walter Lech - Director of Photography

David Walter Lech served as DP for the majority of the film's live action scenes. His credits include "Mitsein" and "The Wind and the Water".



Mark Growden - Composer

Mark Growden is an internationally reknown multi-instrumentalist and artist who has released several critically-acclaimed albums. His latest album, "Saint Judas", is released in Fall 2009.

Additional Crew Personnel:

Zach Lipson - 1st Camera Assistant

Caterina Bernardi - Set Photographer

Brian Copenhagen - Sound Recording

Jordan Torrey - Stage Manager

Chuck Duke - Puppeteer / Mime

Production Stills:



Production Notes:

“Island of the Gondoliers” is the cinematic culmination of a story that Guido has developed for many years. Originating as a children’s tale steeped in a timeless fantasy realm, “Island of the Gondoliers” at one point was meant to be a book. Over 60 scenes were illustrated by Guido, with a variety of bizarre lands and characters that existed in a parallel world with a city best described as what would happen if Dr. Seuss designed Venice. Eventually Guido decided to set the story in the “real world” of 1921 Venice, but keeping the sense of magical realism and dark whimsy seen in films by Federico Fellini, Terry Gilliam, and Jean-Pierre Jeunet.

The first phase of production began in early 2004. Guido formed the core production team of Robert Donald as the Director of Photography and Scott Nordlund as Art Director. For two weekends they bunkered down in Scott’s SOMA studio in San Francisco to create the gondolier puppet miniature sequence seen towards the end of the film. These scenes were filmed in 35mm on Scott’s Mitchell camera.

The next stage was casting and rehearsal for the main characters of the film. Stephan Smith Collins was cast first, in the role of the villainous Mime King Bruno Brunelli. Many scenes were filmed in January 2005 on the stage of Tippett Studio, a visual effects studio located in Berkeley where Guido was working as an animator.

At this point, Guido had a lot of visual material that he could show to actors to visualize the world he was attempting to create. After a thorough casting session in early 2005, he decided on the rest of the lead cast. Ali Allie was cast as the lead character Leo Ghianti. Next, Larissa Kasian was cast as Gia, Glen Caspillo was cast as Luka the Gondolier, and Matteo Troncone was cast as Santo Essenzo. The crew expanded, with friends from the industry helping out on the shoots through the end of 2005.

Along with the continuing production work, 2006 was also a time for the elaborate post-production process, with editing, animation, and visual effects. The principal vfx crew consisted of Kent Matheson and Ben Von Zastrow. Kent is a master matte painter with extensive experience on top films in the industry. Ben is a 3D matte painter and Technical Director at Tippett Studio who worked closely with Kent to achieve the paintings that flesh out the visual world of the film. In 2007, Guido, Robert, and Scott filmed an elaborate miniature shoot that revealed the island city of Floracha.

In late 2007 and 2008 Guido put the film on hold to work as an animator on the Tim Burton production "9" in Toronto, Canada. Upon his return to the Bay Area, Guido had worked on the 36-minute cut created with the film editor Penelope Krueger and sound designer Jen Covens to streamline the film down to a tight 20 minutes. The score was completed with Mark Growden. With the last bits of visual effects and color correction, the film was officially completed in July 2009.

Currently Guido is developing three film projects.



Island of the Gondoliers 16mm, 20 minutes, color, stereo
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