

Soda Pictures



THEATRICAL PRESS KIT

Marianne Faithfull
is

IRINA PALM



a film by Sam Garbarski

coming to cinemas: **May 2008**

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Marianne Faithfull plays Maggie, a widow who is looking desperately for money to pay for last chance treatment for her dying grandson. While aimlessly wondering the streets of Soho she sees a notice 'hostess wanted'; intrigued she enters the club and despite all the odds finds herself a new career to raise the money needed.

Cast: Marianne Faithfull, Miki Manojlovic, Jenny Agutter

www.irinapalm-themovie.com

SYNOPSIS

Middle-aged Maggie must find a way to get enough money for her grandson's lifesaving medical treatment. With all financial resources exhausted, Maggie tries her best to lift the dwindling hopes of her only son Tom and his wife Sarah.

When a "Hostess Wanted" sign catches her eye, Maggie naively stumbles into a city sex club. The true job description is quite a surprise for the respectable, middle-class widow, even if she isn't a prude. But unskilled Maggie accepts this as her fastest way to urgently needed cash and her very last option, having already sold her own home to pay for little Olly's hospital bills.

Shy Maggie has a rough start at "Sexy World," more than just a train ride from her conservative suburb. Wisecracking colleague Luisa shows her the ropes and the two women strike a touching friendship. Tough guy owner Miki, a real ladies' man, reveals a soft spot for dutiful Maggie, and transforms her into the much-in-demand and lucrative "Irina Palm." Maggie courageously proves to herself that she's not so old and useless after all.

Maggie's double life quickly attracts the attention of her gossipy neighbour's prying eyes. The headstrong woman remains steadfastly discreet, keeping the money's origins secret from even her own suspicious son. But discovery is inevitable and Maggie must confront provincial hypocrisy's ugly face, as well as question her own morals. As she holds her head high, gracious Maggie just might find more than family love...



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MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Marianne Faithfull plays courageous, loving Maggie in Sam Garbarski's IRINA PALM. She was recently seen as Austrian empress Maria Teresa in Sofia Coppola's MARIE ANTOINETTE. She also appeared in Gus Van Sant's «Le Marais» segment of the omnibus film PARIS JE T'AIME.

During her 40 years as a performing artist, Marianne has also acted in theater and television. She guest appeared as God in the third season finale of the British cult series «Absolutely Fabulous.» In 2004 and 2005, onstage in London and San Francisco, she starred as the Devil in the Robert Wilson-directed musical, «The Black Rider,» written by William Burroughs and Tom Waits. As part of the all-star cast performing rock opera «The Wall» live in Berlin in July 1990, Marianne played the over-protective Mother.

Marianne's exploration of the works of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill has resulted in some of her most admirable performances. In 1993, she played Pirate Jenny in «The Threepenny Opera» at Dublin's Gate Theatre. Her fascination with music from that era continued with the release of the 1996 album, «20th Century Blues,» as well as a cabaret tour. In 1998, came a recording of the Weill/Brecht opera «The Seven Deadly Sins,» which Marianne also performed in opera houses worldwide, including Berlin, London, New York, and at the Salzburg Festival.

Marianne began her singing career in 1964 with the hit «As Tears Go By», the first of a series of successful pop singles, including "This Little Bird", "Summer Nights" and "Come and Stay With Me". With the 1979 album «Broken English,» Marianne made a radical departure as an edgy, world-weary songstress. Since then, Marianne has continuously experimented with her sound and journeyed from rock to blues to jazz with albums like 1987's «Strange Weather,» 1995's «A Secret Life,» 1999's «Vagabond Ways,» 2002's «Kissin' Time,» and 2005's «Before the Poison.»

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2007 IRINA PALM (dir. Sam Garbarski)
- 2006 MARIE ANTOINETTE (dir. Sofia Coppola)
- 2006 PARIS JE T'AIME (segment "Le Marais", dir. Gus Van Sant)
- 2001 FAR FROM CHINA (dir. C.S. Leigh)
- 2001 INTIMACY (dir. Patrice Chéreau)
- 1995 MOONDANCE (dir. Dagmar Hirtz)
- 1994 SHOPPING (dir. Paul W.S. Anderson)
- 1993 WHEN PIGS FLY (dir. Sara Driver)
- 1969 HAMLET (dir. Tony Richardson)
- 1968 GIRL ON A MOTORCYCLE aka NAKED UNDER LEATHER (dir. Jack Cardiff)
- 1967 I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S'ISNAME (dir. Michael Winner)
- 1966 MADE IN THE U.S.A. (dir. Jean-Luc Godard)



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COMMENTS FROM ACTRESS MARIANNE FAITHFULL

A VERY BIG JOURNEY

In IRINA PALM, Maggie makes a very big journey. She goes from being an unfulfilled, unfinished person to becoming a woman more sure about herself and what's important in life. When we first meet Maggie, she's an incredibly unworldly woman who married very young and who hasn't had much of a life. Because of her sick grandson, she ends up sacrificing even her own home. She takes it upon herself that she has to find all this money needed for the little boy's medical costs. The poor woman has had to put up with a lot and she has no idea why. But the day she accidentally steps into "Sexy World" is the day her life begins to unexpectedly change, eventually even guiding her to love.

SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH MAGGIE

I must say that I had very little in common with the Maggie at the start of the film. But we do share one very important characteristic: the love of a son and a grandchild.

I love my son very much. Like Maggie, I had him when I was 18. And I adore my grandsons, ages 13 and 10. The love she has for her son and grandson are what drive Maggie to do what she does.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK

Maggie is so nervous about anyone finding out about her secret job. She cares and worries immensely about what others think. Getting over this is all part of her journey. By the end of the film, she doesn't care anymore about idle gossip or judgmental opinions. Maggie learns that what people say isn't important. It's what you think about yourself that really counts. I've always known this from my parents, who were extremely unconventional and cool. But still, there have been times in my life when I was upset by how I was regarded. I was heartbroken for a while, but I got over it.

TRANSFORMING INTO MAGGIE

I was attracted to the role because Maggie is so incredibly unlike me. I'm hardly conventional nor conformist. I would never be as patient as Maggie or put up with all the shit that she put up with. So it took quite an effort in a way to transform into Maggie. Director Sam Garbarski helped me a lot to break through. I had to first suppress my experience and make myself a blank slate. Then I had to put myself into Maggie's shoes. But becoming someone else is what I love about acting. It gets boring and tiring to be Marianne Faithfull all the time. I've been doing it a long time! Acting gives me a break from me.



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MIKI MANOJLOVIC

Miki Manojlovic's filmography includes over 40 films. He has not only acted in his native Serbian, but also in English, French and Rom. In 2004, he received the «Pavle Vuisic» Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Yugoslav cinema.

Miki was born in 1950 in Belgrade into a family of actors. He graduated from the Belgrade School of Dramatic Arts and was acting on stage and in television and film as early as 1970. His role as the Father in Emir Kusturica's WHEN FATHER WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS brought Miki international attention. Miki will soon be seen in Emir Kusturica's latest film, ZAVET (PROMISE ME THIS).

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2007 IRINA PALM (dir. Sam Garbarski)
- 2007 LA FINE DEL MARE (dir. Nora Hoppe)
- 2005 HELL (dir. Danis Tanovic)
- 2005 WE ARE NOT ANGELS 2 (dir. Srdjan Dragojevic)
- 2004 THE WHORE'S SON / HUREHSON (dir. Michael Sturminger)
- 2003 GATE TO HEAVEN (dir. Veit Helmer)
- 2003 LOST SEAMEN / LES MARINS PERDUS (dir. Claire Devers)
- 2001 MORTAL TRANSFER (dir. Jean-Jacques Beineix)
- 2000 UNLEADED / SANS PLOMB (dir. Muriel Téodori)
- 1999 CRIMINAL LOVERS (dir. François Ozon)
- 1999 SET ME FREE / EMPORTE-MOI (dir. Léa Pool)
- 1998 BLACK CAT, WHITE CAT (dir. Emir Kusturica)
- 1998 THE POWDER KEG / CABARET BALKAN (dir. Goran Paskaljevic)
- 1998 THE WOUNDS (dir. Srdjan Dragojevic)
- 1998 THE BUTCHER / IL MACELLAIO (dir. Aurelio Grimaldi)
- 1997 ARTEMISIA (dir. Agnes Merlet)
- 1996 SHADOW PLAY / PORTRAITS CHINOIS (dir. Martine Dugowson)
- 1995 SOMEONE ELSE'S AMERICA (dir. Goran Paskaljevic)
- 1995 UNDERGROUND (dir. Emir Kusturica)
- 1992 TANGO ARGENTINO (dir. Goran Paskaljevic)
- 1992 WE ARE NOT ANGELS (dir. Srdjan Dragojevic)
- 1992 TITO AND I (dir. Goran Markovic)
- 1990 EVERY OTHER WEEKEND (dir. Nicole Garcia)
- 1990 TIME OF MIRACLES (dir. Goran Paskaljevic)
- 1985 WHEN FATHER WAS AWAY ON BUSINESS (dir. Emir Kusturica)
- 1981 THE MELODY HAUNTS MY MEMORY (dir. Rajko Grlic)



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SAM GARBARSKI

IRINA PALM is Sam Garbarski's second feature film. His directorial debut, THE RASHEVSKI TANGO, was presented in numerous festivals and won the Jerusalem Municipality Prize at the 2004 Jerusalem Film Festival.

Sam is also the director of three short films, LA DINDE (1999), LA VIE, LA MORT ET LE FOOT (2000) and JOYEUX NOËL, RACHID(2000), which all have enjoyed successful careers on the international festival circuit and on television.

Born in Germany in 1948, Sam lives in Brussels and has Belgian citizenship. After over 20 years of heading his own advertising agency, Sam turned to directing commercials in 1997. He directed more than 50 commercials, many of them award-winners in Cannes, New York and London.

FEATURE FILMS

2007 IRINA PALM

2004 THE RASHEVSKI TANGO (LE TANGO DES RASHEVSKI)



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COMMENTS FROM DIRECTOR SAM GARBARSKI

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

I loved my friend and screenwriter Phillip Blasband's idea of doing a sort of non-politically correct romantic tragicomedy. Later when we developed the story, it was clear to us that it would be a very very difficult project to finance and it was. It took a long long time. The script actually existed before we started writing my first feature, 2003's THE RASHEVSKI TANGO. It's always the same old story, everybody is looking for an original script, but when you come up with one, it frightens them off. After I don't know how many attempts, my producer Sébastien Delloye, walked in one day and asked me "Could you imagine doing it in English?" Sébastien had just come back from the Rotterdam Film Festival, where he had met an English producer who loved the idea and proposed that we try to do it in English. The transformation went very naturally and it gave us the opportunity to build in some new ideas. We met Martin Herron, an English screenwriter, and he did a fantastic job. He adapted it and brought in exactly what we were looking for. Nevertheless my producer Sébastien and I made the final changes to get exactly what we had in mind.

A TRUE SACRIFICE

Maggie is a simple, good and generous woman. She hasn't had much education, neither any occasions to travel. She married her first boyfriend and remained faithful to him, even after his death. Maggie could have never even imagined that this kind of job existed! She accepts it because she simply sees no other solution, and also because she's a bit naive. Her choice is entirely innocent. In her mind, she is just doing a job to make money to pay for her grandson Olly's medical treatment. Afterwards, she can't escape from the situation because of the deal she makes with the owner Miki. Because she's also the kind of person who strives to do something the best she can, Maggie ends up being successful. What Maggie does is a true sacrifice by a wonderful woman. I guess a sex club is probably not considered the most acceptable place to fall in love in. But why not make two people fall in love in a place where nobody would even imagine that it could exist?

FILMING MAGGIE AT WORK

In IRINA PALM, I wanted to show the sometimes tragicomic side of everyday life. At the same time, I didn't want to make a reportage of the ugly side of the erotic business. As the character of Maggie is sincerely pure and honest, I decided to film her work scenes with pudeur. I thought that it would be too easy to include penis shots. I concentrated on telling everything with Maggie's facial expressions and body language. It took a lot of tests. First, on my own with my little camera during rehearsals with Marianne, and then with my DOP Christophe.



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CASTING MARIANNE FAITHFULL

I was sitting on a plane reading an article which said Marianne Faithfull was busy doing *MARIE ANTOINETTE* with Sofia Coppola in Paris. I called my producer from the airport, and he agreed that casting Marianne was a very interesting idea. I called Nathanièle Esther, my French casting director, and she was immediately excited. She found out the same day that Sofia was very happy with Marianne's work, got hold of Marianne's agent, and sent him the script the next day. Twenty-four hours later he called us back, and told us that Marianne loved the script and wanted to meet us. When my producer Sébastien and I actually met Marianne, we felt on the spot that she could be a wonderful Maggie.

WORKING WITH MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Marianne is not a classically trained actress, but a true artist, and there was something happening from the very beginning. Marianne allowed me from the beginning to make her become the Maggie I had in mind. And even when she didn't like a line, a skirt or my way of seeing a scene, she still did it my way. She is very professional and a true artist.

WORKING WITH MIKI MANOJLOVIC

Miki was in my mind from the beginning. When we were trying to finance the project in France, I had already met with him. He loved the script, but I think he didn't really believe that this film would ever come to life. Nevertheless, I called him regularly to keep him informed about our efforts and he always showed the same friendly interest and enthusiasm. Miki lives in Belgrade, and he doesn't like planes at all. He traveled by train 26 hours to Paris for a one-hour meeting with Marianne and me. But when I saw them looking at each other I knew that I had my couple. Then Miki went straight back to Belgrade, another 26 hours of train. I love him for many reasons, but this experience is certainly one. He is a great great actor and a lot of fun to work with.

IMAGES AND MUSIC

I find out again and again that the form in which I finally decide to tell a story is dictated by the heart of the story. Here, we used 90% «normal view» lenses, 40 and 50 mm with grand apertures, in order to give us the feeling that we are with Maggie. The camera was very delicately shoulder-held through the whole film in order to share Maggie's heartbeat. In the end, the film was developed without bleaching and was slightly underexposed in order to give it this slightly de-chromatised image with soft contrasts and living blacks, a sort of tough and poetic feel at the same time. Music also plays a huge part in the storytelling of my images. We shot partly with music in our earphones. John Stargasm from GHINZU who composed and performed the film music with his group did a great job.

CO-PRODUCTION BETWEEN 5 COUNTRIES

We shot in England, Germany and Luxembourg and logically the crew was international. But that suits me. By origin, I'm Polish. I was brought up in Germany, I live in Belgium and I made an English-language film. My first assistant director is Greek, brought up in Germany and living in Paris. My script supervisor is English but of Swedish origin. My DOP is Belgian but lives in France. My production designer is of Italian origin but lives in Luxembourg. It was a nice mix ... The story is set in England, so we shot all the exteriors in England. We shot the interiors in Luxembourg and Germany. My crew did such a good job that there isn't one single detail which betrays this.



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CAST & CREW**MAIN CAST**

Maggie	MARIANNE FAITHFULL
Miki	MIKI MANOJLOVIC
Tom	KEVIN BISHOP
Sarah	SIOBHÁN HEWLETT
Luisa	DORKA GRYLLUS
Jane	JENNY AGUTTER
Olly	COREY BURKE
Julia	MEG WYNN-OWEN
Beth	SUSAN HITCH
Edith	FLIP WEBSTER

MAIN CREW

Director	Sam Garbarski
Based on an Original Script by	Philippe Blasband
Screenplay by	Martin Herron and Philippe Blasband
Director of Photography	Christophe Beaucarne
Production Designer	Véronique Sacrez
Music	GHINZU
Editor	Ludo Troch
Sound Editor	Ingrid Ralet
Sound Engineer	Pascal Jasmes
Costume Designer	Anushia Nieradzik
Key Make Up	Katja Alexis-Reinert
Hair Stylist	Claudine Moureaud Demoulling
Line Producer	Shu Aiello
First Assistant Director	Andreas Meszaros
Script Supervisor	Kerensa Burton
Post-Production Supervisor	Fabian Hannaert
Casting Directors	Leo Davis, Nathanièle Esther
Produced by	ENTRE CHIEN ET LOUP (Belgium) Sébastien Delloye, Diana Elbaum PALLAS FILM (Germany) Thanassis Karathanos, Karl Baumgartner SAMSA FILM (Luxembourg) Jani Thiltges, Claude Waringo IPSO FACTO FILMS (UK) Christine Alderson LIAISON CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE (France) ATELIERS DE BAERE (Belgium) RTBF TELEVISION (Belgium)

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