



A film by Enrique Fernandez & Cesar Charlone

EL BANO DEL PAPA



Starring Cesar Tronsco and Virginia Mendez
Selected for the London Film Festival 2007

The Pope's impending visit to a small Uruguayan town stimulates a flurry of activity among the poorest residents, who hope to strike it rich by catering to the needs of the 50,000 expected pilgrims. Convinced that his idea is the best, one man uses up his family's savings to build a paying toilet...

An alternately touching, humorous and poignant story of human dignity and solidarity from director-scriptwriters Enrique Fernández and noted cinematographer César Charlone (Oscar-nominated "City of God"), co-produced by Oscar-nominee Fernando Meirelles ("City of God", "The Constant Gardener").

Running time: 85 mins

In cinemas from: 1st August 2008

Bookings: Kevin@sodapictures.com

Stills & full press kit : www.sodapictures.com

Press Queries: press@sodapictures.com

SYNOPSIS

It is 1988, and Melo, a Uruguayan town on the Brazilian border, awaits the visit of Pope John Paul II. Numbers begin circulating: hundreds of people will come, no thousands say the media. The well-informed speak of 50,000... The poor townspeople know what this means: 50,000 pilgrims in need of food and drink, paper flags, souvenirs, commemorative medals. Brimming with enthusiasm, the villagers not only hope for divine blessing, but above all for a small share of material happiness. And petty smuggler Beto is certain that he's found the best business idea of all: "The Pope's Toilet", where the thousands of pilgrims can find relief ... Let others make mountains of chorizo sausages and bake towers of cakes – he will strike it rich with human waste! But before he can build the WC, Beto rushes headlong into trouble. He sorely tries the patience of his stoical but optimistic wife Carmen and disappoints his adolescent daughter Silvia, who dreams of a career in the media. He has to increase his risky and arduous journeys across the border. And he has to bury his long-cherished dream of buying a moped. He even loses his most precious possession – his bicycle – just as he secures the keystone for his temple to waste and wealth: the toilet bowl. But he is determined to make it back in time for the divine event.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Enrique Fernandez:

At the time, I was about 10, Beto was the kind of neighbour who came by every morning, just to say hello. He hid underneath an un-tucked shirt and his thin legs looked like toothpicks when he rode his big old bike that seemed to be on the brink of completely falling apart. Beto used to live with his mother-in-law, Dona Leocadia, a pious old woman who had befriended my mother. To prove her affection, she even offered her old dentures she didn't use anymore. Two days later, my mother gave them back, profusely apologetic. Later, she'd confessed to me she'd tried them on but that they didn't fit. For 36 years, my father – who died in 1964 – had been writing lyrics for a Carnival band. That's how I became familiar with all these characters. They have been part of my childhood as they are today in the film. I know their joys and sorrows. I still see them when I go back to my village. I know them very well and love them.

Cesar Charlone:

As a Uruguayan living in Brazil, all the subjects that come to my mind, when I think about film, are related to my homeland. The first documentary I directed and produced in 1978 as a very, very low budget one, shot in Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. After 10 years directing commercials, video-clips, and TV series, doing a feature film was somewhere in my mind". I had a couple of ideas already written down; they were always related to my Uruguayan past. But to find money for them in Brazil wasn't so easy. So



when Elena Laroux, the producer, and Enrique consulted me, I thought it would be a fortunate start. When I received the script, I found there was not only a beautiful story with moving characters, but the opportunity to realize an old dream: working on a Uruguayan story in my homeland. To me, Melo has a special flavour: a Uruguayan town with a great Brazilian influence. Most people in Melo speak Portuguese, watch Brazilian TV and buy Brazilian goods. Not difficult for me to feel at home.

A FOUR-HANDS WORK

Cesar: We worked a lot together, before shooting. Rewriting the final version, looking for locations ... I loved Enrique's story and was committed to get it on the screen as cinematically as possible. For that I worked on a very precise filming plan, which I shared and discussed with him, after which we passed it on to the rest of the crew. So on the set we all knew how and where we were going. It was a pretty simple and smooth shoot. Shortly thereafter, Fernando Meirelles, the director of "City of God", with whom I was working, was moved by the script and decided to join us as a co-producer with our company O2 Films in Brazil.

Enrique: We did a very precise planning and rehearsed a lot together. We had long chats about the characters, situations, and the way things should be shot. When the shooting started, things went quite smoothly. We worked very closely together on the set for the direction of the actors. Cesar took care of everything that had to do with the visual aspect while I took care of making sure that we stayed faithful to our script.

AN ORIGINAL CAST

Enrique: We have a cast with professional and non-professional actresses and actors. The professional actors are Cesar Troncoso (Beto), Virginia Mendez (Carmen, the mother) and Nelson Lence (Meleyo, flying custom officer). Then, we have Hugo Blandamuro (barman) and Carlos Lissardy (Ches the madman). The rest of the cast is made up of locals from Melo, and one – a very important one – Mario Silva, is from Montevideo. They rehearsed for weeks to develop the confidence, ability and concentration needed to face the camera. We had professional actors, non-professionals who happened to be great actors, and ones who had never even seen a camera. It was amazing to see the cast acting together and not being able to recognize which one was the professional.

Cesar: Cesar Troncoso and Virginia Mendez, who are well known Uruguayan actors, were already approached by Enrique. But having such a big cast and mixing them with non-professional actors seemed, at the time, not so easy. Especially considering that their background was mostly theatre. Chris Duurvoort, the trainer, and I had worked together twice before. He is able to make an entire cast homogeneous. Christian went a few times to Melo before the shooting and worked with them on their characters and details like "how to look like a real cyclist". Seeing Beto and Valvulina or Carmen and Silvia acting side by side, it's difficult to say who is professional.

EPILOGUE

Cesar: What I like about "El baño del Papa" is the different levels of the story. There is a social one, a very South American side. The fact is that our "heroes" are smugglers and our "bad guys" are the authorities. That there are social and moral codes, quite different



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than the ones we normally see. It's a story about the need to have a dream, the need to hope for something better. But we also have our "love story", not the typical love story, but a silent, almost hidden one. A father who wants to be loved, accepted, and maybe even admired by his daughter.

Enrique: The story ends with a broken dream, but not with the end of hope. And it's like that because the daily struggle of Beto, like that of all the poor around the world, is a daily task that has to be carried out with conviction and courage. Like anywhere else on earth, some day, the culture and traditions in Melo will no longer exist. They'll change or disappear. We wanted to tell their stories before the inevitable happens.

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CAST

Cesar Troncoso

BETO

Cesar began studying acting in the late 80s at the age of 25. During his time at theatre school he formed a comedic duet with Roberto Suarez. Together they worked the local night clubs, parties, and rock concerts. Upon graduation he began an uninterrupted theatre career, having to this day approximately 30 plays under his belt. The majority of these plays took place in non-conventional locales (train stations, stables, family homes, parks, "galpones"...). He travelled with many of these plays to numerous international theatre festivals (Caracas, Bogota, Buenos Aires, Santo Domingo, Porto Alegre). In 2004 Cesar won the Florencio prize for Actor of the Year, awarded by the Uruguayan Association of Theatre Critics. After working in many shorts, he made his feature-film debut in 2003 with a lead role in Guillermo Casanova's "The Trip Towards the Sea" (El Viaje Hacia el Mar). For this role he received the Revelation prize and Best Actor of the Year award presented by the Association of Uruguayan Critics. He recently appeared in Lucia Puenzo's (Argentina) movie, "XXY".

Virginia Mendez

CARMEN

A graduate of the Margarita Xirgu Municipal School of Dramatic Art (Montevideo, Uruguay), Virginia has worked in a professional capacity since the 80s. She is one of the founding members of the Italia Fausta Theater Company, one of the most prestigious and successful theatre companies in Uruguay. She joined Petru Valenski and Luis Charamelo in "Who's Afraid of Italia Fausta?" a play that had a 15-year run. In the art field she has participated in the design and development of props, wardrobe, and stage design in over 250 Uruguayan plays. In 1988 she received the Florencio prize for best actress in the rubro Theatre for Children. "The Pope's Toilet" (El Baño del Papa) from Enrique Fernandez and Cesar Charlone is her professional film debut.

CREW

PRODUCTION

Laroux cine

We are an independent film production company focusing on the development of documentaries and feature films at a international and national level. Using our experience, we aim to contribute to the expansion and advancement of the Uruguayan film industry, aiding directors and producers interested in shooting in the region. We offer production, co-production and production services. At the helm of the company is Elena Roux. With more than 15 years experience in Uruguayan and South American film production, she has honed her skills through the production of commercials, documentaries and feature films. She has been Line Producer and Production Manager of some of the most watched and acclaimed Uruguayan films, including "En la puta vida" (Beatriz Flores Silva) and "Corazon de Fuego" (Diego Arzuaga). In conjunction with her duties as producer, she also teaches film production at the Catholic University (Universidad Catolica). As an independent producer, she co-produced "Orlando



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Vargas", a Franco-Uruguayan film by Juan Pittaluga (International Critics Week, Cannes 2005). Through her production company, Laroux Cine, she has worked on the development of many projects both in the fiction and documentary genres. She is President of the Producers Association of Uruguay (ASOPROD) and has been Executive Director of TV Ciudad, a TV station in Montevideo, since 2006.

Co-Production

O2 Filmes

With award-winning projects in cinema, TV and publicity, this production house from São Paulo is the largest of its kind in Brazil. "City of God", directed by Fernando Meirelles has been seen by over 3.3 million people in the country, nominated for 4 Oscars and awarded prizes in over 40 festivals and by film institutions such as BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) and the Film Critics Association in New York and Los Angeles. After co-producing "Antonia" (2006), by Tata Amaral, O2 is now releasing the feature films "El Baño Del Papa" (co-produced by Uruguay and France), directed by Enrique Fernandez and César Charlone, "City of Men", by Paulo Morelli and "Not by Chance" by Philippe Barcinski. O2 Filmes is the first independent producer to co-produce films in collaboration with TV Globo, which gave rise to the "City of Men" and "Antonia" series, as well as six episodes of "Sons of Carnival" for HBO Latin America. The company's publicity department employs 14 fulltime directors and produces 400 commercials per year.

O2 Co-Producers:

Fernando Meirelles

O2 Filmes founding partner created and directed various TV programs in the 80's, including the RA-TIM-BUM children's series for TV Cultura. He produced commercials in the 90's, directed the feature films: O MENINO MALUQUINHO 2, with Fabrícia Pinto; MAIDS (2001), with Nando Olival; CITY OF GOD (2002) and THE CONSTANT GARDENER (2005). Produced the feature films UP AGAINST THEM ALL (2004) by Roberto Moreira, CITY OF MEN (2007) by Paulo Morelli; NOT BY CHANCE (2007) by Philippe Barcinski and the documentary GINGA (2006). Produced the series CITY OF MEN and directed a few episodes. He is now preparing his next feature film BLINDNESS, based on the novel by José Saramago, to be shot in Brazil and Canada.

Andrea Barata Ribeiro

Elected by Variety magazine as one of the 50 most influential women in the entertainment business in the world, Andrea is a partner at O2 Filmes and one of the founders of its TV and cinematography branches. Produced the feature films CITY OF GOD (2002) by Fernando Meirelles, UP AGAINST THEM ALL (2004) by Roberto Moreira, and the still to be released CITY OF MEN by Paulo Morelli; NOT BY CHANCE by Philippe Barcinski, besides the TV series CITY OF MEN (2005), for Globo TV and Sons of Carnival, for a HBO Latin America. She has been directly involved in producing over 4 thousand commercials.

Bel Berlinck

Executive Producer of feature films CITY OF GOD (2002) by Fernando Meirelles, SPEAKER PHONE (2003) by Paulo Morelli, and MAIDS (2001) by Nando Olival and Fernando Meirelles. He worked in implementing and developing the TV and cinematography department of O2 Filmes. Produced the feature films UP AGAINST THEM ALL (2004) by



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Roberto Moreira, CITY OF MEN by Paulo Morelli; NOT BY CHANCE by Philippe Barcinski, the TV series CITY OF MEN (2005) and SONS OF CARNIVAL (2006), programs for Fox and Fox Kids, shorts and commercials.

Chaya Films

It is a small French production company managed by Serge Catoire.

MUSICAL NOTES

The original soundtrack of "El baño del Papa" was created by Luciano Supervielle and Gabriel Casacuberta, acclaimed Uruguayan musicians from the collective Bajofondo Tango Club. The soundtrack also includes "Camino de los quileros", the immortal song by Osiris Rodríguez Castillos, which is thematically and musically an integral part of the story.



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CREW

Director	ENRIQUE FERNANDEZ & CESAR CHARLONE
Producer	ELENA ROUX
Original Script	ENRIQUE FERNANDEZ
Adaptation & final version	ENRIQUE FERNANDEZ & CESAR CHARLONE
Co Producers	ANDREA BARATA RIBEIRO, BEL BERLINCK, FERNANDO MEIRELLES, SERGE CATOIRE
Associate Producers	FRANCISCO SALOMON, HUGO KOVENSKI
Line Producers	SANDINO SARAVIA VINAY, CLAUDIA BÜSCHEL
Cinematographer	CESAR CHARLONE A.B.C.
Sound Director	DANIEL MARQUEZ
Art Director	INES OLMEDO
Wardrobe	ALEJANDRA ROSASCO
Make up	CLAUDIA GONZALEZ
Original Music	LUCIANO SUPERVIELLE, GABRIEL CASACUBERTA
Edited by	GUSTAVO GIANI
Production Manager	MIRTHA MOLINA

CAST

Beto	Cesar Troncoso
Carmen	Virginia Méndez
Silvia	Virginia Ruiz
Valvulina	Mario Silva
Nacente	Henry de Leon
Tica	Jose Arce
Meleyo	Nelson Lence
Teresa	Rosario Dos Santos
Gordo	Luna Alex Silva
Capitan	Álvarez Baltasar Burgos
Soldier	Carlos Lerena



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