

AMARCORD IN RIMINI WITH FEDERICO FELLINI

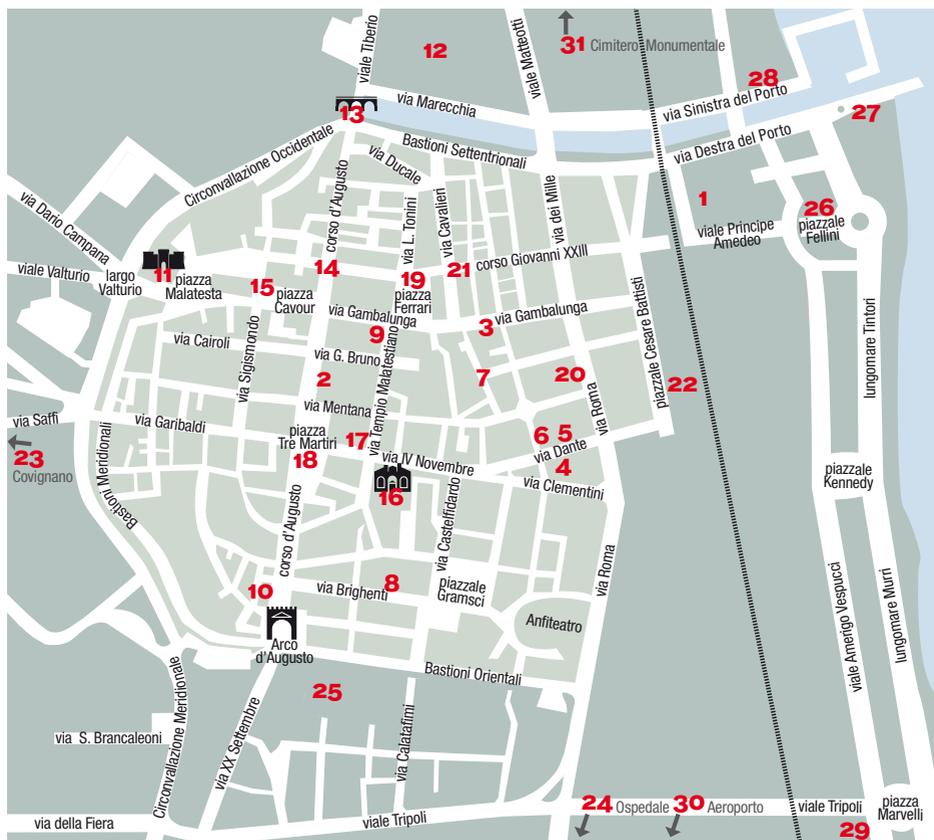
travel notes



RIVIERA DI RIMINI



The main places linked to Fellini in Rimini



Rimini

- 1** Fellini's home in Via Dardanelli no. 10
- 2** Fellini's home in Corso d'Augusto no. 115, Palazzo Ripa
- 3** Fellini's home in Via Gambalunga no. 48, Palazzo Ceschina
- 4** Fellini's home in Via Clementini no. 9, Palazzina Dolci
- 5** Fellini's home in Via Dante no. 9, now no. 23
- 6** Fellini's home in Via Oberdan no. 1
- 7** The nursery school run by the Sisters of San Vincenzo known as 'The Sisters of the Order of Maria Bambina', Via Angherà no. 21
- 8** The G. Cesare - M. Valgimigli Lycee, formerly the Carlo Tonini Primary School, Via Brighenti
- 9** Palazzo Gambalunga, entrance on Via Tempio Malatestiano, formerly the G. Cesare Middle School
- 10** Palazzo Buonadrata, Corso d'Augusto no. 62, formerly the G. Cesare Classic Lycee
- 11** Castel Sismondo
- 12** Borgo San Giuliano - Murals
- 13** Tiberius Bridge
- 14** Corso d'Augusto: Chiesa dei Servi (The Church of the Servants); Fulgor Cinema; Arch of Augustus
- 15** Piazza Cavour: The Pine Cone Fountain; The Galli Theatre; Palazzo Arengo; Palazzo del Podestà
- 16** Tempio Malatestiano - the Malatesta Cathedral
- 17** The Palazzo known as 'Malatesta' the site of the old 'FeBo' artists' shop
- 18** Piazza Tre Martiri (formerly Piazza G. Cesare): Tempietto di Sant'Antonio (the Temple of Saint Anthony); Church of the Order of the Frati Minimi di San Francesco da Paola (known as Paolotti); Bar Turismo (formerly Bar da Rossini)
- 19** Piazza Ferrari: The Monument to Victory - to the Fallen of the First World War
- 20** Titta Benzi's House, Via Roma no. 41
- 21** Corso Giovanni XXIII no. 39 (formerly Via Umberto I) where the Colantonio Chemist's once stood
- 22** The Railway Station
- 23** The Covignano Hill in Rimini: Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie and the Stations of the Cross
- 24** The Infermi Hospital
- 25** Federico Fellini Foundation, Via Nigra no. 26
- 26** The Grand Hotel; Piazzale Federico Fellini; Fontana dei Quattro Cavalli; Fellinia; twenty-six streets named after Fellini's films and dedicated to Giulietta Masina
- 27** Palata (the Quay) and channel harbour; the beach
- 28** Via Sinistra del Porto no. 146 (the left side of the harbour)
- 29** Chiesa di S. Maria Ausiliatrice known as the "Church of the Salesian Order" and the boarding school
- 30** The International Federico Fellini Airport of Rimini and of the Republic of San Marino
- 31** The Monumental Cemetery

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Riviera di Rimini
Travel Notes

Provincia di Rimini
Assessorato al Turismo

AMARCORD
In Rimini with Federico Fellini

The Rimini Riviera Travel Notes

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AMARCORD

is a **free** guide book on
tourism and culture

With the contribution of





AMARCORD

in Rimini with Federico Fellini

*a practical guide to the places, friendships, biography, and dreams
of a great Master of cinema*

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INTRODUCTION

Federico Fellini is renowned worldwide. He has been the most famous film director on the international cultural scene ever since his films made the headlines whilst he was still alive.

His death has not lessened his fame. To the contrary, the legend has become immortal.

Fellini's name has even produced the Italian adjective "felliniano", which means "felliniesque".

It is a renowned fact that Federico Fellini was born in Rimini in 1920, and that his hometown was very dear to him throughout his life.

It is more accurate to say that Fellini's memories of his hometown and of its people have been central to many of his films, the legendary *Amarcord* in particular, which has become a part of our collective memory.

Fellini's childhood games, his adolescent pranks and troubles, the joys and disappointments of adulthood, the entwining of global history and local events during the fascist dictatorship, the traditions, culture and heritage of the Romagna region, which is strongly imbued with Catholicism and political anarchy, all these elements have become part our common heritage and collective memory.

This is why the book opens with a chapter dedicated to Fellini's most internationally appreciated film ***Amarcord***, which gained an Oscar in 1975, and which is one of the top 100 films to safeguard for posterity. The introduction to the first chapter is entitled '*Gradisca* a work of art', while the subsequent sections delve more into the themes of the film. The first paragraph talks about Fellini's homeland, the countryside around Gambettola in the province of Forlì-Cesena, where his father came from, and the town of Rimini, where his family lived. The second paragraph analyses his film, while the third paragraph talks about the original idea for the film, where it took shape and who Fellini wrote it with, his friend Tonino Guerra, a poet and screenwriter from Santarcangelo. Nearly every chapter is followed by an in-depth analysis section with a description of Rimini at the time Fellini was born, when civil unrest and forewarnings of fascist squad violence were tangible, and tourism was just for a very small élite.

This book, the first of its kind, begins with a biography on Fellini and has been written so everyone may appreciate who Fellini was as a man and what he created. It also aims to highlight Fellini's strong feelings for his hometown, and show how Rimini still speaks of him today.

The pages that follow create a correlation between Fellini's public and private sides and his homeland, so the biography is a key to a deeper understanding of the historical, environmental, artistic, and geographical aspects of the area.

There is also a chapter on Fellini's original descriptions of Rimini taken from his book *La mia Rimini (Rimini, my hometown)* which he wrote long before the making of *Amarcord* and which is a blueprint of the film itself.

Fellini's wonderful words underscore his talent as an extraordinary writer and are the evidence of his attachment, or indeed love, for Rimini; a love which he never openly admitted to.

Thanks to Fellini's many descriptions and references to the places he attended and the ones where he lived, we have toured the town looking for them in order to create an itinerary so they may be visited today. Mostly our research has been fruitful, and to our surprise we have found the actual houses where Fellini and his family lived. There are quite a number of them as the family moved often. Nearly all of the buildings still stand, except for the one where he was born and registered in Via Dardanelli, no. 10, which was replaced by a 50s building.

Visitors and those who walk around the town will come across Fellini's old nursery school run by the Suore di San Vincenzo (the Sisters of Saint Vincent), or his old Primary School, Carlo Tonini, in Via Brighenti, or the summer boarding school he attended, which was run by the Salesian Order, and which stands in the area of Marina Centro near the Church of S. Maria Ausiliatrice; a building whose construction Fellini actually witnessed. Then there is Fellini's middle school in the Gambalunga Municipal Library in the street by the same name, his lycée in Palazzo Buonadrata in Corso d'Augusto, and Castel Sismondo, which Fellini went to the first time he "ran away from home" to see the circus that he adored, which used to be set up opposite the castle itself.

In his film about clowns, *I clowns (The clowns)* Fellini included the Rimini castle square. This scene portrays a circus that is being set up opposite the castle. The circus of Fellini's childhood represents a turning point in his life since, as Fellini himself declared, it was his very love of the circus that first attracted him to the world of filmmaking.

This book offers a fascinating insight into Federico the man, and a special biography centered on a tangible map of his life.

It must be said that the Rimini depicted in *Amarcord* is not the actual town itself. Though it looks very real, Fellini never shot a single scene in his hometown. But the places in the film are easy to find and visit in Rimini, and the feelings they evoke are powerful indeed.





The churches, streets, bridges, buildings, the Borgo San Giuliano quarter, and the quay at the end of the channel harbour are all still there, and bring all the memories back to life.

For instance, if you gaze up at the top floors of the Gambalunga Municipal Library, you can imagine a classroom of middle school “rascals” who would indeed study, but who would also play all sorts of pranks such as peeing in a paper tube aimed at a classmate who was standing at the blackboard, so the liquid would gather around his feet.

Then if you continue towards the Temple of Malatesta, a marvellous example of Renaissance architecture, and turn to look at the building opposite the church, you can envision the artists’ shop where FeBo, Federico Fellini and his friend the painter Demos Bonini, earned some money drawing caricatures.

Yet Fellini’s memories and dreams are even more vivid in the Fulgor Cinema and at the Grand Hotel, because the charm and wonder of these buildings are untouched since Fellini’s times, and the awe they inspire today is the same as that experienced by Fellini. We have tried not to leave out any places that speak of the film director; whether they are large or small, easy to find or hidden, we have mapped them all to guide you on their discovery.

The same can be said of the places out of town like Federico’s grandparents’ home in Gambettola, and the magical places that have been dedicated to Fellini and his wife, the actress Giulietta Masina, by their friend Tonino Guerra, which will take you to Petrella Guidi and Pennabilli, where everything speaks poetically about the famous couple.

As the index shows, the guide contains eight and a half chapters, to paraphrase the renowned film *8 ½*, which is another strongly autobiographical masterpiece.

As is befitting to a person of Fellini’s standing, the half chapter is, for reasons of length, a rather short compendium of comments about Fellini by famous people. Of the many people quoted, we would especially like to thank Francesca Fabbri Fellini, Fellini’s niece and the preserver of family history, for her contribution.

To our readers we extend the wish of a “happy amarcord” on the traces of Fellini in Rimini and in the surrounding areas, in the most Felliniesque province of all.

CHAPTER I

AMARCORD

‘Gradisca’ a work of art

The title of Fellini’s most personal film is a word that comes from the Romagna dialect, ‘amarcord’, which means ‘I remember’. With this title Fellini wished to reveal his roots in a film that is like a large painting, unconcerned about sharing his heritage. Through this film Fellini transforms the warm land that welcomed the seed of his life, his place of origin, into a masterpiece. *Amarcord* is considered without a shadow of a doubt to be the most autobiographical of Fellini’s films; the title itself is proof enough. Fellini remembers his youth through the eyes of an alter ego who is not Marcello Mastroianni this time but his friend known as Titta, whose real name is Luigi Bensi, played by Bruno Zanin. The film portrays all the elements of the lives of Federico and Titta in Rimini, the town itself, their youth, their friends, and the real people from Rimini and from the Romagna area who lived on in Fellini’s memory, and who have become part of our collective memory, too. Even the music by Maestro Nino Rota expresses the tenderness of those recollections. The melodies that accompany the viewers’ experience are as light and soft as the fragments of memory in Fellini’s mind. Fragments through which Fellini performs a deep form of psychoanalysis that transfigures his perception of the town, as he states in his own words: “I cannot look at Rimini as an objective fact for it has become a dimension of my memory. When I am in Rimini, I am always a prey to ghosts that I have laid to rest. If I were to remain here, perhaps these innocent ghosts would pose an embarrassing and silent question which I would not be able to answer with summersaults and lies. One should capture the essence of one’s hometown without deceit. What is Rimini? It is a dimension of my memory (a memory I have made up, changed, and tampered with) that I have thought about so much that a sort of embarrassment has taken hold of me”. This quote is taken from a text called *Il mio paese (My hometown T.N.)* which is contained in a book entitled *La mia Rimini (Rimini, my hometown)* by Cappelli Editors, Bologna, published in 1967 (reprinted by Guaraldi, Rimini, in 2003), which predates *Amarcord*. Fellini himself never denied drawing inspiration from this book, a fact that is confirmed by the drawings and sketches he made during the preparation and making of the film. Some of these drawings even bear quotes from this book like those that pertain to two film characters: “Bestemmia” (Blasphemy) and “Giudizio” (Judgment). The film was released in 1973 and won an Oscar (his fourth) in Los Angeles in 1975 (for Best Foreign Film of 1974) and was so highly acclaimed internationally that it became one of the most famous films of all times, as renowned as Fellini himself.

1. Fellini's homeland

"I think of Rimini. The word Rimini is a row of vertical lines and toy soldiers. I cannot be objective. Rimini is a mess; it is confused, frightening, and tender, with the airy, open, empty space of the sea. Nostalgia is even more poignant by the sea, especially in winter with the white crests of the waves and the strong winds, just as it was when I saw it for the first time". With these words Fellini describes the hometown where he was born on 20th January, 1920. His mother Ida Barbiani was from Rome, and his father Urbano, a travelling salesman, was from Gambettola. They named their first son Federico and lived in Rimini, though both parents felt a strong connection to their hometowns, which were to become important points of reference in their son's huge, visionary, and artistically talented future. If we analyse *Amarcord* (and Fellini's other films, too) and focus on the characters who populate this most personal of his films, we see that Fellini portrays real people from his childhood and adolescence; people from Gambettola, where he would stay with his paternal grandmother for long periods of time, people from Rimini and Santarcangelo, and others from San Leo and nearby towns (Santa Giustina, Mercatino Marecchia and Corpolò) who would come into Rimini for all kinds of reasons. The same people he talks about in his memorable story entitled *Il mio paese*. Among the various characters we find the "hairy-lipped women" (*baffone*) "who would take their animals to be blessed by the friars". They were called thus "for the golden or dark hair that visibly covered their top lips, and for their large, firm, and sprightly calves". The boys especially loved these women for the way they would climb onto the saddles of their bicycles with a luxuriant sensuality. The fun would start as the boys counted the bicycles parked outside the Paolotti Chapel, in Piazza Tre Martiri. "Outside we would feverishly count the bicycles heaped against the church wall to find out how many "hairy-lipped women" had come down from the hills". Then the game would begin. "We would anxiously peek into the small church that echoed with bleatings, quackings, and brayings. Finally the "hairy-lipped women" would come out with their chickens, goats, and rabbits, and get onto their bikes. This was the moment we'd been waiting for! As swift as rats, the saddles' pointed muzzles would squeeze into the skirts, which were of slippery shiny black *satìn*. The saddles would sculpt, swell up, and





above

**Federico Fellini and
his brother Riccardo**

below

**An historic postcard
of Rimini in the 20s.**

**The Via Flaminia and
the Arch of Augustus
are in the foreground**

inflate the most beautiful large bums of Romagna in a twinkling of dazzling reflections. We couldn't enjoy them all as many would inflate at the same time, to the right, to the left, in front, behind; we couldn't spin around like tops, we had to keep a minimum of composure, which would result in us missing many of them. Fortunately, some "hairy-lipped women" who were already sitting on their saddles, would stay a little longer chatting to one another, one foot on the ground and the other on the pedal. They would arch their backs and sway in slow wide movements like the waves far out at sea; then their golden calves would puff out with the first hard push on the pedal. The "hairy-lipped women" would depart shouting their goodbyes and some would already be singing. They were heading back to the countryside". The autobiographical element here is glorified, which is a preponderant feature of most of Fellini's work. Suffice it to think of films like *Intervista (The interview)*, *Roma (Fellini's Roma)*, and *I vitelloni*. Though *I vitelloni*, which was shot in 1953, predates *Amarcord*, it is actually considered to be its sequel. In this film, in fact, Fellini talks about the boys who appear in *Amarcord*, who represent Fellini himself and his friends. In *I vitelloni* the boys have grown up and are experiencing the problems and responsibilities of adulthood as they are obliged to take charge of their lives. A theme that is clearly exemplified by Moraldo - the young man who has to abandon his hometown for a large city at the end of the film - i.e. the twenty year old Federico who abandons Rimini for Rome. Though, as we will see in later chapters, in Fellini's case the word abandon is not accurate as it does not agree with his state of mind.

As the Film Encyclopaedia states, *Amarcord* is the film with which Fellini "reaches a synthesis between the dreamlike autobiographical elements of works such as *I vitelloni*, *La dolce vita*, and *8 ½*, and the need to create cinematographic poetry between the sublime and the grotesque such as that in *La strada (The road)*, *Le notti di Cabiria (Nights of Cabiria)*, *Fellini Satyricon*, and *Roma (1972)*. But what is remarkable is how Fellini and the poet Tonino Guerra, who wrote in dialect, managed to create an atmosphere that evokes a ghostly past".

above
**An historic postcard
of Rimini in the 20s:
Corso d'Augusto on the
corner of Via Mentana**

below
**An historic postcard
of Rimini in the 20s:
Piazza Tre Martiri,
formerly Piazza Giulio
Cesare**

Rimini in 1920

When Federico Fellini was born in 1920, Rimini was a small sleepy town comprising a rather well-off middle class that lived in the centre, the San Giuliano quarter on the other side of the Tiberius Bridge, which was riddled with disease including typhoid and tuberculosis, and the harbour area, which had just begun to attract the first tourists. Though at that time, nobody could have foreseen the bustling and rather overwhelming future of the tourist industry that was to take hold of the area in a truly unique way.

The population had greatly increased with the arrival of immigrants from the countryside and the hills, especially from the Montefeltro area, and from the Marecchia, Conca, and Foglia Valleys. People who were to form the backbone of the Rimini tourist industry and family run businesses.

After the earthquake of 1916, which added to the devastation of the bombings and naval attacks of the First World War, the town was still undergoing reconstruction. From 1919 to 1925, the Town Hall buildings were also restored, all be it "in a carefree and rather imaginative manner", according to art historian Pier Giorgio Pasini.

The town continued to expand, especially in the harbour area, where large houses already stood along the seafront.

During those years new quarters appeared in the inland areas away from the beach. The Grand Hotel already stood out with its impressive architecture that seemed to come out of a fairytale. It had been inaugurated on 1st July 1908, but in the summer of 1920 a fire caused the permanent removal of two domes on top of the building. Thus the hotel took on the appearance that Federico Fellini knew and loved and cast as a central protagonist in *Amarcord*. The events of the Second World War led to other considerable restoration, but the building, which was designed by the South American architect Somazzi, was not greatly affected by it.

Meanwhile civil unrest was taking place in Rimini between 1919 and 1920. In October 1920 the left won the City Council elections, but these violent times already counted many victims and foreshadowed the ascent of fascism.

This historical and political period is recounted by Fellini with irony and bitterness in *Amarcord*.





above

**An historic postcard of
Rimini: Piazza Cavour**

below

**Federico Fellini filming
*Amarcord***

2. *Amarcord*

Awarded an Oscar in 1975 for Best Foreign Film, *Amarcord* was produced by Franco Cristaldi for FC/PECF, (Italy/France 1973, colour, 127 m), the photography is by Giuseppe Rotunno, the editing by Ruggiero Mastroianni, the project design and costumes are by Danilo Donati, and the music is by Nino Rota. The plot of the film is only apparently simple because the introspective elements, the references to his memories of past events, and the many autobiographical aspects turn the film into an excuse to recount a much broader story that is rich in content.

The *Treccani Film Encyclopaedia* states: “For Fellini the film is foremost a sort of psychological analysis of society, conducted with the means most familiar to him. This analysis regards the deep reasons behind the advent of fascism, which is seen more as a facet of the human spirit than as a precise and limited historical period. *Amarcord* is thus a film about Italy’s innate provinciality, its incurable immaturity, and its need to shirk responsibility by surrendering power to strong personalities who become a point of reference, papier-mâché idols, in order to continue living in a pathological limbo between the petty, mean actions of a real, limited existence, and the unlimited horizons of a dream. We certainly cannot deny the presence of this feature in *Amarcord* (which is also partly a film about Fellinism). Yet, as always, Fellini does not withdraw from the themes of the film, in fact he is a central part of it, and his moral judgments are always filtered by nostalgic human empathy. Fellini’s film is thus one of very few works that recount fascism from the inside, and it manages to delve critically into its reasons without dispensing judgments from an historical perspective. Furthermore, the film constantly involves the spectator both directly, through numerous asides, and in a more general way by obliging the public to compare their personal memories with the representation of them on film. Basically Fellini begins with an objective political idea, and gradually abandons it. His talent for filmmaking takes over, and along with a poetic discipline imposed on him by Tonino Guerra, the film takes on a life of its own. As Giacomo Manzoli concludes: “*Amarcord* becomes a faithful collective representation of the enchanted memories of a country, and of the moving tenderness of its past.” An effect that is achieved technically through the many points of view that are expressed in the film, and in a wider sense through its unparalleled universal success”.

above

**A poster of the film
Amarcord: a frame with
Titta, his father and
his grandfather in the
foreground**

below

**An historic postcard
of Rimini: the Railway
Station**

The story is set in Rimini between the spring of 1932 and the spring of the following year. We are certain of the dates because of the film's reference to the VII edition of the Mille Miglia Car Race.

The Rimini we see in the film is not the real Rimini, it is an imaginary representation of it. All the scenes of the film were in fact constructed in Cinecittà.

Everything is as Fellini remembered it, and has a dream-like quality to it.

In light of the above, Fellini recounts the life of the town and of the old quarter of San Giuliano - "è bòrg" - and its inhabitants.

Fellini's adolescence inspires his memories of the town fetes, the fascist "Saturday assemblies" and the commemoration of the founding of Rome, as well as Fellini's old school and its headmaster, his middle school teachers, the well-to-do folk, the shop keepers, the blind musician, a buxom woman in search of a husband, a street seller, the town's crazy man, a lawyer, a loose woman, the Junoesque tobacconist, the fascists and the anti-fascists, the count of Lovignano, and all the other boys who, like Fellini, were confused and excited by their pre-pubescent sexuality. Among these characters, Titta is central (Luigi "Titta" Benzi, Fellini's childhood friend and schoolmate). And all of Titta's family play a central role, too: his father, mother, grandfather, brother, and his aunts and uncles, one of whom is mad and locked up in an insane asylum, where the family pays him occasional visits. Through the events described in the film, the young Titta begins a path of personal growth which inevitably brings him to maturity, the kind that always comes too soon, Fellini seems to imply. And before he leaves Rimini for good, all the old friends meet in a huge, classic, dream-like Felliniesque carousel, which in this film takes place at Gradisca's wedding lunch.

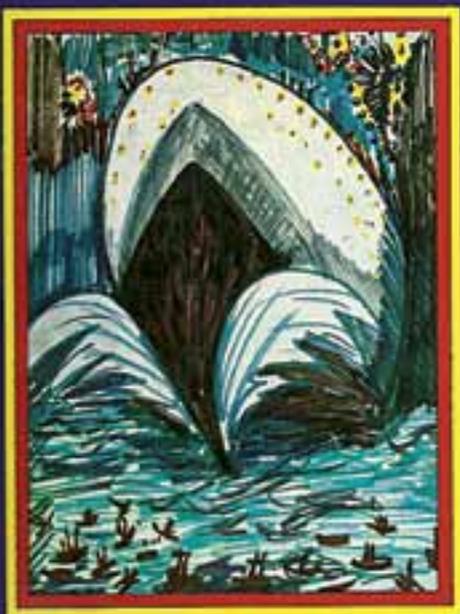
The screenplay hinges on the poem *A m'arcord* by Tonino Guerra, published in the book by Federico Fellini and Tonino Guerra entitled *Amarcord*, Rizzoli publishers, Milan, 1973 which states:

MADE IN ITALY
DOLBY DIGITAL
THE
FEDERICO FELLINI
THE
FRANCESCO
COSTANTINI
AMARCORD
DOLBY DIGITAL
DOLBY DIGITAL



FEDERICO & TONINO
FEELINI & GUERRA

AMARCORD



REZZOLI

A m'arcord

Al so, al so, al so
che un òm a zinquènt'ann
l'ha sémpa al mèni puloidi
e mè a li lèv dò, tre volti e dè.

Ma l'è sultènt s'a m vàid al mèni sporchi
che me a m'arcord
ad quand ch'a s'éra burdèll.

I remember

*I know, I know, I know
that a man of fifty
always has clean hands
I wash mine two or three times a day.*

*But it is only when my hands are dirty
that I remember
when I was a boy.*

The book opens with the poem, and as we leaf through it, we soon come across photos of the film. The protagonists of the first chapter are the “manine” (small hands) that appear in March: “No one knows where they come from. They are like little feathers, very light wads of cotton wool that float in the air (...) they alight on the vegetable patches, they dance in the courtyards, (...) they sway before the rectangles of the open windows”. Then a cloud of them reaches the sea and they “envelop the hundreds of windows of the Grand Hotel”. The second chapter mentions the bonfires that are lit to celebrate the advent of spring, with “flames that redden faces and light up the balconies and windows”. In the third chapter we encounter Gandhi “tall and slim with large black eyes beneath his long hair” (none other than the film director himself, thus called because of his proverbial thinness). The fourth chapter introduces us to the traditional stroll in the Corso: “the crowd forms two currents that flow past each other in opposite directions at a slow pace like a procession (...). Everyone parades as though they were on public display”. Chapter after chapter many characters appear and some names vary from the written text. They include: Titta Biondi, Ninola known as “Gradisca”, Scurèza ad Corpòlo, the Lawyer, the headmaster Zeus, Don Balosa, la Volpina, Aldina Cordini, Fighetta, the blind man from Cantarèl, Oliva, Aurelio, Miranda, il Pataca, Teo, and so forth, names which most people are familiar with. We all remember Teo who shouts from the top of a tree that he wants a woman. We can hardly forget Gradisca either, who got her nickname after an episode at the Grand Hotel where an appointed member of the Town Hall in a very impassioned manner asks her to help him impress the Prince, to whom she says: “Your Highness, please help yourself (gradisca)”. In the book the dialogues and monologues are not in the Romagna dialect, while the two screenwriters employed dialect as a mother tongue in the film, which greatly contributed to its success because of its musicality and poetry. Yet the musings spoken out loud and the chatting of the characters in Italian have an extraordinarily expressive force all the same. We need only quote the comment made by Aurelio, Titta’s father, to the starry sky: “Oh, just look at how many there are. Millions and millions and millions of stars. Good grief boys, I wonder how all that stuff stays up there. I mean, for us it is quite simple. If I have to make a building, I need so many bricks



Scuro



above

**A poster of the film
Amarcord. A frame
with *La Volpina* in
the foreground**

below

**An historic postcard
of Rimini: the Tiberius
Bridge and Borgo
San Giuliano**

and so much mortar, but up there, God bless the Virgin Mary, where do you place the foundations, hey? We're not just talking confetti here, are we?" and another saying of his: "A dad can do more than a hundred sons, but a hundred sons can't even do what one dad does, and that's the truth". Unforgettable are the words uttered by the grandfather who gets lost in thick fog and cannot find the gate to his home: "Where on earth am I? I don't think I am anywhere at all. If death is like this... it's not much fun. Everything has gone, the people, the trees, the birds in the air, and the wine. Stuff that!" And Calzinazz's bitter musings about the fact that he is a builder, yet does not own a home: "My grandfather made bricks, my father made bricks, I make bricks too, yet where is my house?" Guerra took these words from one of his poems contained in the collection *E' lunèri (The Almanac)* printed in 1954, and subsequently included in the masterpiece of a book entitled *I bu (The oxen)* which comprises his first thirty years of poetry. Among the various monologues we find Gradisca's: "Well, I'm still here waiting! I wish to meet someone; a man with whom to spend a lifetime... I'd like a family, some children, and a husband to chat with in the evening... while we drink some milk and coffee perhaps... and also to make love to now and then, because sometimes you just need to! But what matters more than love are feelings, and I have so many feelings inside... But who can I give them to? Who wants them?" And among the many dialogues, another memorable one takes place between a husband and wife, Titta's parents: Aurelio: "The egg is beautiful, isn't it Teo? I feel like that, too. Whenever I see an egg I could just stare at it for ages. I sometimes wonder how nature manages to make such perfect things". Miranda: "My dear, nature was made by God not by an ignoramus like you". Aurelio: "Just piss off, will you?" ("Ma va a fare le pugnette te, va" ([the original dialect expression] is typically used by men in Romagna when they are irritated and want to end a conversation). Just as unforgettable is the confession Titta makes to Don Balosa. Don: "Do you commit impure acts? Do you touch yourself? You know San Luigi cries when you touch yourself?" Titta: "Why? Do you not touch yourself? How can you not touch yourself when you see the tobacconist with all that stuff on her front, or the maths teacher who looks like a lion? How can you not touch yourself when she looks at you like that? And how could I say no

when Volpina asked me to blow up the tires of her bike? I didn't know you could kiss like that. Did you? With your whole tongue churning around..." Don: "I'm the one asking the questions here!"

In 1974, Cappelli Editors, Bologna, published a book series about cinema which was overseen by Fellini's friend Renzo Renzi. The book entitled "*Amarcord, il film*" (*Amarcord, the film*) comprises photos of the production design taken from the original "moviola" editing machine. In this section of the book, Liliana Betti, the director's assistant, copied down everything including the takes and lines that were discarded during the final editing phases. This painstaking work provides a great amount of detail with forty pages of illustrations and wonderful photos of film scenes (by Pierluigi) that retrace the whole film.

Amarcord becomes a faithful collective representation of the enchanted memories of a country, and of the moving tenderness of its past. An effect that is achieved technically through the many points of view that are expressed in the film, and in a wider sense through its unparalleled universal success.

Fellini stated about the film: "Mine is not a mere nostalgic reminiscing, it is a refusal of the past. Before passing judgment we must try to understand. Reality must not be contemplated ecstatically, rather it should be reviewed critically. *Amarcord* is an embarrassing film". He was referring to the showing of the film held before the President of the Republic at the Quirinale Palace in Rome. "I felt coarse and ill mannered presenting such a poor, petty, ignorant view of Italy in a venue overseen by the Presidential Guard of Honour in their full dress uniform".

When asked in 1996 if he intended to make a film about current or future reality rather than another work on the theme of memory, he replied that *Amarcord* is always relevant and up-to-date. "The film directly relates to our days since it hints at the dangers of a revival of a less naïve and less awkward, yet similar, and more threatening society. Fascism is like a menacing shadow that is not merely motionless behind us, but which occasionally stretches ahead and precedes us. Fascism always lurks within us". Basically, the past allows us to understand our present and our future, and Fellini's narrative skill turns an apparently local situation into a more universal statement, as he himself declared: "By portraying

IL FILM «AMARCORD»

DI FEDERICO FELLINI

a cura di Gianfranco Angelucci e Liliana Betti



DAL SOGGETTO AL FILM

collana cinematografica

48

CAPPELLI

FRANCO CRISTALDI

PRESENTA



**FEDERICO
FELLINI
AMARCORD**

SOGGETTO E SCENeggiATURA DI

FEDERICO FELLINI e **TONINO GUERRA**

IL LIBRO OMONIMO È EDITO IN ITALIA DA

RIZZOLI

UNA COPRODUZIONE ITALIA-FRANCIA

PRODOTTO DA

REGIA DI

F.C. (ROMA) **P.E.C.F. (PARIGI)**

• **FRANCO CRISTALDI** •

FEDERICO FELLINI



TECHNICOLOR

UNA ESCLUSIVITA' **P.I.C.**

the life of a small town area, I am describing the life of a whole nation, and I am presenting young people with a picture of the society that they were born in. I show them the fanaticism of the past, the provincial, immature, awkward, incoherent, and humiliating aspects of fascism, and of that society”.

We feel it is useful to list the names of some of the actors who performed in the masterpiece that is *Amarcord*: Bruno Zanin (Titta Biondi), Pupella Maggio (Miranda, Titta's mother), Armando Brancia (Aurelio, Titta's father), Stefano Proietti (Oliva, Titta's brother), Giuseppe Ianigro (Titta's grandfather), Nandino Orfei (il Pataca, Titta's uncle), Ciccio Ingrassia (Teo, the mad uncle), Carla Mora (Gina, the waitress), Magali Noël (Gradisca), Luigi Rossi (the lawyer), Maria Antonietta Beluzzi (tobacconist), Josiane Tanzilli (Volpina), Domenico Pertica (the blind man of Cantarel), Antonino Faà Di Bruno (count of Lovignano), Carmela Eusepi (the count's daughter), Gennaro Ombra (Biscein), Gianfilippo Carcano (don Balosa), Francesco Maselli (Bongioanni, science teacher).

The film was incredibly successful with the public and with the critics and obtained many awards. It received the Oscar in 1975 for Best Foreign Film, the National Board of Review Awards 1974 for Best Foreign Film, 3 Silver Ribbons in 1974: Best Film Director, Best and Most Original Subject Matter, Best Project Design, 2 David di Donatello 1974: Best Film, Best Film Director, Kansas City Film Critics Circle Awards 1975: Best Foreign Film, Bodil Award (Copenhagen) 1975 for Best European Film, NYFCC Award (New York Film Critics Circle) 1974 for Best Film and Best Direction (Federico Fellini), SFCC Critic's Prize (Syndicat Français de la Critique du Cinéma) 1975 for Best Foreign Film, Kinema Junpo Award (Tokyo) 1975 for the Film Direction (Federico Fellini) of the Best Foreign Film, CEC Prize (Círculo de Escritores Cinematográficos) 1976 for Best Foreign Film.

3. Iconography of the film

Dear Giuliano*,

They tell me that you, too, were at the film showing yesterday evening, and that you liked it very much. Obviously this news leaves me absolutely cold. Forget you have seen the film, and forget you enjoyed

above

**An historic postcard of
Rimini: Piazza Cavour,
the "Pinecone"
fountain**

below

**A poster of the film
Amarcord, a frame with
Titta and Gradisca at
the Fulgor Cinema in
the foreground**

it. Rather, think that the film *Amarcord* is being released in a month, so we have to come up with an idea for a poster because the sketches that the distributing company has shown me look like wanted posters for the president and for the head of the press office. Do you have any ideas? I doubt it; however, if you do, just forget them. I wonder why you come to mind instead of another artist! (By the way, do you have any other artists to suggest?) All jokes aside, don't expect me to chat to you, discoursing, and debating about *Amarcord* in the attempt to find a graphic idea to present the film to the public in a precise and effective way. Anyway, don't panic. Grab a piece of paper and a pen and write down these very rough, vague notes, which, thank God, are also quite confused. So, at a first glance the poster should exude the shrill gaiety of a Christmas card, or better still, an Easter card; the colours should be sharp, glossy, and resounding. I insist on the resounding aspect; the poster should convey a peel of bells, of voices, of shouts, and air and light and wind. Don't worry. I'll be more precise about the composition. All the characters should stare out of the poster at the spectators, the passersby. The characters should be caught in an astonished stillness; lovable, reluctant, and brazen, a sort of old, indelible, fabulous image reflected in a festive Sunday mirror. You could portray each of the characters' features in a clearly naive manner - a critical naivety that slightly masks a touch of irony and benevolence. (I think this is the best way to represent the exuberant, eccentric, oblivious individuality of the characters in my film). Then behind the characters there could be a wide open space depicting the countryside, the beach, the sea, and you, who love the surrealist masters so much, could strew this bright celestial depth with some of the themes and situations from the film: the Grand Hotel, the Rex, a wedding banquet. Of this surrealist feeling, however, you must make sure you do not employ its misunderstood vocation for gratuitous subversion, rather, you should bring out one of its more authentic qualities such as wonderment, liberating enchantment, a dreamy lightness, a feeling of menace... Goodbye Giuliano, get down to work right away with enthusiasm and with your usual commitment, and you will see that the first sketch you make will be a disaster. But one can make more than one sketch, and more than one artist can sketch. One





above

A poster of the film *Amarcord*, a frame with the people waiting for the Rex Ocean Liner to sail past

below

A drawing by Federico Fellini. Inside the Grand Hotel, the lobby

last thing and this really is serious, you won't be paid, but to make up for it, everything must be ready in one month's time. I am counting on you. Who knows why? An affectionate hug.

Federico Fellini

Rome, November 1973

*Giuliano Geleng, who produced the poster for *Amarcord*, is the first born son of Rinaldo Geleng, a painter like his father, and a friend of Fellini's during the early years in Rome. Rinaldo got married in 1943, and Federico, who was a wedding guest, designed the invitations.

As for the relationship between the poet and screenwriter Tonino Guerra, and the film director Federico Fellini, which will be dealt with at length in the eighth chapter, here are some quotes by their common friend, journalist and writer Sergio Zavoli: "The two of them never had an argument. To the contrary, the *Amarcord* project strengthened their friendship, which was made to last. Federico did not involve Guerra because they were both from Romagna, rather, the success of Guerra's poems, which were not just in the vernacular, definitely influenced Fellini's choice. I once asked Tonino what he thought Federico's most extraordinary talent was, and he replied: it is contained in 10 m of film. The part with which he fools the whole world into believing that on that evening the Rex Ocean Liner really did sail past the Grand Hotel in Rimini... Tonino was amazed at how everything on the most rickety set he had ever seen, always went smoothly. Tonino would always tell me that Federico had a great quality: he would let you daydream, and then he would take from you what he felt most useful to narrate his film".

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD

Asa nisi masa

“I don’t understand; I can’t say it” - Maya states while the magician holds his hand close to Guido’s head”. As she does not understand the meaning, she writes the thought on a blackboard in the garden of the Grand Hotel La Fonte where the shows take place. Then she reads the three words *Asa Nisi Masa* and the magician asks: “Is that it? What does it mean?” Guido smiles. Before this he had asked his friend who asked them what they were thinking: “What’s the trick? How do you transmit it to each other?” And the reply had been: “I don’t know how it happens, it just does”. He had also said that it was “an experiment using magnetic force and telepathy, I transmit your thoughts to Maya”. The three words that Maya repeats become a single word with a mellow sound, but no meaning. If we wanted to translate it we could not because it means nothing. It is a nonsense chant which is repeated like a nursery rhyme. In all of Fellini’s films word games, chants, truncated words, tricks, and jokes appear as if by magic. In the case of *asa nisi masa* we must point out that the words are said during a Fellinesque dream in 8 ½, released in 1963, where they appear in two scenes. In the first scene Maya the clairvoyant reads his thoughts. In the second scene he is a child at home with other little children. He cannot fall asleep and he imagines that the night is magical. After the old black-clad woman has chased the children and put them to bed, they wake up and chant the nursery rhyme twice.

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the spirits*) the film Fellini shot in 1965 starring his wife Masina in one of the main roles (for which she won a David di Donatello Award and a Silver Ribbon), as Fellini recalls in *Fellini. I am a born liar - The last confession of the Master of cinema - by Damian Pettigrew*, (Elleu, Rome, 2003) “there is a scene in which Giulietta (...) suddenly leaves Susy’s house (...). If you look closely, there is a long crack in the wall. In the crack are the words *asa nisi masa masina mastorna mastroianni*, which I painted in gold like a talisman”.

Thus we find the recurrence of the words that Fellini believed to be magical.

In the year 2003 that saw the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the film director’s death, in Rimini these words became the title of the summer event that takes place along the whole of the Adriatic Riviera in the Emilia Romagna region, known as *Pink Night*. That year, the event was called “the night with a soul” *AsaNisiMAsa* (the capitalized letters form the word ANIMA, soul in Italian T.N.).

Thus the title of this chapter *asa nisi masa* are words taken from Fellini’s childhood, from his memories, and from his daily need to ward off

above
**The house of Federico
Fellini's paternal
grandparents in
Gambettola (FC)**

below
**A poster of the film
8 ½, a frame with the
reconstruction of the**

**inside of the house
of Fellini's paternal
grandparents in the
foreground**

misfortune. They speak to us of the film director's childhood, which was packed with events that Fellini recounted as anecdotes as an adult. We have also chosen this chant to explain how in his films Fellini uses a cryptic language of evocative syllables, whose rules one needs to know.

1. Gambettola - holidays at his grandmother's

Asa nisi masa is a formula that we see written in chalk on a blackboard. We come across these words again in *8 ½*. In this film the words are said by a little girl who hopes that the portrait by her bed will move its eyes to indicate a place where a treasure is hidden, so that she and Guido may become rich. "Guido we mustn't sleep tonight. Tonight the portrait will move its eyes (...); remember the word: *asa nisi masa, asa nisi masa, asa nisi masa*". These mysterious words have no meaning. They are a ploy, one of Fellini's many devices. Here the saying is meant to surprise spectators, thus highlighting the function of cinema itself. Guido, played by Marcello Mastroianni, silently thinks the words *asa nisi masa* and his internal whispering draws together the memories, impulses, tensions, fears, and hopes that we all share. By exploring the confines between life and art, which is a representation of life itself, Fellini attempts to dissolve them, so we no longer know where one ends and the other begins, and *8 ½* epitomizes this.

In the film the black-clad old lady who tries to get the children into bed is probably Fellini's paternal grandmother, known as Franzchina, who lived in Gambettola, in an area called "è Bosch" between Rimini and Cesena (closer to Cesena). As a child, Fellini spent long spells at his grandmother's farm on the outskirts of town, in a magical atmosphere packed with adventures. Fellini himself speaks of his country visits in his story *Il mio paese*. "I would spend my summers in Gambettola, in the Romagna countryside. My grandmother always held a cane in her hands with which she would make the men jump like cartoon characters. That is how she got the hired helpers to obey her in the fields. In the morning there would be a lot of noise and guffawing, then, as she stood before them, those violent men would become very respectful, as though they were in church. Then my grandmother would hand out their milk and coffee and enquire about everything. (...) My grandmother was just like all the



ANGELO REZZOLI presenta
FEDERICO FELLINI

8 1/2

MARCELLO MASTROIANNI ■ CLAUDIA CARDINALE
ANOUK AIMEE ■ SANDRA MILO

ROSSELLA FALK ■ BARBARA STEELE
GUGLIELMO ALBERTI ■ J'ADRIENNE LEBEAU/
IAN RUSSELL ■ CATHERINA BORATTO
con ANTONIO DI NOVI ■ GIULIETTA RUSCONI

IL CINEMA
CINERIZ

LA VENERDÌ 5 LUGLIO 2013

NOTTE ROSA

ANIMASSA



RIVIERA ADRIATICA DELL'EMILIA ROMAGNA



other Romagna women". Grandma Franzchina "who was like a fairytale grandma with her withered face and thin body that was padded out with clothing, always wore black. To punish us she would lightly beat us with a flexible green stick to which we would respond with harrowing howls". The old Fellini family home still stands in the Gambettola countryside in Via Soprarigossa.

Regarding the theme of the countryside, Fellini declared: "The countryside was an extraordinary discovery for me. It was a fabulous and somewhat magical environment with its animals, trees, thunderstorms and seasons, the farmers' dealings with their animals, our river, and even the farmers' savage and brutal murders". He writes extensively about his grandmother's hometown and some descriptions stand out in particular: "When I think of Gambettola, of a two centimetre tall nun, of the hunchbacks, of the light above the fireplace, of the lame sitting at rough old tables, I always think of Hieronymus Bosch. Many gypsies would pass through Gambettola, too, as well as coal miners who were migrating to the mountains in Abruzzo. In the evening, announced by horrible animal cries, a fuming travelling shack would appear. It was the pig castrator. (...) The pigs knew he was coming, which is why they would grunt with fright. This man bedded all the girls in town. Once he got a silly fool pregnant, and everyone said that the baby was the devil's child, which is where I got the idea for *The Miracle (Il Miracolo)* episode in Rossellini's film. The event also filled me with a deep malaise that led me to make the film *La strada (The road T.N.)*".

The rural surroundings with their archaic dialects and primitive inhabitants were an incubator for Federico's innate imagination as a town child who was exposed to fascinating and mysterious events. A fact that Fellini himself acknowledged in one of the many anecdotes he liked to recount. Especially when he spoke of his blessing the four corners of the bed in which he slept at his grandmother's, giving each corner the name of a cinema in Rimini: the Fulgor, the Savoia, the Sultano, and the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro. And it was in that same bed, in a state of half-sleep and half-wakefulness, as Kezich recounts, that "he would have extrasensory experiences. Sometimes he imagined that he could fly like a kite, while at other times he felt he was carried off into other worlds", as

above left

Federico Fellini's birth home in Via Dardanelli, no. 10 (rebuilt from scratch)

above right

The second home belonging to Federico Fellini and his family in Palazzo Ripa, Corso d'Augusto, no. 115

below left

Another home belonging to Federico Fellini and his family Via Clementini, no. 9

below right

Another home belonging to Federico Fellini and his family Via Dante, no. 23 (at the time it was no. 9)

the following description shows: "Once (...) I remember (...) while I was playing in the shade of an oak tree, I heard an ox or a cow mooing in a shed. At the same time, I don't know in what dimension of my mind, I saw a hotel bellman in a red uniform behind me. He came out of the cowshed wall towards me. As he advanced he floated in midair. Then he entered the back of my head and disappeared out of my forehead, dissolving into a series of pubescent dots in the air".

2. The Rimini of Fellini's childhood and the "Gambalunghiana" Middle School

The house where Fellini was born in Rimini at 9.30 pm on Tuesday 20th January, 1920, no longer exists, or rather, in its place in Via Dardanelli, no. 10, there is a different building. This street is right next to the railway line, on the beach side. The present building is a block of flats surrounded by a small garden. However, the atmosphere is still reminiscent of Fellini's times. The terraced houses that Fellini mentioned, and the nearby streets full of houses from the 20s and 30s have changed little, despite the fact that in Viale Principe Amedeo, the adjacent street, a skyscraper built between 1957 and 1960 stands 100 m tall, and many buildings have been refurbished in a modern style.

After the birth of Federico, the first born son, the Fellini family moved from Via Dardanelli to Palazzo Ripa in Corso d'Augusto, no. 115, and then to Palazzo Ceschina in Via Gambalunga, no. 48, which is still the same, and which in Fellini's times was close to the Politeama Cinema, which Fellini would speak of often. In February 1929, the year of the memorable snowfall, the family moved again to Via Clementini, no. 9, and two years later they moved nearby to Via Dante, no. 9, which is now no. 23 as Kezich reminds us. "I remember the houses I lived in well, apart from one, my birth home. One Sunday afternoon when I was seven we were having a trip in our horse-drawn carriage. In winter the landau was closed. Six of us could fit in it: my parents, my brother and sister, and our housekeeper, all squashed up in the dark because the window had to stay shut, or it would let the rain in. I couldn't see a thing, just darkness, and the faces of my father and mother. It was a great joy to sit next to the coach driver because up there you could breathe. On that Sunday afternoon the carriage turned





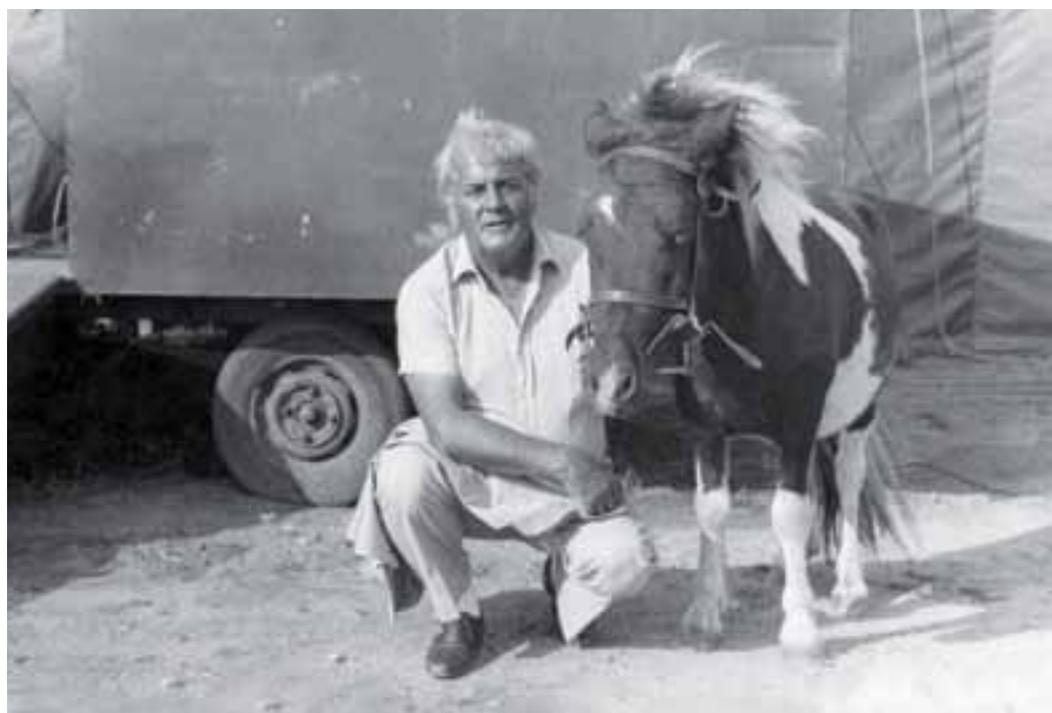
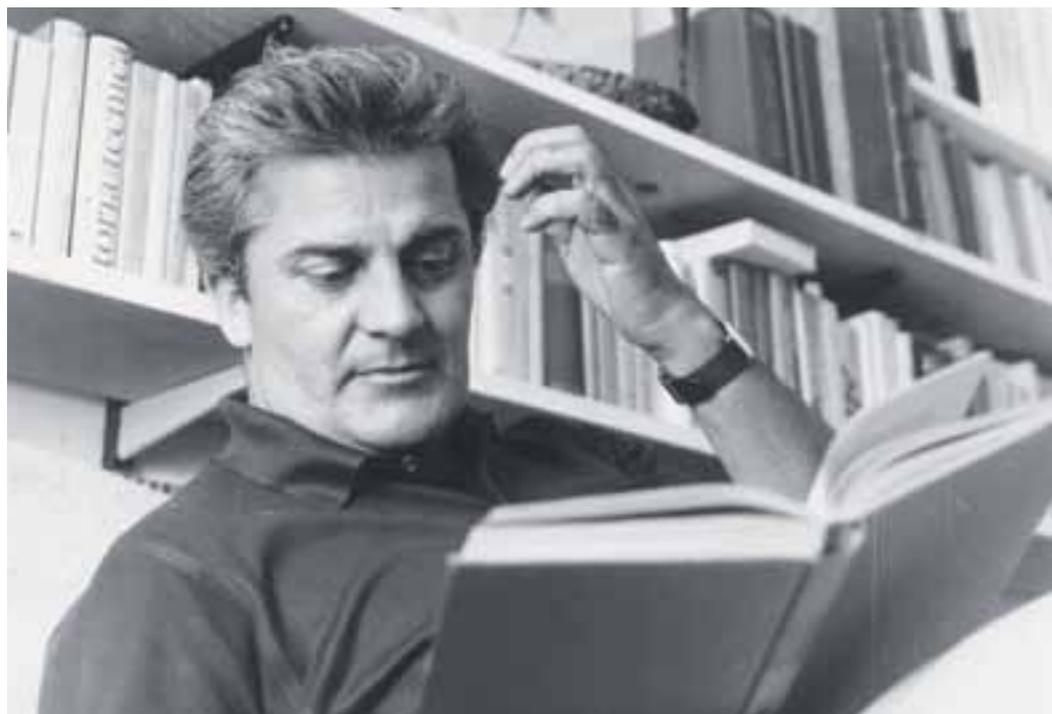
into a street we had never been down before. I saw a series of terraced houses. Dad said: "You were born there" and the carriage took off again. The first home I actually remember was the one in Palazzo Ripa. It still stands on the high street. (...) One morning I heard a lot of mooing and animals moaning. The little courtyard of the building was full of oxen and donkeys. Maybe, though I'm not certain, there was a market on, a sale". Fellini attended a nursery school run by nuns, the Sisters of San Vincenzo: "I attended the San Vincenzo Nursery School, the nuns with the big hats". They were dressed as many of the nuns in his films would be. In *Il mio paese* Fellini describes various processions, especially one where a nun of this order tells him not to let the flame of the candle go out "because Jesus doesn't want it to". Fellini concludes by saying that he fought so hard against the wind that he ended up crying with the effort. When he was seven months old he could imitate animal sounds; when he was one year old he could walk. He was a chubby boy, but he got worryingly thin in later years. His parents moved house many times, though never far from the town centre.

When his mother returned from Rome, where she had gone to be near her son who was studying there, she moved to Via Oberdan, no. 1, where Fellini's sister Maddalena and her family - husband Giorgio and daughter Francesca - continued to live afterwards.

In 1921, thirteen months after Federico's birth, his brother Riccardo was born on 27th February.

Riccardo Fellini

Riccardo looked a lot like his brother, but his personality was very different right from the start. Apparently he was a naughty boy, to the contrary of Federico who was very good, as his family and relatives would always remark. Having grown up together, they were always very close from an early age. And while still very young, Riccardo followed his older brother to Rome, where he became an actor, though he actually dreamed of becoming a singer. In the capital city he attended acting classes at the Experimental Centre of Cinematography. Then he began acting in a small role in a film by Mario Mattioli *I tre aquilotti* (The three eaglets), shot in 1942. During his acting career he worked in a dozen films including *I vitelloni*, directed by his brother Federico, and *L'ape regina* (*The Queen Bee*) by Marco Ferreri. Riccardo also directed a film in 1962, entitled *Storie sulla sabbia* (*Stories on the sand T.N.*). He worked on documentaries for RAI (The Italian Public Broadcasting Company) and upon private commission, too. He worked as an organization and production manager for a number of films for various production companies. He mostly made documentaries on themes linked to the relationship between mankind and animals for Italian National TV and Radio, which led critics to define him as an animal-rights supporter ahead of the times. Among these documentaries we wish to mention *Zoo folle* (*Crazy Zoo T.N.*) created for RAI, which aired in the 70s, and which brought him considerable success. He died on 26th March 1991. Stefano Bisulli and Roberto Naccari filmed a documentary on Riccardo Fellini entitled *L'altro Fellini* (*The other Fellini*) to remember the life and artistic achievements of Federico's younger brother.





above left

**Another home
belonging to Federico
Fellini and his family,
Palazzo Ceschina, Via
Gambalunga, no. 48**

above right

**The home belonging
to Federico Fellini's
mother and sister in
Via Oberdan, no. 1**

below

**The Fulgor Cinema
in Corso d'Augusto
in a stock photograph**

During his early schooling, Federico attended two primary schools. The Rimini library has a little book with Fellini's notes and an autograph: "Federico Fellini's book, Class III, Tonini School, a pupil of Master Giovannini". Federico was a very quiet pupil with a great talent for free drawing. "I attended the first and second years of primary school at the Teatini School. I was in the same class as Carlini with whom I saw the hanged man on the Marecchia River. Our teacher, who used to beat us, would suddenly turn kind during school celebrations to which parents brought presents (...). After primary school I was sent to Fano to a small Provincial College run by the Order of the "Padri Carissimi". The stories about the woman nicknamed "Saraghina" (sprat fish), revelations about sex, and the punishments I was subjected to, I have already recounted in 8 ½". In fact Federico is little Guido in the film, the boy with the black cape and cap. The one who takes his friends to the beach to watch the buxom "morona" (dark haired lady) known as Saraghina, who hid in a bunker on the beach and danced the rumba. But what he did not know was that Saraghina was the devil! As his confessor will later declare. "I didn't know. I really didn't" - Guido replies in the film, having been publicly humiliated in front of all the teachers, his mother and schoolmates, and having been subjected to the worst punishment of all, kneeling on chick peas.

As a child Federico was sickly and very thin due to a thyroid imbalance.

However, as of a very young age, he showed a really fervid imagination, which he did not just manifest in his drawings. When he was seven, he was highly impressed by circus life, which was to play a prominent role in his films in later years. In the summer of 1927, when Fellini was seven, a memorable event occurred: his "first attempt at running away from home". There was to be a "second" and then a "third" attempt, he loved to say. "Enthusiastic about Pierino the clown's act, portrayed in the film "*I clowns*" (*The clowns*) - as Kezich writes - when the circus packs up, the child runs away from home and joins the circus caravan". Fellini's mother always denied his "first attempt at running away" even though the film director always insisted that there was some truth to it. The joyous and powerful effect that the show had on Fellini was such that it propelled him into a world that he would never leave.

above left
**Federico Fellini and
his brother Riccardo**

above right
**A photo from the set
of the film *Amarcord*,
Federico Fellini**

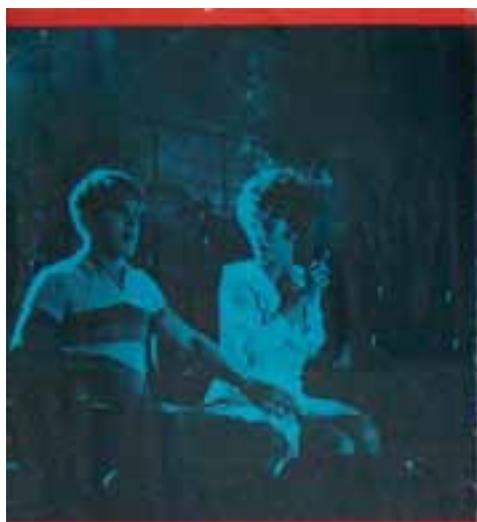
**and Gradisca are
in the foreground
(The Archive of the
Gambalunga Library)**

below
**A poster of the
film *Amarcord***

During Fellini's primary school years the Fulgor Cinema in Rimini became his second home, a place where he was rowdy with his friends and played many pranks, and where in later years, he would attempt some advances similar to those involving Gradisca in *Amarcord* and Fausto in *I vitelloni*.

"It is a well known fact that the Fulgor Cinema in Rimini is the place where I first discovered films as a boy. Once, when I was going to see Valentino in *Lo sceicco (The sheik)* for the seventh time, just before the showing, an incredible Rubensesque woman went up to the usher with two tickets. "Where's the other person?" the usher asked. "Well", the blonde replied, blushing under her makeup, "a single seat is uncomfortable for me, so I buy two". "Che culo!" (literally meaning "what a big bum!" it is a play on words meaning "what good luck!" T.N.) replied the impertinent usher "your seat numbers are 34 and 53"; Fellini recounts this story in the volume published by Elleu, which, as already mentioned, is his last confession. With this anecdote Fellini hints at how his attention would be caught by the shapely curves of certain blondes.

As an adult Fellini liked people to think that he had been a very naughty child who got up to all sorts of mischief. Whereas all witnesses agree that he was a really good little boy. They say that he loved to play with his toy theatre, putting on shows with puppets that he himself had made, and claiming that he would become a puppet master when he grew up. Apparently he also learnt cartoon drawing techniques quite early on by copying comic strips from the *Corriere dei piccoli* and other children's comic books. These comics made him happy, as he tells Vincenzo Mollica in the book entitled *Fellini. Parole e disegni. (Fellini. Words and drawings)* "these cartoon characters came with the "Corriere dei Piccoli" that my father would bring home on Saturday. (...) They were the most fun, faithful, and reliable friends at a time when my life consisted of schooling, processions, and marches; the typical atmosphere of the 30s". On 17th October, 1929, as Kezich writes, his sister Maria Maddalena was born and welcomed with curiosity by Federico and Riccardo, who promptly renamed her "Bàgolo".



FRANCO CRISTALDI ...
FEDERICO FELLINI AMARCORD
di FEDERICO FELLINI, TONINO GUERRA, 1973, F.E. - P.R.F. - TECHNICAL - P.I.C.



A tavola in Casa Fellini

RICETTE DA OSCAR
DELLA SORELLA MADDALENA



above
**The cover of the book
by Maddalena Fellini**

below
**Federico Fellini with
his sister Maddalena
(The Archive of the
Gambalunga Library)**

Maria Maddalena Fellini

As an adult, both her features and her build were very similar to Federico's. She lived in Rimini, where she gave birth to her daughter Francesca, and for a while also worked as an actress for the cinema, TV and theatre.

Having joined the film industry rather by chance and a little late in life, her first appearance on a set was in a film in episodes by the directors Giuseppe Bertolucci, Giuseppe Tornatore, Francesco Barilli, Marco Tullio Giordana, *La domenica specialmente (Especially on Sunday)* released in 1991. Following which she starred in other films including: *A rischio d'amore* by Vittorio Nevano, an episode of the *Ispettore Sarti* TV series by Giulio Questi, *Hors saison* by Daniel Schmid, and *Bonus Malus* by Vito Zagarrio. Her last apparition was in *Viaggio di Nozze* by Carlo Verdone in 1995. In 1993, after Federico's death, in collaboration with the Rimini City Council and the Emilia Romagna Regional Body she established the Fellini Foundation, donating part of the family home to the Fellini Museum. Maddalena Fellini always spoke of her unpublished writings with amusing irony. Her first publication in 1993 with the Guaraldi Rimini Publishing House, entitled *Storie in briciole di una casalinga straripata*, is a collection of family anecdotes and adventures. Followed by a book entitled "*A tavola con Federico Fellini, Le grandi ricette della cucina romagnola*" - published by Idea Libri, Santarcangelo di Romagna, 2003 - a recipe book of dishes that Maddalena cooked for her brother, which he called "a symphony of flavours". The preface is by the poet Tonino Guerra, and the introduction is by Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Maddalena died at the age of 74, on 21st May 2004, in her home in Rimini after a long battle with illness.

Twenty years after Fellini's death, in April 2013, Francesca, Federico Fellini's niece and Maddalena's daughter, added new content to her mother's book turning it into a personal culinary "amarcord" with anecdotes by her famous uncle and unpublished culinary delights. The title of the book is *A tavola in casa Fellini. Ricette da Oscar della sorella Maddalena (At the table with Fellini, Oscar recipes by his sister Maddalena)* Rare Earth Publishing House, Milan.

above left

Palazzo Gambalunga - Palazzo Visconti (now the Municipal Library, in Fellini's times it was

the G. Cesare Lycee) entrance on Via Tempio Malatestiano
above right
Palazzo Gambalunga,

entrance on Via Gambalunga
below
Palazzo Buonadrata (now the seat of the

Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, in Fellini's times it was the Classic Lycee) outside shot and the main staircase

When Maddalena was born (as she was always known), the Fellini family lived in Via Clementini, no. 9, "the house of my first love" Fellini called it, as we will see further on. After finishing primary school at the boarding school of the Padri Carissimi in Fano - where it seems that he only attended the third and fourth years as a boarder - he obtained his primary school certificate. Then, in the school year of 1930-31 he enrolled in the first year of the Giulio Cesare Middle School "which - Fellini writes - was in Via al Tempio Malatestiano", in Palazzo Gambalunga, which houses the Municipal Library today, and whose main entrance is on the street by the same name. Fellini's classmate and best friend Luigi "Titta" Benzi remembers their classroom on the top floor, which was similar to an attic, on the corner of Via Gambalunga and Via Tempio Malatestiano. "Going up and down the stairs was always an adventure. The stairs never ended. The headmaster, who was known as Zeus and was like a fire-eater and puppet master, had feet the size of a 600 (a Fiat car that was popular at the time, Ed.) with which he would try to kill the children. His kicks would break our backs. He would keep very still and lash out suddenly with a kick that would squash you like a cockroach". At that time Federico loved reading adventure novels, especially those by Emilio Salgari, and games with friends consisted of imaginary epic battles. "Middle school years are a time of "battles" inspired by Homer. We were reading the Iliad at school and learning it by heart. Each one of us identified with one of Homer's characters. I was Odysseus". Later on, Fellini attended the Lycee in Palazzo Buonadrata in Corso d'Augusto, no. 62. During these years he had his first flirtatious encounter as he recounts: "(...) flirting from a distance, a visual form of flirting. (...) During the lycee years I fell in love with the "11 o'clock lady". At that time the shutters of the small balcony opposite would open and a beautiful woman in a dressing gown would appear and talk to her cat and her canaries in their cage, and to the flowers in their vases. When she bent over to water the flowers, her dressing gown would fall slightly open on her bosom. We would have been waiting for that moment since half past eight in the morning. Sometimes the mathematics teacher, who walked for miles around our desks with his hands behind his back, would follow our gaze to the window and stand there watching and raising himself up and down on his toes". In addition to Titta Benzi nicknamed "il Grosso" (the big one), Fellini's lycee friends





above

Federico Fellini and his Lycee classmates and teachers (last but one on the right, second row)

below

Federico Fellini wearing a jacket and tie on his bicycle with his friends on the seafront (second from right)

included Mario Montanari, who, like Titta, lived in Rimini all his life, and who formed the so called “Tris” group of friends with Fellini. Then there was Luigino Dolci, the son of Fellini’s landlord, and Sega known as Bagarone, the top student in the class, who moved to Rome when he was older. The Montanari family had a castle-like country house on the Covignano Hill, the highest part of Rimini, which is still an elegant, aristocratic area today. “La ‘Carletta’, the small country castle that belonged to the Montanari family - Titta recalls - was the epitome of aristocracy and elegance to us. We would take the girls there, mostly seamstresses. We would have parties and dance and have fun, or hold pretend séances... for the ‘fools’ who believed it. It was also the time of our first kisses, and the gramophone constantly played the hit record of the time, which was Stardust”.

In 1933 Federico visited Rome for the first time as a young man. These are his words: “What struck me most were the bad manners that were to be seen all over town. Bad manners and vulgarity. But it didn’t strike me negatively. I had already understood that vulgarity is part of the Roman character. It is the magnificent vulgarity recorded by Latin authors such as Plautus, Martial and Juvenal. It is the vulgarity of Petronius’ *Satyricon*. Vulgarity is a form of freedom, a victory over the fear of bad taste; redemption from the façade of respectability. Those who draw creative inspiration from Rome, find its vulgarity enriching. It is one of the appealing features of the city”. In 1934, Achille Beltrame published a drawing by Fellini in the *Domenica del Corriere* newspaper that depicts an Ocean Sunfish beached on the Rimini shore. The following year, in June 1935, Fellini passed his final exams at the Monti Lycee in Cesena. Then he was sent to Forlì in uniform, as a member of the Escort of Honour of Victor Emanuel III, for the opening of an exhibition by Melozzo di Forlì. Kezich writes that “to Fellini the King looked like a rabbit, and he made his fellow soldiers laugh by imitating his smirk”. In 1936 Fellini took part in the camping adventure of the *Italian Youth of the Lictor* in Verucchio, a town 20 km from Rimini in the area that once belonged to the Malatesta Lordship. Here he drew caricatures of the balilla musketeers. These drawings comprise his first published work. “The hands of this young man and his talent for caricature afford him friendship and his first earnings” - Kezich recounts. Fellini carried out this activity at school, too, where he often drew his teachers. An important event in Fellini’s life at

above left

The building known as Palazzo “Malatesta” with a shop where Federico Fellini opened the FeBo artists’ shop

opposite the Tempio Malatestiano

above right
A drawing by Federico Fellini ‘Il pataca’ in *Amarcord*

below left

An historic postcard of Rimini, the Arch of Augustus

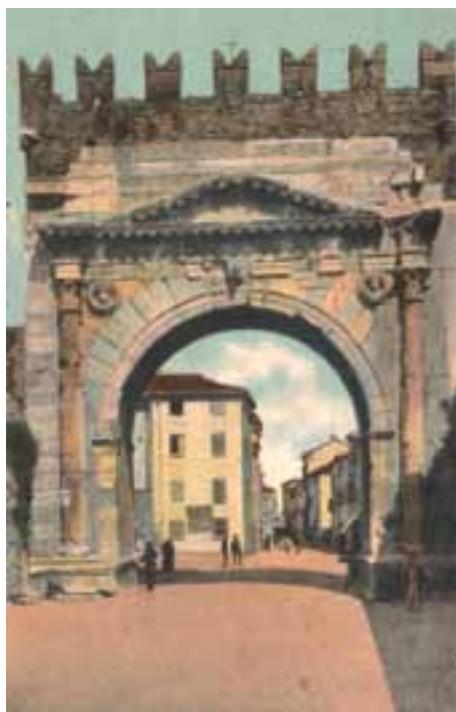
below right

Il Corriere dei Piccoli much loved by Federico Fellini

this time is Bianca Soriani and her family’s move into the building opposite his home. She is two years younger and Fellini falls madly in love with her. “Bianchina was a little brunette. I could see her from my bedroom. The first time she appeared behind a window, or - I don’t remember - she was dressed in her fascist youth movement uniform, and had beautiful heavy breasts, like a mother’s”. Kezich writes: “When talking to his friends, Fellini compares her to famous actresses such as Kay Francis and Barbara Stanwyck. But the growing idyll creates much ill feeling. When Mrs Fellini asks Bianchina’s mother to keep a closer eye on her daughter, in the Soriani household slaps and punishments are rife”. Despite this, the two persevere and Federico’s love is so intense that when his mother forbids him to see the girl for the umpteenth time, he faints out of desperation and falls to the floor. Apparently the pair sometimes managed to get onto a bike together and ride beyond the Arch of Augustus. Even more legendary is their escape to Bologna on a train that was stopped after two hours by the Railway Police, though Bianchina later denied it. In 1938 Bianchina’s family moved to Milan and Federico never saw his beloved in Rimini again, though he wrote to her often, and, as Titta recalls, the following year he went looking for her. She was to become Pallina (“little ball” because of her small rounded nose) in the stories Fellini wrote for the “Marc’Aurelio”, and Cico’s (Federico) fiancée and bride played by Masina in a series of radio programmes. Later as a journalist, Fellini would describe many events from these years to do with love, school, and personal experiences in his stories published in the “Marc’Aurelio” and in the cartoons in the satirical newspaper “*Il Travaso delle idee*”. In July 1938 Fellini sat his written exams at the Monti Lycee in Cesena and his oral exams at the Morgani Lycee in Forli and obtained his diploma. The final exams were saddened by the suicide of a depressed schoolmate who had failed. Kezich writes: “Yet another reason for Fellini to deeply resent this useless, oppressive school, which he will heavily condemn in *Amarcord*”.

3. FeBo and their first views of the sea

In 1937 Fellini and his friend Demos Bonini, the painter, open an “artist’s sketching and caricature shop, the FeBo company”, where, as Fellini writes, they also draw “caricatures and small portraits of ladies at





above
The quay in Rimini
a stock photograph

below
The Rimini beach
seen from the quay

home". The name of the company is inspired by Fellini's signature of his sketches as FE - Fellas - and Bonini's as BO. "The shop was in an evocative building, opposite the Duomo". Fame comes quickly and Federico looks for a way to make the most of it from the start. He suggests to the manager of the Fulgor Cinema that he draw caricatures of the actors to be used as posters for the cinema's film showings. Needless to say, in exchange Fellini asks to view the films free of charge.

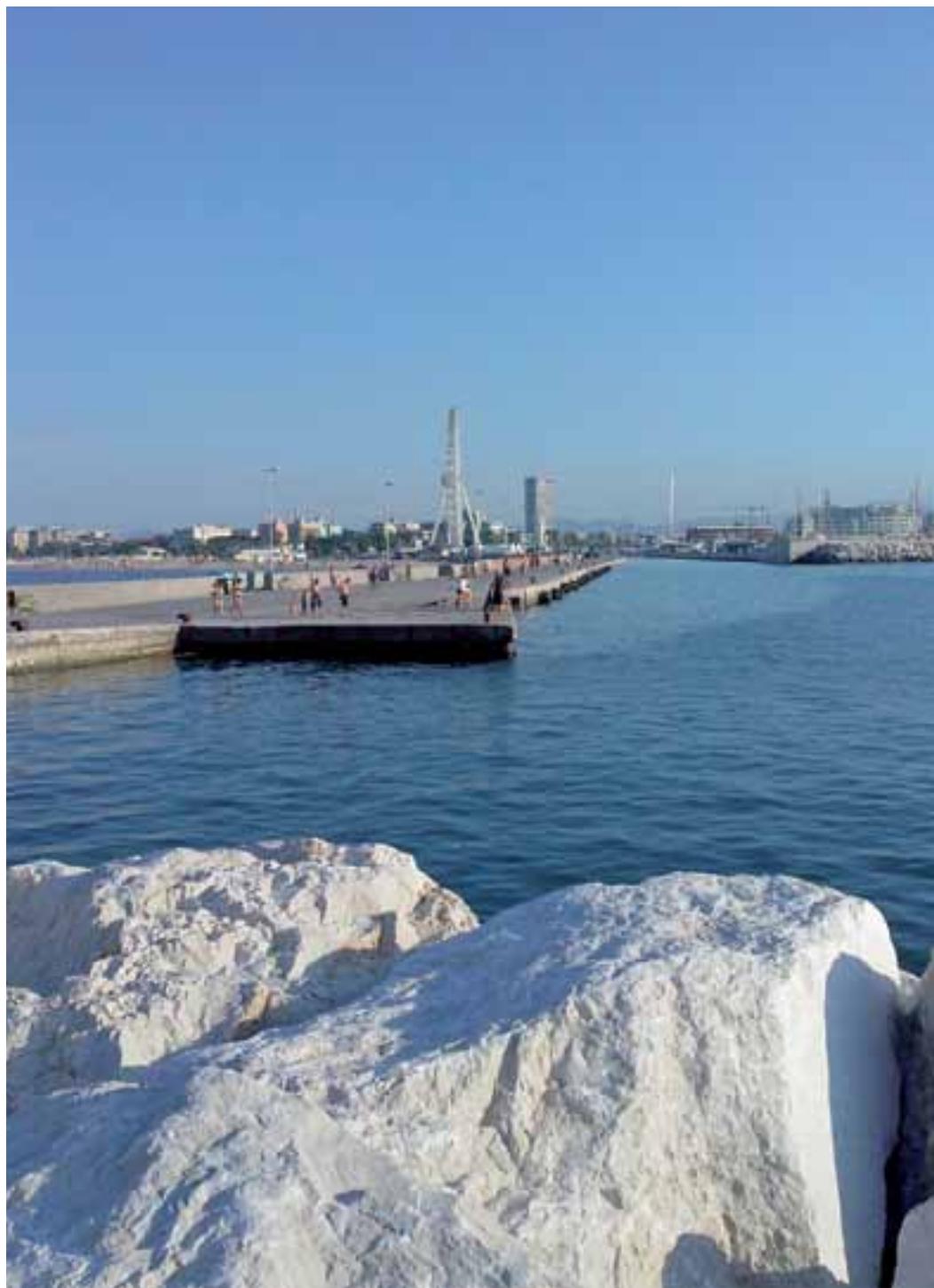
"In the evening we would go to the beach and disappear in the banks of fog in the Rimini winter. The shutters were down, and the hotels were closed. It was completely silent, except for the sound of the waves. While in summer, to annoy couples who were making love behind the boats, we'd quickly undress and go up to them stark naked and ask the man behind the boat: "Excuse me, what time is it?" In the daytime, because I was thin and had a complex about it - they called me Gandhi or "Canocchia" (squill fish) - I would not wear swimming trunks. I lived a solitary existence. I looked to illustrious examples such as Leopardi to justify my phobia of swimming trunks and my inability to enjoy myself like the others who were splashing around in the water (maybe this is why I find the sea so fascinating, like something that I have never conquered; a place from which monsters and ghosts arise). Anyhow, to fill the void, I devoted myself to art. I had opened an artists' shop with Demos Bonini".

Opposite the sea there was a pine wood. Nowadays there are only a few pine trees left in some small parks in Rimini.

During a trip to Palmariggi in the early 60s, as the chronicles report, Fellini remembered climbing the pinewood trees in Rimini as a child to spot the cicadas that sang all day. He also describes how their singing made him dizzy like a majestic resonance box in the silence, among the vegetation and the dust, where the summer seemed to sink in amusement. Nowadays there are few trees. They are bent and sickly, and you no longer hear the cicadas singing, but you can hear children busily chasing each other in the playgrounds. The sea of Fellini's childhood and adolescence left an indelible mark in his memory, and was a permanent backdrop to a town whose inhabitants mostly lived in the old quarter. It is no surprise, therefore, that the sea has a unique place in Fellini's expressionism. Fellini maintained that true realism should be visionary,

that of his own style; an expressionism that portrays the deep moods and feelings harboured in the unconscious as well as its emotional aspects. In *8 ½* he envisions nightmares. In *Fellini Satyricon* and in *La dolce vita* he generates monsters and alters morphology and colour. In *Casanova* the sea is completely artificial and allusive, and in *E la nave va* (*And the ship sails on*) the sea is simulated in a film studio with enormous sheets of cellophane that are shown for what they are. Another typical feature of Fellini's work is the symbolic and mostly negative connotation of the sea, as he himself declares, though in *Fellini's Satyricon* the poet Eumolpo states that "the sea is good". Mostly for Fellini the sea hides monstrous creatures in its depths that occasionally surface. The sea is also the setting of vile acts of the past and of the present, and is usually a backdrop to negative emotions and situations.

Yet Fellini would always recreate the sea in his memory first, then in his imagination, and finally in the film studios. Something he declares in his story entitled *Ciliegie e mari di plastica* (*Plastic cherries and seas T.N.*) in the volume entitled *Federico Fellini. Sono un bugiardo* (*Federico Fellini. I'm a born liar*). "Film the real sea and it looks fake. Try filming a plastic sea that you have created and the simulated reality is more interesting, because it is an intensified form of reality linked to the power of suggestion; the opposite of Hollywood hyper-real special effects. With a sheet, two Kg of Parmesan, and two technicians, you can create a storm".





Franco Corbelli presenta



Federico Fellini
E la nave va

una Coproduzione RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana e VHS Produzione s.r.l. (Italia) GAUMONT ITALIA
Produttore associato Aldo Neri per la SIM. Registrazione della VHS Produzione s.r.l.

GAUMONT

above

**The quay with its
bars and restaurants**

below

**A poster of the film
E la nave va (And the
ship sails on)**

Fellini and the sea

The sea in his filmography from “Fellini e il mare”

(Fellini and the sea) by di Roberto Nepoti

“In Fellini’s complex representations, the sea “floods” a large part of his filmography. Sometimes the sea in his films has a geographical reason to be included (films set in Rimini) but not only that. Sometimes it has a diegetic function throughout a narrative (*E la nave va*); at other times it is strongly symbolic (*Casanova*). On occasion it is simply a natural feature, and at other times it is transfigured, artificially simulated, or merely hinted at. However, it is important to notice that in all these forms, the sea is never just a purely decorative background, which frequently occurs in films of many different periods. To the contrary, for Fellini this liquid element often has a symbolic, narrative role, which is ever more apparent as Fellini’s work evolves throughout his lifetime. In *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The white sheik*) (1952) the sea appears for the first time in an eight minute sequence in which, on the Ostia beach, the new bride Wanda dreams of her idol Fernando Rivoli, the sleazy actor of a photo-romance magazine, who is the object of her erotic fantasies. He is dressed as a rather unlikely sheik. Having appeared to her on a swing in the famous scene, he takes her on a pedal boat - the laughable version of a romantic felucca - and just a few metres from the shore, he clumsily tries to seduce her. The sequence, which ends with the unfaithful husband being punished by his muscular wife, is a grotesque and bitter parody. In *I vitelloni* (1953), which is entirely set in Rimini, the sea has a diegetic purpose in at least five sequences, one of which is another sad seduction scene in which a homosexual head comedian drags his friend Leopoldo to the beach at night, in the wind and the raging waves. And the last scene in which Fausto desperately searches for his wife, who has run away with their daughter, ends with priests and seminary students running along the seafront. *La strada* is like a narrative circle that is enclosed by two beach sequences (cut by a third one). In the first one Zampanò buys something from the mother of the poor girl Gelsomina who lives in a hut on the beach. The last scene, one of the most moving scenes of all of Fellini’s films, takes place at night. The man collapses onto the beach wracked by remorse and desperation. The renowned final sequence of *La dolce vita* (1960) is another example of a film that ends on the seashore. In this sequence, which is lit by almost blindingly bright sunshine, we see Marcello’s bitterness for the moral degradation

above
**A poster of the film
Lo sceicco bianco
(*The white sheik*)**

below
**The quay with
the seafront in
the background**

he has reached projected onto an enormous sea monster that has mysteriously come to die on the beach in Fregene, while the young blonde girl from the kiosk comes up to him. She is the antithetical symbol of the innocence that he has lost. 8 ½ starts with a scene that involves the sea. Guido, played by Marcello Mastroianni, represents Fellini and his alter ego. Here we see him dreaming of falling from the sky onto the beach. And the famous sequence with Saraghina and the discovery of sex by the boy protagonist, which is much more disturbing than reassuring, is also set on the seashore, where the huge woman, an almost animal-like projection of sexual desire, performs a strange dance to the notes of Nino Rota. In *Fellini's Satyricon* (1969) the first scene in the Emperor's boat lasts a whole thirteen minutes. It is full of atrocities and culminates in the fishing of yet another mysterious sea monster, like the one in *La dolce vita*; in the epilogue we see yet another ship heading to discover new worlds. The sea is a constant presence in *Amarcord* (1973) as a backdrop to a Rimini that is immersed in a dream. The key sequence is the one in which the Rex Ocean Liner passes by, followed by many of the townspeople in their boats. It is a suspended nighttime sequence; the liner is an epiphany that emerges from the dark. Though it is brightly lit, the atmosphere is not at all festive; to the contrary, what prevails is a feeling of mystery and precariousness. The sea is essential in *Casanova* (1976) where the scenes of the Venetian Lagoon are in absolute keeping with the sombre, funereal feeling of the whole film. (...) The culmination of Fellini's long relationship with the sea comes in *E la nave va* (1983), which is set on the waves from beginning to end. Nor is the sea joyful or vital here, either, and not just because the ocean is the setting of a funeral during which the opera singer Edmea Teuta's ashes will be poured into the water, but also because of the apocalyptic ending, which sees a young Serb attacking an Austro-Hungarian battle cruiser that responds by bombing the ship; a clear metaphor for the outbreak of the Great War".



ALBERTO SORDI **BRUNELLA BOVO** **LEOPOLDO TRIESTE**
ALDO LADI - ANTONIO ALIBONTE - LINA MASSETTA - ENZO MILLORE - GIANFRANCESCO RINALDI - ALVARO SANCHEZ
e **GIULIETTA MASINA** *in un film di FEDERICO FELLINI*

**LO
SCEICCO
BIANCO**



CHAPTER III

FRIENDSHIPS

The vitelloni epic

When thinking of the film *I vitelloni* in 1953, Fellini, in his early thirties, draws from the events and memories of his adolescence, which are full of characters that are destined to remain in our memories. The division of the plot into lengthy episodes, experimented here for the first time, was to become a norm from then on. Fellini writes the story with Ennio Flaiano from Pescara, and Tullio Pinelli. The word *vitelloni* was used in Flaiano's hometown Pescara just after the war. Flaiano imagined the film being set in Pescara and was developing it around a number of fictional characters who would represent the young generation of his hometown in the 50s. The word *vitellò* (calf) (*vitellone* - steer) was used in the town of Abruzzo to describe the young layabouts who spent their days at the bar doing nothing, not even seeking work. At that time it was common for young people to greet each other with "*Uhe vitellò cum'a sti'?*" (Hey layabout, how are you?) because youth unemployment was rife. This slang word, which was popular then, declined in later years. Fellini subsequently wished to set the film in Rimini. He saw his hometown by the Adriatic Sea as the perfect setting. There is much of Federico in this film. Not by chance did Fellini choose to dub Moraldo's last line in the final scene where he says goodbye to Guido from the train. Fellini wanted to highlight the autobiographical reference to his departure from Rimini as a young man with a great talent and a "squill-like" thinness that induced his friends to nickname him Gandhi. Though many parts of the screenplay are autobiographical, where Fellini describes situations and people from his childhood for instance, the film director wanted to detach himself from reality. Thus he invented a town by blending memory and imagination, which he did again twenty years later with the Rimini portrayed in *Amarcord*. And as ever, not a single scene was shot in Rimini; rather, Fellini chose Florence, Viterbo, Ostia, and Rome. This film was the first of Fellini's to be distributed abroad. It was a blockbuster in Argentina and highly successful in both France and Great Britain. The screenplay was nominated for an Oscar in 1958, and was included in the official selection of the 14th Venice International Art and Film Festival of 1953. "The public and critics are unanimous in endorsing the success of a new film director (...) even the jury presided over by the surly Eugenio Montale, the poet who declared his hate of cinema, (...) recognizes Fellini's merits, giving him a Silver Lion during a festival in which the highest prize is not awarded. The film gains six Silver trophies and is ranked second" (Kezich 2007).

above
**A poster of the film
*I vitelloni***

below
**A photo from the set
of the film *I vitelloni*
(The Archive of the
Gambalunga Library)**

1. *I vitelloni*

The story is about five young men from Rimini: Leopoldo the intellectual, Fausto the Casanova, Moraldo the more mature one, Alberto, who is rather immature, played by Alberto Sordi, and Riccardo the compulsive gambler, played by Fellini's brother. During a beauty contest on the beach, Miss Sirena (Miss Mermaid) 1953 is awarded a prize, but the winner, Sandra (Leonora Ruffo), suddenly faints. While everyone is waiting for a doctor, Fausto (Franco Fabrizi) a philanderer in his thirties, intuits the cause of the fainting spell. He runs home, packs a suitcase and asks his father for some money, because he wants to leave for Milan to look for work right away. Sandra's brother, Moraldo (Franco Interlenghi) reaches him and tells him that Sandra is pregnant. Obligated by his father, he can do nothing other than marry her. The wedding is attended by all the friends, who make fun of the new groom. Alberto seems to be the most confident as he carries on enjoying himself playing pool, pranks, and betting. He finds an excuse to ask his sister Olga, the only family member with a job, for some money, though he really wants it to bet with. Even though she gives him the cash, he scolds her for her secret affair with a married man who does, however, intend to marry her. When he returns from the honeymoon, Fausto's father-in-law finds him a job working for a friend of his, Michele, who sells sacred objects. At this point we see alternate scenes of Fausto's squalid affairs and the empty lives of the other members of the group. Though Fausto is married, and his wife is expecting a child, he still behaves like a Don Juan. When Alberto gets drunk at a party, he realizes how empty and useless his life is, but he isn't brave enough to change. The following day, Olga leaves with her man, while her mother and brother are in tears. Her mother is only sorry to lose her daughter's income, and her brother is unhappy because he has to promise to look for a job. Fausto's duplicity is discovered and he is sacked. Out of spite, he asks Moraldo to help him steal a wooden angel from the shop, but they can't sell it. Sandra's father is furious and Sandra is beside herself, but the birth of little Moraldo, the joy of the family, takes the pressure off Fausto. He looks for another job, but he can't let go of his old friends with whom he has spent his youth in a superficial and irresponsible way. Sandra, who is tired of his philandering, runs away with the child. Fausto and his



Il grande momento del stellone



above

A drawing by Federico Fellini 'the vitellone's great moment'

below left

Federico Fellini with his friends, the first on the right

below right

Federico Fellini with his friends, the second from the left

friends start a long and useless search for them, and Fausto becomes desperate and wants to end his life. Meanwhile Alberto drives past a group of exhausted workers, and in a cowardly manner makes fun of them with a rude sign as he shouts: "Workers..... prrrrrr, workers of the mass". Just a few metres on, however, his car breaks down. As the workers chase him, all he can do is run away, while he shouts that he was only joking. In the evening, when Fausto returns home, he finds out that Sandra has come back. But his father Francesco is waiting for him to teach him a hard lesson, and whips him with his belt. Finally having understood the responsibilities that a family entails, he seems to mend his ways. In the last scene of the film, Moraldo is the only one who is brave enough to leave town and he takes a train to Rome, without telling anyone. He is seen at the train station by Guido, a porter and a true friend, while he imagines his friends blissfully asleep in their beds.

As for the autobiographical references and the scene where Alberto Sordi shouts: "Workers! Take this!" following it with a raspberry, Fellini's friend Titta recounts an extraordinary anecdote. "It was an integral part of our repertoire, though slightly different in real life; to start with we were both on a bicycle, not in a car. Federico was sitting on the crossbar of my bike, holding a Torsani gramophone, and we were heading for the 'Carletta', the castle-like country house that belonged to the Montanari family. Along the road that led to Covignano, in the fields and vegetable patches there were some farmers who were bent over working the land... That's where we carried out the 'evil deed!'".

2. Titta Benzi

The Rimini trio, "Tris", as Fellini nicknamed it, comprised Fellas (Federico Fellini), il "Grosso" (the big one) Luigi 'Titta' Benzi, and Mario (Mario Montanari). The three inseparable friends kept in touch throughout their lives. However, one was a closer friend and a confidant to Fellini.

He was Fellini's best and lifelong friend from Rimini, as the lawyer loved to say. Fellini and Luigi Benzi, nicknamed Titta by the film director, was also known as "il Grosso" (the big one) during his childhood and youth. The same age as Fellini, born in Rimini on 8th March 1920, he was the seventh son, and as he loved to point out, he was Fellini's classmate

at middle school and at the classic lycee for eight years. "I would go to his house to study in the afternoon, so... His was a very respectable family. To start with Urbano was a cereal merchant". Their first meeting on the beach (...) was not very successful. Little Federico broke a spade on his head. "I like to think that it was an accident", Benzi recounted to Sergio Zavoli in *Diario di un cronista (A reporter's diary)*.

This is Titta's version: "The first time I met him was back in 1925, when, during the first warm spring days, fathers would take their children to the beach". They always spoke about the spade episode. "When in later life (...) I would tease or taunt him, he would say: "Remember that ever since we were little, I have always sorted you out".

And while Federico as a young man was nicknamed "Canòcia (squill fish) and "Gandhi" because of his excessive thinness, the stout Benzi was nicknamed "Grosso" (Big) though most people knew him as "Titta". Fellini chose the name "Titta" for his character in *Amarcord* because he drew inspiration from his friend, his family, and their house, which he would frequently go to, and which still stands in Via Roma, no. 41.

"*Amarcord* is the story of my family. Me, Titta, my brother, my father, my mother, and my grandfather - he declared in an interview with Raisat in 2003 for a documentary entitled *Felliniana*. "I didn't realize that it was the story of my family when they were filming it. He used to say: "Come to Rome to play the role of your father, because nobody can act Ferruccio's part better than you" - and my father is portrayed well in the film... he was irascible.... He would rip a tablecloth off a set table. Fellini gave my father a really huge gift (...) a really magnificent one... in which he portrays him just as he was... the master builder... I didn't realize at all. When, however, on 12th December 1973 Federico phoned me and said: "Oh! Come to Rome and tomorrow evening we'll go to the Quirinale Palace for the first showing of *Amarcord*" (...) that is when I realized that Federico had given me such a great gift in the form of this film. The film portrayed our happy adolescence, the best years of one's life, from the age of ten to eighteen, or twenty... I can quote my mother's criticism of *Amarcord* - she was a woman who didn't put up with any nonsense: "Your friend killed me off before the time", because my mother dies in the film. And my mother would say: "What? I am still alive, and he has had the daring to make me die?..." And Federico would laugh heartily".



Luigi "Titta" Benzi

PATACHÉDI

Gli amarcord di una vita
all'insegna della grande amicizia
con Federico Fellini



Guaraldi

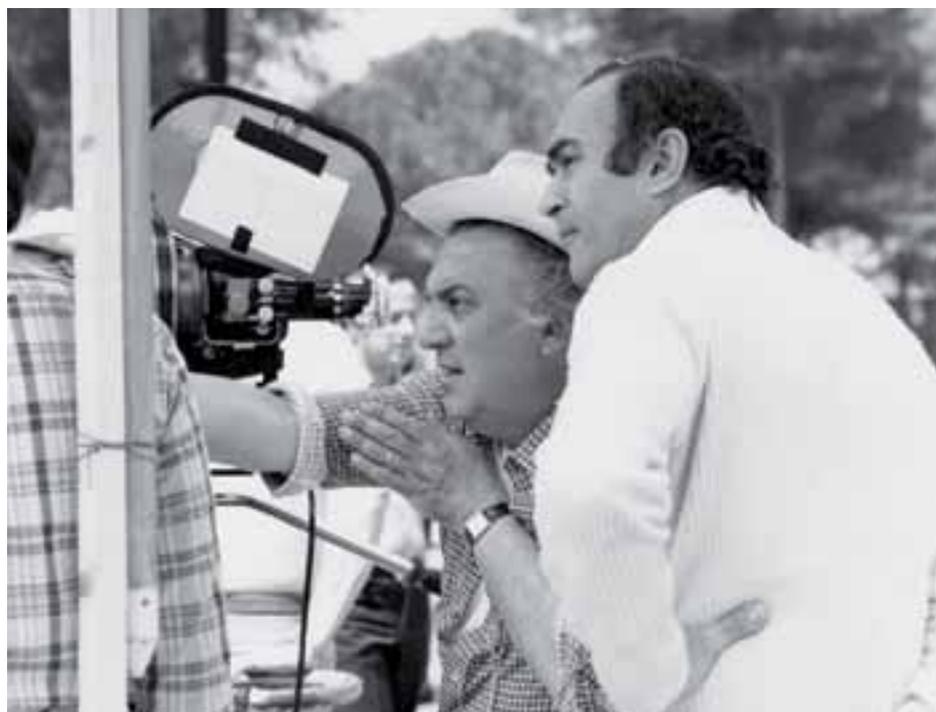
Luigi "Titta" Benzi

E POI...

I nuovi amarcord
un po' veri e un po' inventati
di un avvocato di provincia



Guaraldi



above

Covers of the two books by Titta Benzi, *Patachèdi, E poi...*, Guaraldi Editore

below

Federico Fellini behind the film camera with Titta Benzi during the

making of *Amarcord* (The Archive of the Gambalunga Library)

Titta has indeed said much on the subject of mothers. “Just think how far mothers will go. When Federico used to come back from Rome, naturally I would go and see him, and she'd say: “Why don't you become a lawyer like Titta?” and she was right in a way”.

Benzi obtained a Law degree in Bologna on 2nd July, 1942. Then he returned to Rimini, where he still lives, and where he has practiced as a criminal defence lawyer for over 60 years, since 1946, in important trials in Romagna, the Marche, and Bologna. He was City Councillor for the Republican Party and Secretary for the “Edera” (Republican Party) in Rimini in 1946. In the fateful year of 1968, he was elected President of the Casino Civico Club in Rimini. For a number of mandates he was a member and Vice President of the Order of Lawyers of Rimini. He is also a literary author. We owe him the delightful “amarcord” (memoires) of a provincial lawyer entitled *Patachèdi* and its sequel entitled *E poi...* both published in Rimini by Guaraldi. Fellini wrote a dedication in the first book: “Patachèdi: small events and actions of little significance that make you laugh or cry. This is what they say about me, my profession, my home, and my family; Federico Fellini, a friend that many would have liked to have”. What is the secret of his inexhaustible energy? “He sets his alarm clock at five in the morning”.

When Fellini returned to Rimini, Titta would accompany him on his trips around town and the surrounding area.

“Titta, looking at that sea of nightlife revellers (...) mocked me a little and said: “Do tell me, Mr Fellini, you who have done so much research, what does it all mean?” These were their comments on the golden years of tourism in a Rimini that was no longer familiar to them. The film director wrote: “I also felt vaguely mortified. I suddenly found that something that I had sorted out and catalogued had grown to enormous proportions without my consent, without asking me for advice. Maybe I was a little offended, who knows! I now felt that Rome was more comforting, smaller, tamer, and more familiar. In one word, mine. I was suffering from a comical sort of jealousy”.

Federico received the same welcome from Titta when he came back to convalesce in the summer of 1993 and stayed at the Grand Hotel for five days. “How could I ever forget those days - Benzi recounts - they

were the best five days of my life. Federico had come back to Rimini after the operation. I said to him: why have you come back to Rimini in August... And he replied: "Well, Grosso, Rimini is my hometown". Those five days were wonderful. We spent them going around the town and the hills".

Then the situation worsened and the autumn took his best friend away. At the funeral Titta was next to the coffin, in the Sala delle Colonne, the foyer of the old Galli Theatre, wearing a light coloured mack, his eyes moist, and his gaze fixed on the man who had been a "brother" to him.

3. Nino Rota

One of Fellini's greatest friends was Giovanni "Nino" Rota Rinaldi. A composer with an overwhelming talent, who started studying music at a very early age. Federico Fellini met him when he was busy writing for *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The white sheik*) produced by Luigi Rovere, released in 1952. Fellini talked to Rota and they immediately decided to work together on the film. That is when a friendship between the two artists was born that was to last thirty years until the death of the composer in Rome, in 1979; at the same time, they began a lifelong collaboration on Fellini's films. An anecdote about their first meeting has it that Fellini, who was coming out of the Lux, noticed a man waiting for a bus. Fellini went up to the man and asked him which bus he was waiting for. Rota said the number of a bus that did not take that route, and while Fellini was trying to explain this to him, the bus showed up. Though the anecdote is rather unlikely, it sums up the ingredients that characterized the artistic relationship between the two men, made up of empathy and irrationality. What is certain is that the two artists got on so well that their collaboration completely took over their lives and art. Proverbial are the surreal, crazy dialogues recounted by the frequent spectator Tonino Guerra. One of the many anecdotes tells of how neither Fellini nor Rota could end a phone call that Fellini had promised to make after an interpretative failure on Rota's behalf. To sum up, as he put the phone down he said: "Nino, you are right; it is really difficult to talk to this man". Their incredible friendship led them to work on over seventeen films together. Fellini was not a great music lover, but that was not a problem for Rota, who, for Fellini's films, would willingly agree to write little marches with marked and lively rhythms. A



FEDERICO FELLINI
PROVA
D'
ORCHESTRA

RAI - RADIOTELEVISIONE ITALIANA

GABRIELI - ITALIA

GAUMONT S.A. 1969

NINO ROY

**A poster of the film
Prova d'orchestra
(Orchestra rehearsal)**

good example of this are the notes that accompany the scene of the final parade of characters in 8 ½, which has become a classic Fellini tune. It is important to remember that Rota wrote numerous soundtracks for films by other directors including the most renowned ones of the time. And we must add that right from the start of his career as a composer for the cinema, the theatre and ballet, Rota never stopped writing chamber and vocal music for orchestras, as well as a number of operas, and even some pieces for TV. He received many international prizes including a Golden Globe, the Oscars and a David di Donatello. He also taught for many years. Rota was born in Milan, in 1911, and wrote the soundtracks for all of Fellini's films with amazing results from *Lo sceicco bianco* to the prophetic and bitter *Prova d'orchestra (Orchestra rehearsal)*. The two men formed a creative symbiosis and a brotherly friendship that is unique in the history of cinema. During a conversation with Fellini which aired on the morning of 10th January 1979, when Fellini was a guest on the programme "Voi ed io" (You and me) - (a long lasting, popular programme on Radio Due hosted by the affable, cultured Nino Rota, a name much loved by music and cinema enthusiasts), Rota recalled their first encounter. They met to work on the soundtrack of *Lo sceicco bianco* - Rota was already well known in Europe having worked on 50 soundtracks - while Fellini was at the beginning of his career. As such, Rota had asked Fellini to substitute his favourite pieces, the circus tune known as the "March of the gladiators" and "La Titina" with original themes. "If I hadn't managed to change the music that Fellini loved so much, which were linked to the circus and to Chaplin, our collaboration would probably have ended before it began. To the contrary, our friendship and professional ties have never wavered. It isn't that Federico is insensitive to music, rather, he is too forcibly struck by it". And Fellini, who was enchanted by Nino Rota's gift of literally living in a world of music, answered with these words: "You, dear Nino, when you write music you can't listen to the radio and hear a street musician playing a concert. I, on the other hand, wish to be like a dog wandering among the litter sniffing it here and there without following any rules. I do not want to be restricted by perfection in any way. That is why music makes me gloomy, because it represents perfection". Fellini in fact writes in his last confession received by Pettigrew (Elleu, Rome, 2003): "I always

avoid listening to music at home. Great music fills me with remorse. Music has a dominating effect on me. It is like an insidious form of cruelty that slowly makes its way into your being, reminding you of fullness, that peace and harmony are within your reach. Then suddenly it is over". It was on that morning on the radio that Fellini admitted to not being able to bear music, and the reason was that it touched him so profoundly that it upset him. It was enough "for someone to tap a rhythm on an object for him to feel troubled". The sole exception was when he needed music for his films. "The music for my films - Fellini writes - often begins with me singing an aria in a noisy café with my friends. If Nino were still a part of this world, I would call him and organize a meeting. I would sit at a piano next to him and sing my vague and weak aria. He would get hold of it and develop it into a melody. I liked working that way, and often, even before I'd have an idea, the melodies that Nino made up would inspire characters and situations for new projects. When we had written and recorded enough music, I would play it during rehearsals, so the music would become a living part of the film, as important as the lighting, the project design and the dialogues".

The composer died shortly after having recorded his last soundtrack for his friend *Prova d'orchestra*.

Of Rota Fellini writes: "In *E la nave va* (*And the ship sails on*), I called the ship "Gloria N." I left the N incomplete because I didn't know what it meant. Later I understood that it meant "Gloria Nino". When he died, I was left with a kingdom of silent shadows".

Even after his death, Fellini would feel his friend's presence nearby, as he loved to say: "I can't stop feeling his presence, the way he would show up at meetings. He would turn up at the end when the stress of filming, editing and dubbing was at its peak. But as soon as he appeared, the stress would dissolve and everything would become festive; the film would enter a joyful, calm, fantastic place (...) that would always surprise me".

For Federico's funeral, Giulietta Masina asked the trumpet player Mauro Maur to play *Improvviso dell'Angelo* by Nino Rota in the Basilica of S. Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in Rome.



CHAPTER IV

RIMINI

Dreams, the cinema, and snowfalls

The autobiographical element in Fellini's art is no doubt the most preponderant, we need only think of films such as: *L'Intervista* (*The interview*), *Roma* (*Fellini's Roma*) and *I vitelloni*, which many consider to be the sequel of *Amarcord*, even though this film, which speaks of childhood memories, was made in later years. The children and teenagers in *Amarcord* have grown up and their problems have changed, but Federico and his friends are always clearly recognizable. Moraldo, the young protagonist who at the end of the film *I vitelloni* leaves his hometown to live in a big city, is the young Fellini who leaves Rimini and chooses Rome as his final destination.

We find Federico again in *Amarcord* among the boys who attend the lycee and the fascist parade, which, as Titta the lawyer used to say, was held on 21st April, the day we celebrated the founding of Rome, the Eternal city. We find Federico again with his friends waiting for *Scurèza ad Corpolò* who would arrive on his motorbike, and looking in amazement at the snow that would not stop falling that year, the famous "heavy snowfall" of 1929, and warming himself before the bonfire which burned the "sega vecchia" - an effigy of wood and old rags - and the winter with it.

Again we encounter Federico and his friends opening their arms to the "manine" (little hands) that are falling on the town, while his grandfather states: "When puffballs come, cold winter's done".

The images of *Amarcord* remind us of this phenomenon as well as the story told by Giudizio, who, in the third scene, tries to give a scientific explanation of the occurrence: "The little hands coincide with the arrival of spring in our town... these little hands spin around... they drift here and there, too". While we see the cypress trees in the cemetery in the fourth scene Giudizio's voice states: "...They fly over the cemetery where everyone rests in peace" In scene five on the beach, his words describe them to us again: "... They fly over the seafront like the Germans seeing as they don't feel the cold..." In the sixth scene we see the Grand Hotel which is still closed and Giudizio's voice declares: "...They... they... wonder, they wonder". Finally in scene seven, on the quay, Giudizio states: "They dirf... dirft... drif... Oh, ... they wonder, they wonder, they wonder!" At the end of the quay there is a distinct looking man of about sixty (...) to everyone in town he is "the Lawyer". He is holding a new bicycle (...).

And again we find Federico as a child punished for having committed the sin of enjoying Saraghina's exhibition, the "huge woman" of Junoesque proportions with her skimpy clothing, who dances a rumba on the beach, as the film director shows us in a scene in 8 ½.

above left
**The cover of the
book *La mia Rimini*
by Federico Fellini,
Cappelli Editore**

above right
**A mural in Borgo
San Giuliano showing
the Rex Ocean Liner**

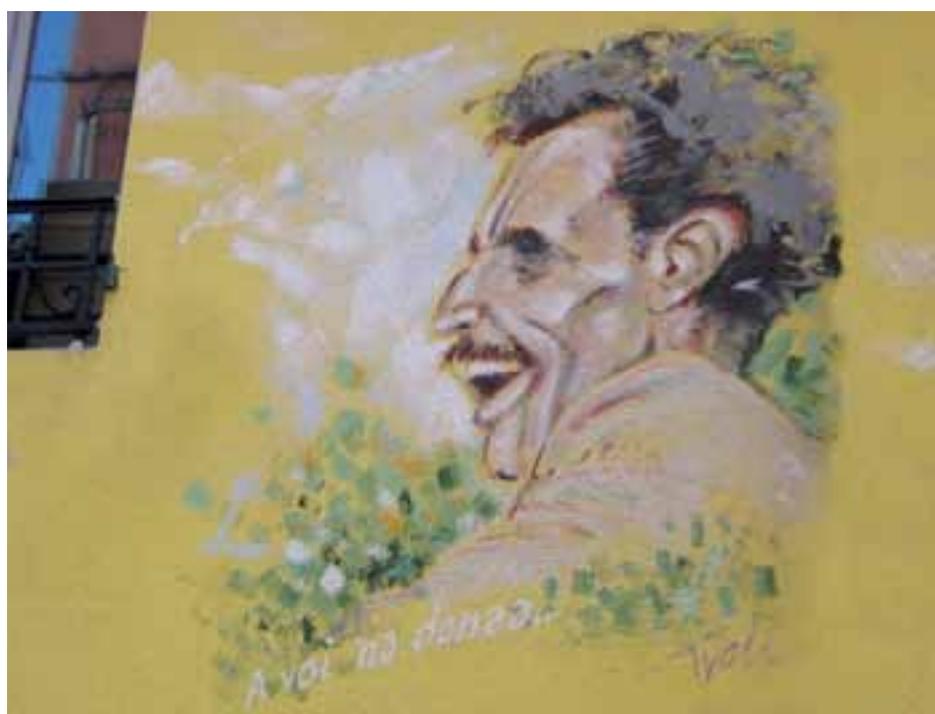
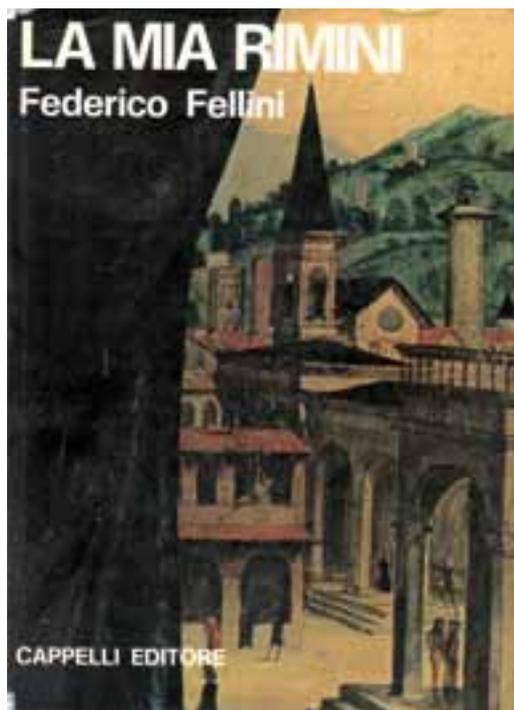
below
**A mural in Borgo
San Giuliano showing
Ciccio Ingrassia as the
character “il Matto”
in *Amarcord***

We also find Fellini in the character of Titta in *Amarcord* when he says: “Gradisca makes me faint; I want a wife like Gradisca”. Just as we see it in the film, in the story entitled *Il mio paese* he recounts: “Once (...) I stopped to watch Gradisca and my heart was pounding. (...) Maybe because I was so overwhelmed, I sat at a distance at first, and then got closer and closer. She was smoking slowly with her plump lips. When I got to a chair near her, I reached out a hand. Her opulent thigh, right up to her garter felt like mortadella tied up by string. She didn’t stop me, she just looked straight ahead, magnificent and silent. My hand went further up to the white plump flesh. Then Gradisca turned slowly towards me and kindly asked: “What are you looking for?” I couldn’t carry on”.

1. Fellini’s Rimini

Amarcord portrays the Rimini of the 30s, though it is not a faithful representation of Fellini’s memories. There is a dream-like quality to the Rimini of Fellini’s imagination, and the town we see in the film was entirely recreated and shot in Cinecittà.

The quarter called “e’ borg” by the Rimini inhabitants, is the area of San Giuliano that lies just over the two thousand year old Tiberius Bridge. Today the houses are reminiscent of the ones of Fellini’s childhood though they have all been refurbished, and the area as a whole has a fresh look with none of the poverty and wear and tear of Fellini’s times. What is more, the houses are lively and colourful thanks to murals that depict Fellini’s stories and characters. Every two years, during the “*Festa de’ Borg*” celebrations on the first weekend of September, the “Borgo” area is brought to life by street performers, clowns, fire eaters, jugglers, stilt artist, actors, and musicians. There is food and the same festive atmosphere of bonfire night on the eve of Saint Joseph, depicted in *Amarcord*. With a little imagination we can even picture Zampanò driving through the quarter in his three-wheel van followed by Gelsomina and “il Matto” (the mad man), memorable characters in *La strada* and *Amarcord* respectively. If you encounter a little old lady sitting by her front door shelling peas or top and tailing green beans, you will remember the old lady cooking chestnuts in a Rimini snowed under by the unforgettable snowfall of February 1929. Just look around you and you will recall many





above left
The Tiberius Bridge

above right
**The Paolotti Chapel
in Piazza Tre Martiri**

below
**La Chiesa dei Servi
in Corso d'Augusto,
inside**

scenes from Fellini's films, even ones that are not necessarily set in his hometown. Simply stroll through the narrow streets of the old quarter with its front doors ajar and you will be carried away by your imagination. A number of real monuments appear in Fellini's films like the Tiberius Bridge, which the *Mille Miglia* Car Race crosses in *Amarcord*. Close by, just beyond the bridge, stands the Chiesa dei Servi (Church of the Servants): "that enormous, terribly tall, thick wall with no windows, (...) whose façade and entrance is hidden in a small square that is always taken up by market tents". The building, which is intact, was the object of childish bets and pranks. Just like any church of the time, it was freezing in winter, which gave rise to a variety of sayings such as: "He got the flu in the Chiesa dei Servi" or "Would you spend a whole night locked in the church for ten Lire?" Bedassi, known as "Tarzan the fool", once took up the bet. One evening he hid behind a confessional with a kilo of lupine beans and two sausages. The following morning at six o'clock, when the first elderly ladies were in the church, they heard a sound like a braying donkey with a cold. It was Bedassi. He had sunk down in the confessional among the lupine bean skins, and was snoring open-mouthed. When he opened his eyes he said to the sexton, who had managed to shake him awake: "Mum some milk and coffee". For years Bedassi's confessional was the object of curiosity and attention by admirers and the unbelieving. It was more important than the pictures above the altar". Then there are the unchanged squares of the elegant town centre like Piazza Cavour with its fountain and the statue of the Pope, which is easily recognizable in the film 8 ½. "Life was slow at the Caffè Commercio, too, on the corner of Piazza Cavour. It was a respectable café. (...) A café for the elderly, which intimidated us a little. Giudizio worked at the Caffè Commercio. He was a backward man who helped women unload vans, and who worked like a donkey, because he was a donkey. (...) Gradisca would walk past the Caffè Commercio, dressed in shiny black satin that seemed to sparkle. She wore the first thick fake eyelashes. In the café everyone pressed their noses against the window. (...) Gradisca's appearance caused strong yearnings and appetites, hunger and a desire for milk. As she walked, he hips were like the wheels of a locomotive engine; they brought to mind that powerful motion". The other beloved Piazza was the one where the

above
**The Monument to
the Fallen of the
First World War
in Piazza Ferrari**

below
**The Grand Hotel
in Rimini**

Victory Monument stands. Today it is called Piazza Ferrari and boasts a monument to the Fallen of the first World War and the magnificent Domus del Chirurgo (House of the Roman Surgeon), which in Fellini's times was still sleeping under the lawns of the small park. In Corso d'Augusto people stroll aimlessly today as they did then; Fellini tells us this is «il passeggiino» (...) which consists of cheeky glances and short bursts of laughter. Two currents flowed in opposite directions, chasing each other. People walked so much they seemed to wear out the lower half of their bodies". Halfway down the Corso stood bar Raul "a copy of the Milanese bars of the time, it was popular with artists, the restless youth, and sports people". This bar was particularly favoured by the "vitelloni" (young layabouts) who played pool and met here in winter, while in the summer everyone moved to the Zanarini Bar, because, as the film director writes: "In summer everything moved down to the beach. There is a fundamental distinction between the seasons in Rimini, a substantial change that is not just dictated by the weather. (...) There are two different Riminis". In the Corso there was, and still is, the Fulgor Cinema, that Fellini loved so much and attended so often. The town centre also comprises the Sismondo Castle known as "La Rocca"; "the prison of Francesca" which, when Federico was a boy, "was full of drunks and petty thieves who stole sacks of cement". The prison where Fellini once decided to see in the New Year with his friends. "With the help of the prison guards, who were our friends, we wanted to take sausages and bread rolls to the inmates and eat with them". We have no further details of this event, but Fellini wrote this about the Rocca: "That gloomy, stocky building has always lurked like a dark presence among my memories of the town", and what an incredible world would gather outside it, and what joy it would bring! "Opposite the Rocca there was a dusty square where the circuses would set up; a lopsided square where the town ended" and where it begins today. "Pierino the clown would perform with his circus exchanging insults with the inmates who shouted awful things at the female circus riders through the prison bars". Fellini had so many memories of the places in his hometown, and most especially of the Grand Hotel. The hotel where "a Prince of noble blood" once received the beautiful Gradisca's offer of her body with the words: "Your Highness... please help yourself (gradisca)!". She was obeying instructions she had





above left

**The Church of Santa
Maria Ausiliatrice
known as the “Salesian
Church” in Piazza
Marvelli**

above right

**The channel harbour
and the lighthouse**

below

**The terraced houses
in Borgo San Giuliano
seen from the channel
harbour**

been given to pay the Prince his due respects. “And that is how Ninola got her nickname” Titta’s voice reminds us in the film. This hotel welcomed incredibly wealthy Arab sheiks and their multitudes of concubines, as Fellini himself states: “The Grand Hotel was a fairytale of wealth, luxury and Eastern splendour (...) We would walk around it like rats to get a look inside; but it was impossible. So we would peek into the large courtyard round the back (permanently shaded by palm trees that reached the fifth floor), it was full of cars with fascinating and indecipherable number plates. Isotta Fraschini: Titta would swear with admiration. Mercedes Benz, another whispered swear word. Bugatti... The drivers in their shiny boots smoked as they walked up and down. They kept tiny mean dogs tethered to their leads”. Opposite the Grand Hotel there is the sea where we marvelled at the passage of the Rex Ocean Liner, the beautiful cruise ship that moved us and made us dream so; it matters not if it never really sailed along the Rimini shore. Close to the beach in Piazza Tripoli stands the new Church of the Salesian Order, which Fellini saw as it was being built, in fact “it had become - he writes - a must on our Sunday outings in our horse-drawn carriage. “Let’s go and see the work on the New Church” we would say. But as it was Sunday and there were no workers, we would stand there and look at the silent scaffolding, the large motionless cranes, and the piles of sand and lime mortar. (...) Some years later, when I was ten, I spent a whole summer at the New Church of the Salesian Order as a day pupil. They would fetch me in the evening”.

Nearby lies the channel harbour, where for a very short time Fellini owned a house that Titta had persuaded him to buy, but which he sold right away. It is also believed that the people of Rimini wanted to donate another house to Fellini there.

“The old side of the harbour. When I was a child I would see it on the other side of the water. I saw them building the skeletons of ships. The other side of the quay across the channel harbour, when viewed from this side, made one imagine a life of fights and brawls in antithesis to the Germans who drove along the seafront in their Daimler Benz cars. Actually, the start of the summer would be welcomed by poor Germans. You would suddenly see bicycles lying on the sand and packages, and fat ladies and walruses in the sea. My father’s errand boy would take us

above
**The Rimini Cemetery,
entrance**

below
**Chiesa delle Grazie
in Covignano, the sea
is in the background**

children to the beach wearing woolen caps. At that time, on the other side, the old side of the harbour, I saw dry bushes and heard voices”.

Just as the beach filled with tourists fascinated him, so did the station. “A place of adventurous dreams with its trains and bells; the railway lines that divided between the hedges (...) at the end of a strange day (...) we had a Vermouth in the station bar, we who never drank alcohol. Then I got on the train. Montanari said: “Now Federico, become international”. And Titta added: “Good grief ...but...”. The horn sounded, a sudden jolt shook the wagons, the train was leaving, the houses, the cemetery”.

With regard to the cemetery, that too, was a place Federico and his friends would go to. “A fascinating place in Rimini was the cemetery. I’ve never seen a less gloomy place. For a start it was on the other side of a level crossing, so it was preceded by the exciting and happy sight of a train. The gate would go down as a bell rang. On the other side you could see a pale low wall with lots of tunnels like children’s playhouses. I first saw it when my grandfather died. (...) It was a great outing. We ran and hid among the tombs. I remember the fascinating faces of the photos on the headstones. (...) The cemetery was always undergoing construction, so there was a lively atmosphere because the builders sang as they worked”.

Occasionally Fellini and his friends would leave town. “In those days we always stayed in town. We would rarely venture into the surrounding areas. I remember the “delle Grazie” Hill, a Sanctuary with the Stations of the Cross, to which you can trace the terrifying Lenten with its miraculous, apocalyptic, religious feeling that I rediscovered many years later in certain film sequences. At the top of the hill many little chapels were set in a zig-zag fashion. Once, to celebrate Lent, a great feast was held on the hillside: farmers, old ladies, a stench, lupine beans, paper cones full of salami, a man vomiting; people were climbing the hill on their knees, singing”.

These places exist to this day, and Fellini’s vivid imagination has not misrepresented them. To the contrary, walking through present-day Rimini, around Borgo San Giuliano, the old town, and Marina Centro, where the Grand Hotel stands out in all its majesty, we sense those mysterious, dream-like atmospheres. And many stories delight visitors who are enchanted to discover that the images of Fellini’s films - which have become part of our global heritage - are still alive in Rimini today; in Fellini’s Rimini.





alla mamma
mia esse. Un bellissimo
di Lisa e la sua famiglia originale
trovata a metteram.
at
Federico

2. The Fulgor

The building that houses the Fulgor Cinema still exists and is being refurbished. The project is by one of the greatest and most versatile production designers in the world: Oscar winner Dante Ferretti. The construction site - as the Valloni Institute, the owners, state - was opened on 7th September 2012. Work will end two years and eight months later in May 2015. During this time, the building will occasionally be opened to the public who will see the progress made. If you walk down Corso d'Augusto, at no. 162 you can see the cinema under the scaffolding; the building is practically unchanged since Fellini attended it as a young man.

This is the very cinema where Federico saw his first film, sitting on his father's lap: *Maciste all'inferno* (*Maciste in Hell*), as he will later recount in *Roma*.

The Fulgor is also where Fellini attempted an overture with Gradisca, as he recounts in *Amarcord* and in the book *La mia Rimini* (*Rimini, my hometown*).

It is also the cinema he attended free of charge thanks to the portraits he drew of the film stars featured in the cinema's showings. In the above mentioned book he also writes: "I had an agreement with the owner of the Fulgor. He looked like Ronald Colman, and he knew it. He wore a raincoat in summer, he had a moustache, and always stood very still so he wouldn't lose the likeness (...). The work I did for him - caricatures of the "stars" of the films he was showing, were put in shop windows as advertisements - I gave them to him in exchange for free admission to the Fulgor Cinema. In the warm sewer of vice which cinema theatres were in those days, there was an usher we called Madonna (a local expression: Madonnaccia instead of Cristianaccio means a large and hefty man). The air in the cinema was softened by a foetid, sweet substance, sprayed by the usher. Below the screen were the rough benches, and a fence, like that of a stable, separated the "plebeians" from the more "distinguished" citizens. We paid 11 cents; the row behind ours cost 1 Lira and 10. In the darkness we would smuggle into the "distinguished" seats, because that's where the beautiful women sat, they said. But we were always caught by the usher, who stood in the shadows spying on us from behind a curtain, his presence betrayed by his cigarette that glowed in the dark. With my caricatures, I managed to obtain free admission for me, Titta and my brother".

The refurbished Fulgor Cinema

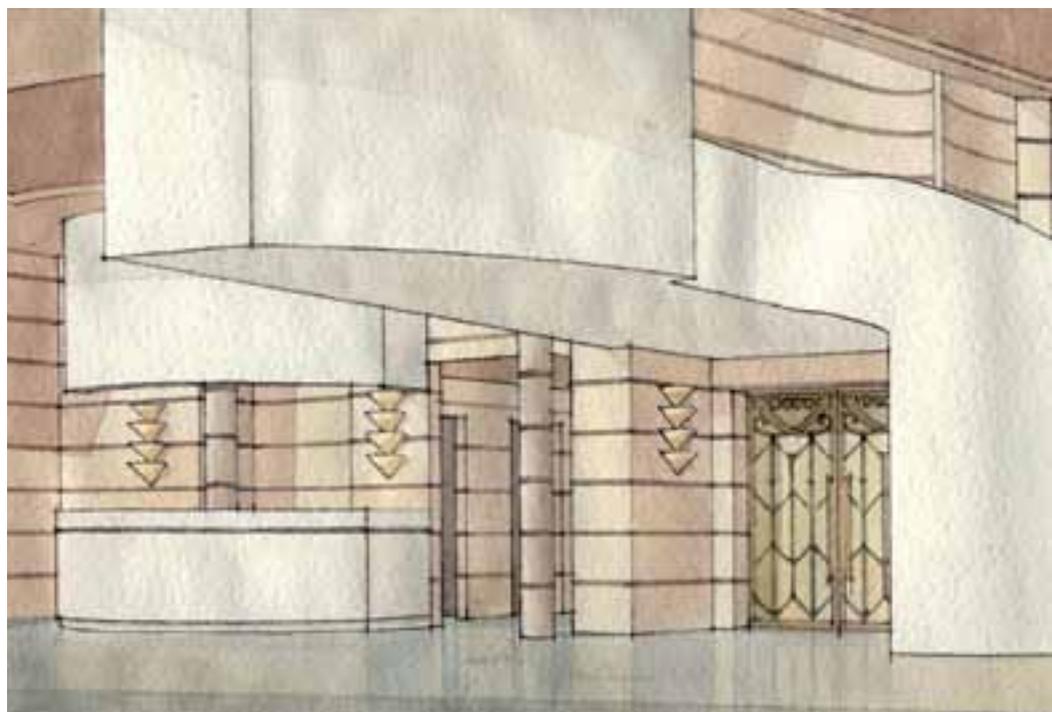
The Fulgor Cinema will soon bring to life Fellini's words and images. Below is an idea of how the new structure will welcome his memory. Next to the "CINEMA FULGOR" theatre, that seats 158, with its completely renewed areas, there will be another theatre with seating for 52 people. It is also likely that two important institutions will be included in the building: the Federico Fellini Foundation and the Municipal Film Library.

This is what the Ferretti project entails:

The present three floors of the building will see the addition of a fourth floor created in the space under the roof, which will be used as a deposit, a warehouse, and a consultation room. The building's main doors will remain the same. The present entrances to the two theatres in the façade that looks onto Corso d'Augusto will be preserved, while the back entrance will lead to the facilities on the top floors, the Foundation and the Museum.

The second floor will be entirely taken up by the Federico Fellini Foundation and Fellini Museum. The Foundation manager's office will look onto Piazzetta San Martino, while the spacious press and events office will look onto Vicolo Valloni.

The Fellini Museum will be next to the above mentioned buildings. It will house writings, drawings, cartoons, rough drafts, and sketches signed by Fellini, photos and objects from the films, the costumes from the film *Roma*, film posters and books from his library in Rome, and a precious copy of the *Libro dei Sogni (Book of Dreams)* by Fellini. The Museum, which was planned by the Federico Fellini Foundation and by Fellini's relatives, is temporarily housed in a Municipal building in Via Nigra, no. 26. The Museum can be visited upon prior booking.





above
**The Grand Hotel,
terrace**

below
**An historic postcard of
Rimini with the Grand
Hotel and the Kursaal**

3. The Grand Hotel

When Fellini returned to Rimini from Rome, he enjoyed staying at the Grand Hotel, which he had been to so often as a boy. The suite he stayed in and the table he dined at are the same to this day. Fellini considered the Grand the hotel par excellence; the best in the hospitality business, but above all, it was the emblem of his dreams; a building that inspired his imagination, as it does ours.

“When descriptions in novels were not stimulating enough to generate sufficiently evocative scenes in my mind, I would resort to the Grand Hotel and use it like those rundown theatres that employ the same backdrop time and again. Murders, kidnappings, crazy love-filled nights, blackmail, suicide, the garden of torture, the Goddess Kali, it all happened at the Grand Hotel. (...) On summer evenings the Grand Hotel would turn into an Istanbul, a Baghdad, or Hollywood. On the terraces sheltered by thick rows of plants, Ziegfeld parties probably took place. You could catch a glimpse of the bare backs of ladies that looked golden to us, surrounded by the arms of men in white dinner jackets. Now and then a scented breeze conveyed languid, syncopated notes that made us feel quite faint; the tunes of American soundtracks: *Sonny boy*, *I love you*, *Alone*, which we had heard at the Fulgor Cinema the previous winter, and which we would have hummed for whole afternoons with Xenophon’s *Anabasis* on our desks, our eyes staring off into space, our throats tight. Only in winter, when it was damp, dark and foggy, could we take possession of the Grand Hotel’s vast terraces, that were drenched in water. But it was like getting to a campsite when everyone has long gone and the fire is out. In the dark we could hear the howling sea”. However, the atmosphere was fantastic in winter, as it still is today, without the tables and the marquees that sheltered the elegant ladies. “The Grand Hotel, which was as closed as a pyramid with its domes on the rooftop (no longer standing Ed.) and its pinnacles that disappeared into the banks of fog, was even more foreign, forbidden and unattainable to us”. Actually it wasn’t entirely out of bounds because once, when he was a boy, he managed to enter the hotel. “One early summer morning I ran up the wide staircase and crossed the large brightly lit terrace with my head down, and entered... At first I could see nothing. The shadows were thick and there was a waxy freshness like

above
**A photo with Federico
Fellini on the set of
Amarcord, the fascist**

**parade in front of
the Fulgor Cinema
(The Archive of the
Gambalunga Library)**

below
**The Grand Hotel
in Rimini**

the Duomo on Monday mornings. The peace and silence of an aquarium reigned. Then, little by little, I saw sofas as large as boats, armchairs larger than beds, a red carpet slowly curving and winding up a marble staircase towards shiny stained glass windows: flowers, peacocks and sumptuous tangles of serpents with knotted tongues. From a heady height, miraculously suspended in midair, the largest chandelier in the world hung. Behind a bar that was covered in friezes like a Neapolitan hearse, was a tall man with silvery hair and shiny gold-framed glasses. He too was dressed like an undertaker at a luxury funeral. Without looking directly at me, his extended arm was pointing to the door”.

After all, as Alessandro Catrani states, the Grand Hotel was founded to attract the high-class tourism that crowded the prestigious beaches of the Côte d’Azur. Rimini lacked nothing to compete with the more prestigious European resorts such as Biarritz, Ostend, Monaco, Deauville and Trouville. Construction on the Grand Hotel lasted two years. It was opened in June 1908 with its four floors, 200 rooms, tasteful and refined French and Italian furnishings, carpets, golden stuccos in a Belle Époque style, balconies, terraces, modern comforts, and English gardens.



CHAPTER V

PLACES

Federico's hometown

Whether you cycle or walk, it is just as exciting. Street after street, building after building, travellers will discover the places Fellini remembered, dreamed of and invented as the undisputed Master film director of international fame. "It is better to remember than to live" says Ivo's grandmother, a protagonist in Fellini's last film *La voce della luna* (*The voice of the moon*) released in 1990. Fellini remembered his childhood in Rimini throughout his life and often reinvented it. To him it was wonderful and magical, all be it "provincial and repressed", yet "part of a tightly knit community - that of the Romagna region and of the Adriatic coast - that gave a mysterious imprinting to an extensive, amoebic, viscous, and uncontainable creativity" as Renato Minore writes in the book *Amarcord Fellini*. Fellini "displaced memories as though he were moving furniture in a new room, in order to find the best place for it" - Minore continues. For Fellini "childhood was always like a new room to furnish with new improvisations". Below is a description of the Rimini that Fellini knew, which now belongs to the world thanks to his films, though he never shot a single metre of footage in Rimini itself. Rimini has a place in film history, and many remember the geographical locations and imaginary places of his films: the harbour, the beach, the Grand Hotel, Piazza Cavour, and the Fulgor cinema. The list is long, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter where next to each place we have quoted Fellini's words from his book about Rimini or from the dialogues of his films.

The whole town is pervaded by Fellini's spirit, both the old part and Marina Centro, as well as the surrounding areas including the Hill of Covignano, the cemetery, and the Marecchia River. We encounter Fellini and the world of his childhood and adolescence as we discover the places where personal events from his life, and the anecdotes he had heard recounted took place. We imagine his characters cycling or walking by, and our visions overlap with reality. We may see people who remind us of film characters like Fafinone, Gigino, Bestemmia, Guàt, Raul, Giudizio, and the seductive and voluptuous Gradisca.

However, Fellini's town is not just the Rimini of his memories. Alongside this imaginary town, there is the real Rimini that contains the places to which Fellini returned as an adult, which struck him deeply, and which have not changed since. Fellini speaks of them in his book *La mia Rimini (Rimini, my hometown)*. "I returned to Rimini because of this book" - in the mid 60s. "The Rimini I see now is a sprawling town. When I was little, the town was surrounded by kilometres of darkness, and the coastal road was full of potholes. Just a few fascist buildings would appear like ghosts,

above
**A street poster
indicating Piazzale
Fellini**

below
**La Fontana dei Quattro
cavalli (the Fountain of
the Four Horses)**

the seaside summer camp buildings. (...) Now the darkness has gone; it has been replaced by kilometres of clubs, bars and bright signs, and an endless procession of shiny cars whose headlights draw a kind of Milky Way. Light is everywhere. The night has vanished. It has moved off into the sky and far out to sea. The same is true of the countryside, of Covignano, where there is a fabulous club with no equal in Los Angeles or Hollywood. It stands where once only the barking of scruffy dogs could be heard in old farmhouse courtyards". In the Rimini of the economic boom, Fellini sees the aquarium, sparkling new hotels, shops and shopping centres, the skyscraper, clubs, restaurants, and the new town quarters, and on the subject of tourism he writes: "daytime runs into nighttime, and nighttime runs into daytime without a break; an endless day that lasts for four months, like it does at the North Pole". The town is so new that it looks like Las Vegas, which causes him to write: "This Rimini (...) seemed to be telling me (...) that I too should change, as I stolidly muttered to myself about the new features of my hometown".

1. The town, the harbour, and the Marecchia River

Let us begin the varied and exciting tour of the places of Fellini's memories.

It is worth starting in **Via Dardanelli** on the beach side of the railway at no. 10, where Fellini was born, though his family moved to the old town shortly after.

From here it is a short walk to the beach down the parallel street **Viale Principe Amedeo**, where you can enjoy the sight of beautiful houses built in the early 20th Century, surrounded by large gardens, and look at the 100 m tall skyscraper that towers over the city. This avenue reaches **Piazzale Federico Fellini**, where the **Fontana dei Quattro Cavalli** (the fountain of the four horses) stands in the middle of the square. It was restored to its original likeness and location in 1983. The horses that belonged to the monument dated 1928 have been repositioned, and the large basin that was taken down in 1954 has been reconstructed. Carry straight on and you will reach the area where the **Kursaal** once stood; a building with a peer that led to a floating platform on the sea, which was opened in 1873 and demolished after the war. Fellini and his friends would come here in the summer to "watch people dancing" on the terraces.





above

The large 40s camera known as Fellinia

below

The beach and the sea seen from the roof of the Grand Hotel

Past the fountain, on the left, you will see the majestic and mysterious **Grand Hotel** and its park that borders a long stretch of the path that leads to the beach.

This magical hotel is a symbol of the Belle Époque and is still fascinating today. It is one of the most famous Italian hotels in the world, thanks to Fellini. This enchanting building has sparked evocative daydreams in all those who have entered it or simply admired it. It was central to Fellini's imagination; a departure point of youthful dreams and fantasies in which he imagined voluptuous, refined ladies dancing in large, luxurious ballrooms. Later it became an arrival point and a place of rest, when he would stay in room no. 315, proof of Fellini's attachment to this elegant, seductive Liberty building, created by the genius of Architects Paolo and Ezio Somazzi, Swiss men of Uruguayan origin. A place of pleasure, holidays and leisure, it was built between 1906-1908 at the same time as the new Montecitorio debating chamber was being built in Rome. A tour of the Grand Hotel is a must. The enchanting rooms and fantastical sights evoke past times when luxury and seduction predominated. The terrace and the staircase that leads to the large garden must also be seen before setting off for the seafront.

Before reaching the beach, the **Fellinia** will appear on the right, the large Ferrania camera that has graced the area since the late 40s, and which, for some time now, has been the front office of the Fellini Foundation by the sea.

When you reach the **beach**, a glance at the **sea** will bring to mind the film studio reconstruction of the waves upon which the Rex Ocean Liner sailed, the ship that everyone in town ran to see, as recounted by Fellini in *Amarcord*, though this event only ever occurred in Fellini's imagination. Fellini could not help being captivated by the fact that the Rex was the largest Italian turbo ship with its 268.20 m in length, and a capacity of over two-thousand passengers. Launched in 1931, it was the pride and joy of the fascist era and the only Italian ship that could compete with the large international vessels of the time. Nor could Fellini resist placing the Rex in the film that is a memoir (*Amarcord*), because he was just as fascinated with it as everyone else. The same enchantment we see etched on the mouths and faces of the multitudes that set off in their dinghies to see it sail past on the Adriatic, where it never actually did sail except for when

above
**A photo from a scene
in *I vitelloni* (The
Archive of the Fellini
Foundation)**

below
**The streets in Marina
Centro named after
Federico Fellini's films**

it headed on its last voyage to Trieste to escape from the war, and where, unfortunately it was sunk on 8th September 1944.

We should also mention that on the Rimini beach in 1934 the “sea monster” that inspired the last scene of *La dolce vita* really did beach itself. A glance at the beach in winter will evoke this scene, which is pervaded by the innocence of Valeria Ciangottini, and Marcello Mastroianni's enigmatic farewell. On the beach we can also imagine Saraghina from *8 1/2*; large, dark-haired, scruffy and sensual. Though there is no tangible evidence of the bunker and of the old crumbling walls.

As you leave the beach, in no time at all you will reach Viale Regina Elena and its side streets, which join the main road like a series of affluents. These streets are interesting because they are all dedicated to Fellini. **Twenty-six streets in the heart of Marina di Rimini** are named after as many films and screenplays by the most famous of Rimini's sons; a unique and significant way to physically mark the town with the complete filmography of the renowned film director.

To these we can add the street dedicated to Giulietta Masina, Federico Fellini's wife, not far from the square by the same name. These streets are located between the channel harbour and Piazza Marvelli in Marina Centro, starting exactly in Piazzale Fellini. Below is a detailed list of the streets dedicated to the Master of cinema:

- **via 'Luci del Varietà' (1950)** formerly Via dell'Esperanto
- **via Giulietta Masina** formerly via L.L. Zamenhof
- **via 'Lo sceicco bianco' (1952)** formerly via F.F. Chopin
- **via 'I vitelloni' (1953)** formerly via W.A. Mozart
- **via 'Agenzia matrimoniale' (1953)** formerly via L. van Beethoven
- **via 'La strada' (1954)** formerly via C.M. von Weber
- **via 'Il bidone' (1955)** formerly via P.I. Cajkovskij
- **via 'Le notti di Cabiria' (1957)** formerly via J.S. Bach
- **via 'Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio' (1962)** formerly via M.P. Musorgskij
- **via 'La dolce vita' (1960)** formerly via J. Strauss
- **via '8 1/2' (1963)** formerly via G. Bizet
- **via 'Giulietta degli spiriti' (1965)** formerly via B. Smetana
- **via 'Toby Dammit' (1968)** formerly via H. Purcell





above

**The channel harbour
a stock photograph**

below

**A mural in Borgo
San Giuliano showing
"Scurèza ad Corpolò"
from the film *Amarcord***

- **via 'Fellini Satyricon' (1969)** formerly via C.F. Gounod
- **via 'Block-notes di un regista' (1969)** formerly via R. Wagner
- **via 'I clowns' (1970)** formerly via R. Schumann
- **via 'Roma' (1972)** formerly via E. Elgar
- **via 'Amarcord' (1973)**
- **via 'Il Casanova di Federico Fellini' (1976)** formerly via Scilla
- **via 'Prova d'orchestra' (1979)**
- **via 'La città delle donne' (1980)**
- **via 'E la nave va' (1983)**
- **via 'Ginger e Fred' (1985)** formerly via Buccari
- **via 'Intervista' (1987)**
- **via 'La voce della luna' (1990)** formerly via B. Neri
- **via 'Paisà' (1946)** formerly via G. Lettimi
- **via 'Roma città aperta' (1946)** formerly via Cesena

After a stroll that leads us into Fellini's enchanted world, thanks to the many sights that recall the posters of his films, it is advisable to stop in Piazzale Fellini to enjoy an enchanting view, and then proceed to the **channel harbour**, or to be precise, the quay known as '*palata*', the winter meeting place of the "vitelloni", the young layabouts. "If someone offered you ten-thousand Lire would you go for a swim right now? "I would". Riccardo one of the "vitelloni" answers Leopoldo in the film by the same name, while they look at the sea with their friends on a winter's day. The quay is also the site of the bravados of '*Scurèza ad Corpolò*' the motorcyclist in *Amarcord*.

Walking along the channel harbour is a pleasure in any season and never disappointing. If we think of Fellini's words we will feel even more involved. "Last night I dreamed of the Rimini harbour. It opened onto a green, heaving, threatening sea like a moving meadow over which heavy laden clouds ran towards the land".

The quay in *Amarcord* with the hazy contours of the fishing boats, the ghostly sails and the faint shimmer of the water... a couple of fishermen and Biscein who declares: "I been to Norway...".

If we look at the other side of the channel harbour, we can try to guess which house Fellini bought, because at one time his friend Titta encouraged him to purchase a house there. Fellini did indeed buy one, but then sold it right away. On the same side of the harbour there is a house at no. 146. It is

believed that Fellini owned it for a while and that it was a gift from the owner of the Grand Hotel and the City Council. Photos dated September 1983 show Fellini and the house during the festivities that took place in Rimini to honour him. On that occasion, the upper portion of the Grand Hotel was lit up to represent the legendary Rex Ocean Liner, and Fellini's name and a huge THANK YOU were projected onto the Rimini skyscraper. The title of the event was "*Omaggio a Fellini*" (*Homage to Fellini*). It was held during the world premiere of his film *E la nave va* (*And the ship sails on*) at the Novelli Theatre in Rimini. The two day event ended on Sunday 25th with "Fellini's Day" a special celebration held at the Grand Hotel, which was broadcast live during the programme *Domenica in* presented by Pippo Baudo.

In Marina Centro we find **Piazzale Marvelli (formerly Tripoli)** which is overlooked by the Church of the Salesian Order that Fellini saw as it was being built, and which he attended for a whole summer when he was sent there by his parents as a day pupil. At that time it was called "la Chiesa Nuova" (the New Church) and Fellini spoke of it often. Today it is called **Chiesa di Santa Maria Ausiliatrice** but is still known as the Church of the Salesian Order. It is in Viale Regina Elena, no. 7. In summer the church is surrounded by the chatter of tourists milling around on foot, on their bikes, and on hired "rickshaws", and by parties of children on their school trips at other times of the year. The same kind of jollity that from the basketball court behind the church walls Federico would sense as a boy as he got ready to face the "cheering of the people who were enjoying their freedom and strolling with their ice cream cones" on the other side.

A short walk links the harbour to the **railway station**; a metaphor of departure that Fellini loved. Nothing here has changed since Fellini and his friends would watch trains arriving and departing, which led him to write: "Once we saw a blue train. It was a sleeping car. A blind went up and a man appeared in his pyjamas". This station is the one we see repeatedly in Fellini's films starting with *Amarcord* when the fascist hierarch arrives; we catch a glimpse of it in *I clowns* (*The clowns*), it is alluded to at the end of *I vitelloni*; we see it in *Fellini's Roma*, and it acts as a backdrop to Fellini when he watches trains departing for the capital as a boy. From here, in minutes, you can reach **Via Roma** where at no. 41 you can see the **house** that belonged to **Titta**, Fellini's middle school, lycee, and lifelong friend,





above

**The Tiberius Bridge,
with Borgo San
Giuliano in the
background**

below

Borgo San Giuliano

the renowned lawyer known as Benzi. The beautiful house where Titta lived with his family is surrounded by a garden, and was so familiar to Federico that he drew from it to create the house of the main character in *Amarcord* with the creaking gate and the staircase that leads up to the front door. It is also the house that Titta's grandfather cannot find in the film because he is lost in fog so thick that with great dismay he thinks that he is "nowhere" at all. These inside and outside film shots portray a typical Romagna family of those times, when unruly children got a good hiding and angry fathers would pull tablecloths off set tables and sing famous arias while shaving in the morning; and mother would tend to everything with great patience and care, and sometimes give vent to emotional outbursts.

From Via Roma the stroll can continue towards the town centre along various routes, but if you follow the old walls you will reach the **Tiberius Bridge**. Or more precisely, the Bridge of Augustus and Tiberius because it was begun under the first Emperor in the year 14 A.D. and finished under Tiberius in 21 A.D., as an inscription on the inside of a parapet states. The bridge over the Marecchia River, the *Ariminus* of Roman times around which the first settlement was erected, still links the old town to the outer area, the renowned Borgo San Giuliano. This is where the old Roman roads begin, the Via Emilia and Popilia that head North. Via Emilia was traced in 187 B.C. by the Roman Consul Emilio Lepido, and linked Rimini to Piacenza; while Via Popilia led to Ravenna and continued on to Aquileia. **Borgo San Giuliano**, just beyond the two-thousand year old bridge, is one of the most Felliniesque areas of the city. As previously mentioned, if you cross the bridge you will experience the atmosphere of Fellini's films and imagine that you have encountered some of his famous characters. What is more, the many murals on the façades of the houses speak to us of Fellini and his world. This area is full of narrow streets, little piazzas, and blind alleys that recall times gone by. The atmosphere of this quarter is the same as that which pervades the beginning of the film set in Rimini *I clowns*, even though the old inns have become luxury restaurants, the houses have been freshly painted, and there is no trace of the old crumbling walls. Yet the murals on the houses that were once very poor, but which now belong to the wealthy, really stand out.

Until recently there was a larger number of murals and signs with the nicknames that Fellini used in *Amarcord*. But constant refurbishment and

problems linked to the maintenance of the murals have entailed the loss of some paintings. Yet the narrow streets and the colours of the local houses still create a magical, evocative atmosphere. From the Borgo, look towards the bridge, cross it and take **Corso d’Augusto**, which is the street that leads into town, and the place where people still stroll as they did in Fellini’s day. It is also the street which the Mille Miglia Car Race used to hurtle along. Then suddenly, on the right, you will see the impressive **Chiesa dei Servi**. This “dark, gloomy and windowless” building is the setting of unusual juvenile pranks recounted by Fellini, as described in the previous chapter along with Don Baravelli’s deeds, Fellini’s Religion teacher who would sit for the whole lesson with his eyes shut, because “he did not want to see!”.

Just after the church, on the right, walking towards the town centre, you will come across the **Fulgor Cinema**, where work on a Museum to Fellini is being carried out. When it is finished it will bring to life Fellini’s memories and his artistic world. It was in the Fulgor that the Master of Cinema first had a glimpse of the world and of American films, though his fascination with the cinema began when he used to peek into the Politeama (which no longer exists) near the station, not far from his house: “the house where I first felt a sign of predestination”. His parents took him to the Politeama to see a show “and the excitement lasted all night long”. The following landmark is **Piazza Cavour** with the **Arengo Staircase**, the site of fascist celebrations and of the protest of a solitary gramophone which plays the International Socialist Anthem. In the middle of the square stands the **Fontana della Pigna (Fountain of the Pine Cone)** which is clearly visible in *Amarcord*, and which acts as a backdrop in the scene where heaps of snow are thrown at Gradisca and where we see the enchanting descent of a peacock. In this square once stood **Bar Commercio** and the foyer of the **Galli Theatre** - now called **Sala delle Colonne** as the theatre is still under reconstruction - where on 4th November 1993 Fellini’s friend Sergio Zavoli read a funeral speech during Fellini’s lying in state. From Piazza Cavour head toward **Castel Sismondo**, which is described in Fellini’s words in the previous chapter: “The Rocca, the prison of Francesca, was then full of petty thieves and drunks”. In the square opposite the castle, which is now a car park, Fellini would go and see the circus, and watch the beloved performers and artists





above

**Piazza Cavour with the
statue of Pope Paul V**

below

**Fellini's nursery
school**

during the day. From the castle we advise you to head back to the other side of Piazza Cavour and take **Via Gambalunga** to the end to see **Palazzo Ceschina**, where Federco lived as a boy from April 1926 onwards. The building stands opposite the Ferrari School, which has taken the place of Fellini's beloved Politeama, often spoken of by the Master of cinema.

As you walk back along this street towards the town centre, we advise you to look at no. 27, **Palazzo Gambalunga**, which was Fellini's old Middle School, and which is now the prestigious, elegant and spacious Municipal Library. This building once belonged to the family of Alessandro Gambalunga, an enthusiastic patron of the Arts who bequeathed it to the City of Rimini in 1617. The Gambalunghiana Library now houses over 1350 codes including two signed by the humanist Basinio da Parma, the *De Civitate Dei* written for Pandolfo Malatesta - the 'gradenighiano' of Dante's Divine Comedy. The ground floor houses the Film Library with Fellini's complete works.

"Rimini is a dimension of my memory", Fellini wrote, and upon entering this building we get a feel for these words. Here it is easy to imagine scenes from *Amarcord* and Federico's footsteps ascending the "endless staircase" and running into the cloister. At a right angle to Via Gambalunga we find **Via Angherà**, where, at no. 21, Fellini's old **nursery school** once stood. He talks of the "Sisters with the big hats" of the Order of Saint Vincent, but as there are no records of this order ever having been in Rimini, it is thought that the nuns may have been the Sisters of the Order of Maria Bambina. From Via Gambalunga, crossing the town centre, you come out onto **Piazza Ferrari**, where in the unchanged part of the park (the other has been taken over by a Museum and the Roman Surgeon's House) there is the impressive "nude statue": the **Monument to Victory**, or rather, to the Fallen of the First World War, created in the early 20s, and inaugurated by King Victor Emanuel III, which made the boys dream so. "This is the monument to Victory... we would go and see it every day... and I would even dream of it at night!" Titta's voiceover narrates in his role as Fellini's "double" in *Amarcord* in scene number 35: "Outdoor daytime shot. Spring. It is raining. The statue of Victory bends over the shoulders of the unknown soldier, and at the foot of the monument Titta's friends are completely still, sheltered by their umbrellas, their backs to us, they

are staring... at the round bottom of the Victory Statue, which is glistening in the rain". The monument in Piazza Ferrari is dedicated to the Fallen of the Great War, but the anatomical details, "the bare parts of the statue" that perturbed the protagonists of the film are extraordinarily lifelike; to the extent that the scene in *Amarcord* is structured around it. "Titta's friends are staring hungrily at that anatomical detail, and Count Poltavo makes a circular gesture with his hands to indicate the opulence of the shape. Naso, on the other hand, makes an untoward, obscene rhythmic gesture with his hands in front of his abdomen". From here you can take **Via Tempio Malatestiano**, which ends right opposite the **Temple of Malatesta**, the Rimini Cathedral, which Fellini and his friends would attend "especially because girls went there" as his friend Benzi remembers. One of the most renowned Italian Renaissance buildings, it was commissioned by Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, and designed by some of the most famous artists of the 15th Century and later, from Leon Battista Alberti and Piero della Francesca, to Agostino di Duccio and Matteo de' Pasti.

Turn to look at the "large evocative building", as Fellini defined it, right opposite the church, known as **Palazzo Malatesta**, on the corner of Via Tempio Malatestiano. Here the FeBo company artists' shop run by the young and extraordinarily talented artists Demos Bonini and Federico Fellini once stood. "The FeBo company of drawings and caricatures with faces pasted onto coloured paper backgrounds; the fruit of genius and hard work" as Fellini's lawyer friend recalls.

The following stop is in former Piazza Giulio Cesare, nowadays known as **Piazza Tre Martiri** because, as the Master of cinema wrote "that is where the Nazis hung three men from Rimini". Where the Bar Turismo stands today, once there was the "Rossini" Bar where Federico played billiards with his friends. In the piazza we also find the octagonal **Tempietto di Sant'Antonio (Small Temple to Saint Anthony)**. It was built in 1518 and reconstructed after the earthquake in 1672 in memory of the "Miracle of the Mule" which happened by intercession of Saint Anthony of Padua. According to the legend, the citizens of Rimini had gathered in the piazza to receive Holy Communion from the Saint, when a farmer passed by with his mule. The farmer showed no interest in the Holy Sacrament, while his mule sat down, refusing to carry on, and knelt in front of the Saint's hands.





Behind the little temple, which was reconstructed for *Amarcord* in a Romanic style, there is the Church of the Order of the Minimi of Saint Francis da Paola, or, as it is known in Rimini, the Church of the **Paolotti**. It was reconstructed in 1963-64 on the remains of the previous baroque church which was razed during the Second World War. Fellini has a unique memory of it. In 1967 he wrote about Nurse Sara who would put him to bed during his stay in hospital “she reminds me of the Romagna “hairy-lipped women” of the Church of the Paolotti”. Which brings to mind his lively description of the “hairy-lipped women” in *Amarcord* all lined up on their bikes, among them the “wild cat of San Leo, a surly muscular gladiator, the hairy-lipped woman from Santarcangelo with her red hair and silvery jumper, which she wore without a bra, and the two square smug sisters from Santa Giustina”. We are reminded of these women every time we see the church, and are tempted to look for their bikes outside it to see if it is worth waiting for one of them to come out at any minute.

Heading back to Piazza Cavour for a moment, walking along Corso d'Augusto, you will pass **Palazzo Ripa** once no. 63, now no. 115, one of the houses Fellini lived in with his family; the first one “I really remember”, as he himself wrote. It is a beautiful, distinguished building in a very central location, decorated with an earthenware doorway that is framed by a terrace with wrought iron balustrades, it has an inner courtyard where the Fellini family lived in a flat on the second floor. Along the Corso there once stood the previously mentioned **Bar di Raoul**.

At this point, head back to Piazza Tre Martiri, and from there continue towards the Arch of Augustus. You will meet people walking along the **Corso**; people who now, as then, are out on their Felliniesque stroll (“il passeggiato”) “which was hot warm and passionate between those two dark places”; the one starting in Piazza Cavour, and the other in Piazza Giulio Cesare. Continuing along the street with your back to the piazza which is nowadays known as Tre Martiri, at no. 62 you will encounter the 17th Century **Palazzo Buonadrata** (though the façade was restored after the earthquake of 1786), today it is the seat of the Bank called Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Rimini. The frescoed rooms and salons of this building were once Fellini’s old lycee. If you walk past it you will get to the **Arch of Augustus**, a veritable symbol of the city. It was built in 27

B.C. to honour Emperor Octavian Augustus, founder of some of the most important roads in Italy including the Via Flaminia, which starts exactly here. Even Federico as a young man dared to venture beyond the Arch on his bike with his beloved Bianchina Soriani sitting on his crossbar.

At **Via Brighenti**, no. 38, close by, we encounter Fellini's old school. Today the "Giulio Cesare-Manara Valgimigli" Lycee stands in the place where the **Carlo Tonini Primary School** used to be.

From here the walk continues for a few hundred metres along the old walls in Via Bastioni Orientali. Then turn into one of the side streets, such as Via Galeria, which flanks the Church of the Saints Bartholomew and Marino in Piazzetta Castelfidardo. From here reach Via Anfiteatro, which leads to Via Clementini and Via Dante. Fellini's family moved to **Via Clementini, no.9**, in February 1929. This is the home of Federico's adolescence, and, as he wrote, of his first love, the "brunette" Bianchina Soriani. This building is known as **Palazzina Dolci**, named after the owner of the building "Agostino Dolci & F. Ferramenta", "father of Luigino, one of my middle school friends, the one who would play the part of Hector in the Iliad".

The building in **Via Dante, no.9**, is thought to be where the family lived from April 1931 onwards.

Leave this street and carry straight on. You will come to **Via Oberdan, no.1**, which was the seat of the Fellini Museum and Foundation from 2001 to 2009. It was also the house where Federico's mother lived for the rest of her life - Ida Barbiani was her maiden name and Fellini was her married name - with Fellini's sister Maddalena (today Maddalena's husband, Giorgio Fabbri, and their daughter Francesca still live here). Currently the **Museum** and the **Foundation** are waiting to be restored and opened to the public in the building of the **Fulgor Cinema**, as previously mentioned.

If you have time, you can reach **Corso Giovanni XXIII**, once called Via Umberto I, and look at **no.39**, where the **Colantonio Chemist's** used to be, which, as Titta Benzi recounts, sold potassium pills. On bonfire night these pills would be mixed with sulphur from the mines of Perticara, which was brought down by the trains from Mercatino Marecchia (now known as Novafeltria). The boys would steal the pills and "by mixing everything together you'd make enough powder for a small detonation, if you pushed





FEDERICO FELLINI
20.12.1920 - 31.10.1993

GIULIETTA MASINA
27.7.1921 - 23.11.1994

PIRELLA FELLINI
20.11.1943 - 2.4.1945

down hard enough... (...) Back then the pharmacist's son was one of our school friends. He is the one in *Amarcord* who is standing at the blackboard when we pee into the paper tube. He is also the boy in the confession scene with Don Baravelli in the same film”.

The itinerary in the town centre ends here. Now we will move from the city to the **Marecchia River**, where the film director loved to be taken by Titta when he returned to Rimini. It is best to drive or take public transport here. Fellini bought a piece of land right by the river before his “legendary” purchase of a house by the harbour, which he never lived in. “Titta convinced me to buy a piece of land by the Marecchia River. Quite honestly the place looked like the perfect setting for the murder of a prostitute. On the evening we went to look at the land we could hear a great fanfare. A man in his pants was playing the tune of the lowering of the flag. It was Fiorentini, who knew everything there was to know about Garibaldi. About Garibaldi and Sangiovese wine. (...) You see, as the Marecchia reveals its rocky bed in this area, it is a desolate and rather squalid spectacle. But Titta had advised me to buy that piece of land. “Just wait and see you fool” he’d say “a motorway will pass near here, and the value of the land will go up”. Then the motorway took a different direction. (...) I went to the Marecchia River for the first time when I was a boy. We had bobbed off school, as we would say, skived off. I was following Carlini. By the river there was a black Balilla car full of policemen some of whom were descending the banks like toads. Low clouds were slowly circling in ambush among the dry branches of the trees. We got to a wood of poplar trees; a man had hanged himself. He wore a cap. Two policemen were already guarding him. I couldn’t quite understand what I was seeing. I saw a fallen shoe, a sock on a shoeless foot, and a pair of ragged trousers covered in patches”.

2. The place of eternal rest

You can reach the **Monumental Cemetery** by car or by bus. Fellini considered this place as “fascinating” as his stories about his visits to the tombs. Federico Fellini now rests here with his wife Giulietta Masina and their son Pier Federico, who was born in 1945, and who died just eleven days after his birth. The town cemetery is in Piazzale Bartolani, no. 1, in the Rimini quarter known as Le Celle, on the other side of the railway

above
**A photo from a scene
in *Amarcord*, Fellini's
Middle School -**

**Palazzo Gambalunga
(The Archive of the
Gambalunga Library)**

below
**The Federico Fellini
International Airport**

line. Fellini reminds us that at one time it was on the other side of a level crossing, though now there is an underpass. A beautiful avenue of cypress trees, where you can park your car, leads to the entrance. As soon as you enter, on the left, there is a splendid monument and memorial to Fellini, a sculpture in shiny bronze that bears the signature of the renowned sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro, who was born near Rimini in Morciano di Romagna. It represents the prow of a ship, that is reflected in a thin layer of water that skims the monument. There is a bench beside it. "I decided on the bench - Pomodoro declared - because Fellini had confided to a friend that he wished to be buried in a park with a bench".

Close to the large prow, that looks towards the city, along the fourth path on the right, there is the Fellini family tomb, where Federico's parents rest: Urbano Fellini (27.2.1894 - 31.5.1956) and Ida Barbiani (4.11.1896 - 27.9.1984).

3. Iconography of the town

It is true that Fellini did not enjoy returning to Rimini as he himself declared: "One thing is certain, however, I do not come back to Rimini happily, I must admit. I have a kind of blockage about it". Many have written that it may have depended on Fellini's inventions of the city; on recollections that fed on a rather fervid and eccentric memory. It may just be an outright lie. After all, he was the first to call himself an unapologetic liar and to talk of "useful" lies.

This theory is actually partially confirmed by the words that Fellini wrote to the Mayor from the hospital in Rimini, two months before he died.

"I am glad I was born in this area, and I hope that my fellow citizens will be able to preserve their generosity of spirit in friendship and in life, despite dark times".

In actual fact, the most generous gesture in the recent history of Rimini was made by Federico Fellini himself when he created that "artistic monument" for his city, as Rimini writer Giuliano Ghirardelli states in his book *Guida alla Rimini di Fellini (A guide to Fellini's Rimini T.N.)* "Amarcord, an everlasting film that is admired all over the world, was entirely dedicated with a great passion to Rimini".

Fellini also gave his name to the International Rimini Airport, so every arrival and departure appears beside the great film director's name.





di Giovanni de' Medici
per la famiglia Medici
1515 - 1516
1517 - 1518
1519 - 1520
1521 - 1522

Places dear to Fellini, near Rimini

Near Rimini in the small town of **Gambettola**, known as “e’ Bosch” (the wood), situated on the Via Emilia a little before Cesena, when coming from Rimini, you will see the farmhouse that belonged to Fellini’s paternal grandparents in Via Soprarigossa, where his parents lived, and where Fellini may even have been born; though we do not know this for certain. What we do know, however, is that Fellini spent a lot of time here during his childhood, as he himself recounted. The house, which was saved from demolition, is in a state of abandonment, but there are plans to refurbish it and turn it into a Museum.

It is situated near the largest parkland area by the Rubicon River. It covers twenty-four thousand m² and offers a variety of facilities. It is also near the Rigossa Torrent, which the Gambettola inhabitants would like to turn into a resting area along a hiking and cycling route, which has been planned for some time. The route, which would stretch from the sea to the hills, would be an important destination for cycling tourists.

Petrella Guidi in the Municipality of Sant’Agata Feltria is a very evocative place. Fellini’s friend Tonino Guerra, poet and screenwriter, wished to pay homage to Fellini and his wife Giulietta Masina here. To this end in *Il Campo dei Nomi* (*The field of names*), at the foot of the thousand year old Torre di Castello, two headstones are dedicated to them. On the Easter day of 1994 when the headstones were placed in the presence of Michelangelo Antonioni and Wim Wenders Guerra stated: “In this garden let us keep them company with our imagination”. The two stones are both engraved with a sentence. On the one dedicated to Fellini, Guerra wanted to quote the words that Fellini had said to him two years before his death, when he went to Pennabilli to see him: “A rectangular stone on a lawn would be enough, and perhaps a bench for those who wish to keep us company”. On Giulietta Masina’s stone next to Fellini’s we read: “Now then Giulietta, please stop crying”. This is what the Master of cinema said to his wife when he received the last Oscar to his career in Los Angeles, and Giulietta could not withhold her tears. Guerra had this sentence inscribed: “The Valley, Federico, wishes to be close to your name”. To afford some shade over the stones of the two great artists

of the cinema, he had an elm tree and a holly oak planted.

And in the district of **Pennabilli** in *L’Orto dei Frutti dimenticati*

(*The orchard of forgotten fruits*), Guerra had a sculpture installed: *La Meridiana dell'incontro* (*The Meridian of the meeting*), created by Polish artist Krzysztof Bednarski. It represents two doves whose shadows project the profiles of Federico Fellini and Giulietta Masina in the afternoon sun. Guerra had the following words written for Fellini and Giulietta: "In the afternoon, the shade of the two doves joins us to the profiles of Federico Fellini and Giulietta Masina".

A similar but larger sculpture by the same artist is waiting for a permanent location in the city of Rimini, where it is currently stored. Again in **Pennabilli** in the garden of Guerra's house called *La Casa dei Mandorli* (*The house of the almond trees*) large stylized flowers that Guerra drew and produced in white stone, bear the names of the deceased film directors with whom he worked, including Federico Fellini's name, naturally.

In a street in the old town of Pennabilli, *Via Tonino Guerra*, large panels exhibit photos of the poet with the film directors he was closest to. One of the first pictures we encounter on the right, as we climb the hill towards Guerra's house, is a photo of him with Fellini, which was taken in 1991, two years before the illness and death of the Master of cinema from Rimini.



FEDERICO
FELLINI

CHAPTER VI

MATURITY

The road to Rome

As an ambitious young man, Fellini felt that Rimini was too small for him, and he wished to make some money, too. Kezich writes: “his family bores him, school exasperates him, and Rimini no longer seems to offer anything. Having turned eighteen, in 1938, Federico is impatient”. So he decides to occupy his time drawing cartoons and captions that he sends to various newspapers. The “Domenica del Corriere” in its column *Cartoline del pubblico* (*Postcards from the public*) is the first to publish his work on 6th February 1938. This is an amateur collaboration, but his following work for the Florentine weekly political and satirical newspaper “420” is of a higher level, and offers many intense moments. Fellini signs his drawings and short stories as Fellas. In the short time between his final lycee exams and subsequent diploma and his collaboration with the “Marc’Aurelio” newspaper, he commutes from Rimini to Florence, and then from Rome to Florence. His early work as a cartoonist and writer for the “420” newspaper is invaluable for his later collaboration with the “Marc’Aurelio”.

With regard to his departure for Rome, or rather, his escape from Rimini, his Third Escape, as he defined it, there are many interpretations. What is certain is that the separation was final.

“We always talked about leaving, but only one of us actually left one morning, without telling anyone...” The voiceover in the final scene of *I vitelloni* states. The protagonist Moraldo quietly departs from his hometown without a fuss, leaving behind his family, friends, local bar, and the games of billiards. The young railway worker on the platform asks him: “Were you not happy here?” as the train begins to move. Moraldo imagines his friends asleep in their homes: Alberto, Fausto, Riccardo, and Leopoldo, and a feeling of nostalgia takes hold of him, but the train has gathered speed, and he cannot turn back. *La dolce vita* also ends with Paolina smiling at Marcello, just like the young railway worker smiles at his friend Moraldo; growing up means learning to face separation, and being strong when saying farewell. In real life Federico’s departure at the age of eighteen was not as poetic. To the contrary, it was a rather carefree affair, as his friend Titta remembers. It was on 4th January 1939 (though on another page he says that it was on 8th January, a more likely date considering that it fell on a Sunday. The Christmas holidays would have been over, and Fellini’s mother, a practicing Catholic, would have wanted her children near her at that time of the year). Titta also states that everyone was present, all his Rimini friends, at least up to Bologna. The General Register Office states that Fellini officially moved to Rome on 14th March.

1. Rome

Whether his departure was a solitary affair, or whether it occurred in the company of his friends, we will never know for certain. While we can deduce what his arrival at the Termini Station in Rome was like from the renowned sequence in the film *Roma (Fellini's Roma)*. A tall thin young man dressed in white gets off a train and beckons a porter, who looks like a clown. The young man follows the porter, while his attention is captured by the crowds of people who are walking past him: priests, nuns, soldiers, sellers, beautiful women, and lowlifes. In the background we see a poster of De Sica's film *Grandi magazzini*. He is fascinated and amused and lets the city swallow him up like a voracious step mother. In his passionate biography on Fellini, Kezich tells us that the film director's realistic version of his escape from his hometown is the following: "A young man with high hopes, who is counting on the vague job offer of a journalist he has met by chance, leaves the area of the town where he was born, to try his luck in the city alone". In actual fact, there is much more to Fellini's decision to move to the capital, including his mother's encouragement, or rather, Ida's desire to return to the hometown she had literally run away from for love, now that she has a valid reason, a son studying at university, whom she can live near and support. Fellini's mother packs up and locks the house in Rimini, and takes her daughter Maddalena to a new address in the capital in Via Albalonga, no. 13, not far from Piazza Re di Roma. Fellini's father, Urbano, stays in a furnished room in the old town of Rimini with their son Riccardo. Ida, who wants one of her sons to become a priest, accepts the idea of a son becoming a lawyer, though he is obsessed with journalism.

Slowly but surely, Fellini's brother Riccardo moves in with his family in Rome, because he is taking singing lessons and wants to become an actor, and Fellini's father visits them once or twice a month. Federico often does not go home and Riccardo follows suit. Each member of the family lives a separate existence following their desires and impulses. After barely a year, the mother, who is always alone with Maddalena, decides to return to Rimini. She moves back to the house in Via Sonnino, no. 13, and closes up the one in Via Albalonga. Kezich tells us that "for Federico this move marks the definitive cut of the umbilical cord" even if it is more like a homecoming than a separation, because ever since he was little,





he has always been keenly aware that Rome is his mother's hometown, which leads him to feel that it is also partly his. "It is like a passage from his real mother to the Large Mediterranean Mother, which he identifies through Jungian psychology many years later", Kezich believes, and adds that Fellini's is an "all-consuming relationship with the capital city, imbued with a sense of freedom and fear, relief and solitude".

Fellini will later say: "For one who does my kind of work, it is stimulating to live in a city that is also a Cinecittà, in which perspective, set designs, and human pettiness recall ancient civilizations and other eras and societies. (...) Rome is a mysterious planet that drags along everything with it. It is enriched and nourished by its own deterioration. (...) Death cannot but exist in a city that has one of the most spectacular archaeological heritages in the world. (...) Rome does not need to create culture, it is culture". As a young man, once he has settled in the capital city, Federico has no intention of looking back, though he does so constantly in his imagination; while his need for a protective mother to shelter him is so strong that he finds it in a new, significant, and decisive female figure.

2. Giulietta

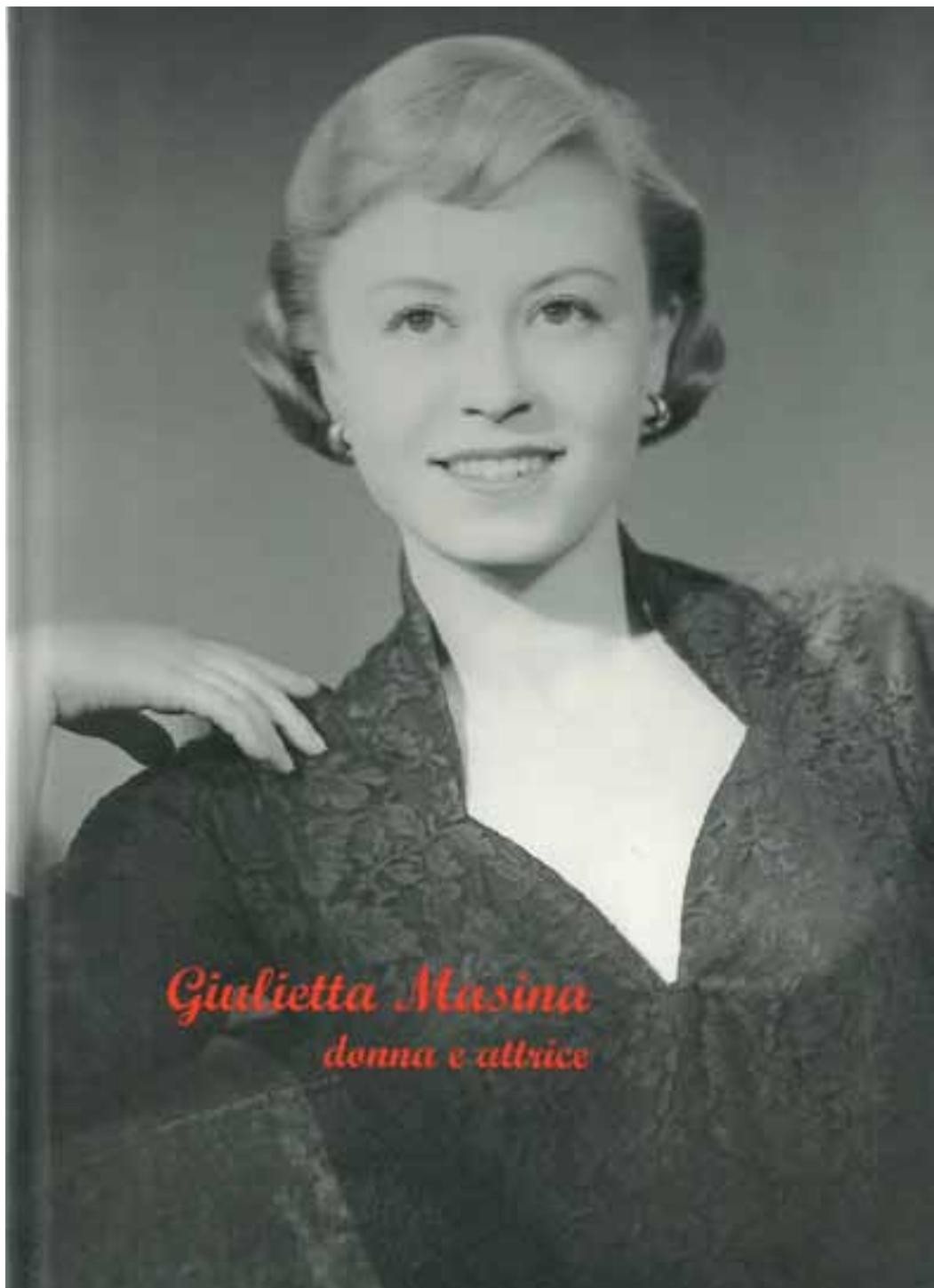
Fellini is the protégé of the director of the Marc'Aurelio newspaper for which he writes humorous stories, and which he had wanted to work for as a journalist at any cost when he was still living in Rimini. This is stated in a magazine of that time that also calls Fellini the "Marc'Aurelio's cabin boy". The Marc'Aurelio has many successful columns including *Secondo Liceo*, a series of over 40 episodes that are an "amarcord" (memoir) of school life; *Il primo amore (First love)*, where Fellini extols his love for Bianchina, his great love from Rimini, and *Oggi sposi (Just married)* 12 episodes that begin on 12th February 1942. Here the adventures of Cico (Federico) and Bianchina foreshadow Fellini's marriage to Giulietta. During these years, Fellini writes and draws incessantly. He publishes a short book *Il mio amico Pasqualino (My friend Pasqualino)* in the book series "Umoristi Moderni" (Modern Humorists) Ippocampo Editions, cost 5 Lire, and "every publication is richly illustrated" we read on the inside back cover. The main character is "a little man with a strong alter ego". "The

**The cover of the book
*Giulietta Masina donna
e attrice (Giulietta
Masina woman and
author)* by Tiziana
Contri, Rotary Club**

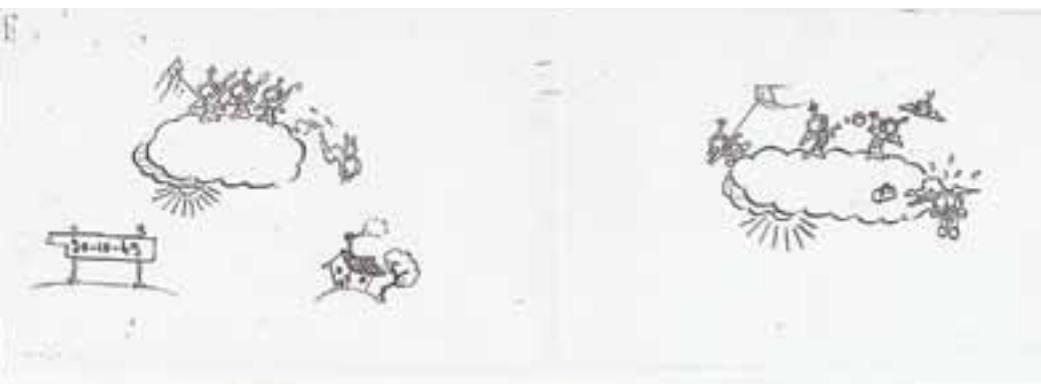
**San Giorgio di Piano
“Giulietta Masina”.
The photo of the
actress was taken in
1953 and comes from
the C. Cesari Archive**

text is comical and humorous, grotesque and existential” as Beniamino Placido writes in the preface to the anastatic reprint. He continues: “We deduce from the events in Pasqualino’s life that there was little money and that times were uncertain in the Italy and Rome of that period. Goods were scarce. Clothing was forcibly rough and scrounged up. Domestic hygienic facilities were particularly rough and ready. (...) Thus the long - mortifying and embarrassing - queues for the municipal bathroom (...) when many people were crammed into one lodging. (...) Yet that bathroom was also a place of refuge (...). There is a mirror in this bathroom that is much more reassuring and comforting than the evil reflections of shop windows (...). This mirror makes him feel that he is good-looking (he who is so desperately thin)”. Indeed Pasqualino greatly reflects the part of Federico that is confident of his talent, yet “painfully disconnected from reality”, which he always will be. Fellini’s is a detached form of reality that enters the realms of myth and magic; the best instance being “the epiphany of the Rex Ocean Liner” in *Amarcord*.

For a while Fellini also writes plays, then his collaboration with the Marc’Aurelio decreases as he produces more work for radio. In the meantime he is hounded by compulsory conscription, which he tries to get out of by every means possible, starting in 1939 when he feigns sickness and resorts to misunderstandings about his dual residence in Rimini and in Rome. He has an incredible stroke of luck when the military archive in Bologna blows up. His documents no longer exist, so he is exempt from military service. After two years collaborating with EIAR (Italian Body for Radio Auditions, which became the RAI Italy’s Public Broadcasting Company), where he writes scripts for variety show companies, his work for radio becomes more personal. He signs articles for the popular programme *Terziglio* with his real name. In these writings he displays the vast repertoire of themes and characters that he had created for the newspaper and shows a great talent as a playwright, which perfectly suits the work he does for radio. It is while Federico is working for radio in the autumn of 1942 that he meets the young actress Giulietta, whose full name is Giulia Anna Masina, in the radio manager’s office. She had worked for the University Theatre and had started acting and singing during live performances in the EIAR comedy and musical theatre company. Originally from Emilia, she was



Giulietta Masina
donna e attrice



above
**Federico Fellini
and Giulietta Masina
in the mid 50s in an**

**autographed postcard
(Marina and Monica
Zucchini's Archive)**

below
**Federico Fellini and
Giulietta Masina's
wedding invitation
1943, drawn by Fellini**

**himself (The Archive
of the City Council of
San Giorgio al Piano -
The Angiolina Ramponi
Archive)**

born in San Giorgio di Piano in the Province of Bologna on 22nd February 1921, but lived in Rome with her aunt Giulia, a wealthy widow. Gifted with an amazing talent, she had a slight physique - she weighed 42 kg - and androgynous features. Her great strength was her ability to transform herself completely thus excelling in the most diverse roles. With a trivial excuse of asking for some photos, sometime after meeting her Fellini calls Via Lutezia, where the girl lives with her aunt, to tell her that there might be a role "for the Duse of the University Theatre" in a film that he had written, but which he never shot.

Thus their love story began and lasted their whole lives. Their engagement was very short and their marriage very long, ending only with Fellini's death and Masina's shortly after.

Their first date was at half past one in front of the EIAR, which at the time was in Via Botteghe Oscure, where the PCI (Italian Communist Party) established its headquarters after the war. From there they went towards the Triton Fountain to have lunch in a nearby restaurant. She had already eaten at her aunts' because she had to keep her roles outside the University Theatre a secret as her main objective was to get a university degree. She was struck by the wad of money Fellini pulled out when he settled the bill. She could not have imagined anything of the sort as he had not been in Rome for many years; she later said that she never again saw him with so much money in his pockets. They liked each other from the start. "They met and fell in love once and for all", Kezich writes.

Giulietta always said that it was love at first sight.

Fellini then admitted and often repeated that Giulietta's impish air made him happy. Frankly Giulietta is not the "bona" (Romanesque dialect for attractive woman) voluptuous type of woman that Fellini clearly favoured, but he liked her because, as Kezich writes "on the one hand, he knows right away that he has found a strong woman to lean on, and on the other, he feels he has established a surreal rapport with a character straight out of an illustration in a book of fairytales". They share a childlike trait of their personalities, and more importantly, a strong elective affinity, their work. They are both perfectionists, indefatigable, and willing to put up with sacrifice, which is why their working relationship is enduring, starting with the *Terzoglio* radio shows and including *La strada*, *Le notti di*

Cabiria (Nights of Cabiria), *Giulietta degli spiriti (Juliet of the spirits)*, and *Ginger e Fred* to name but a few.

After 8th September 1943 their relationship rapidly blossoms. Fellini does not do his compulsory military service and decides to marry Giulietta on 30th October (as the invitations designed by the groom himself state) a typical day of the last, tragic phase of the Second World War with a blackout and a curfew, as Kezich writes. The wedding takes place in the flat next to Giulietta's, where Monsignor Luigi Cornaglia de' Medici lives, a prelate of Santa Maria Maggiore who has permission to say mass at home. Few guests attend and both sets of parents are cut off by the war. On 1st November, forty-eight hours later, apocalyptic events occur in Rimini with the first of a long series of bombings that raze the city to the ground. Fellini's brother Riccardo, accompanied by the harmonium, sings the *Ave Maria*, as he does in the film *I vitelloni*. For the first few months the couple lives in Giulietta's aunt's house and their family life and work go hand in hand. From 1942 onwards, in fact, the young Arts student, who was already considered a good actress, plays the character of Pallina, Cico's first girlfriend and young bride. The misadventures of the young couple are broadcast on the *Terziglio* radio show and start up again after the war as an independent series entitled *The adventures of Cico and Pallina*, interrupted after fourteen episodes in February 1947.

Just a few months after the wedding, Giulietta falls down the stairs and suffers a spontaneous abortion. A second pregnancy reaches full term and a child is born on 22nd March 1945. He is baptized Pier Federico, nicknamed Federichino, but only lives for 11 days. He contracts lethargic encephalitis and dies on 2nd April, a tragedy that marks the couple forever. Giulietta says: "Not having had children, we became each other's son and daughter; that was our fate".

Giulietta Masina appears in the masterpiece by Roberto Rossellini *Paisà (Paisan)* (as a walk on) while her cinema debut occurs in 1948 in a film directed by Alberto Lattuada *Senza pietà (Without pity)* where she plays the part of a worldly woman with a minute physique and a good heart, a role that will stay with her for most of her career in films directed by Carlo Lizzani, Giuseppe Amato, and Renato Castellani. In 1950 Fellini's first film with Lattuada is released under the title of *Luci del varietà (Variety)*

UN FILM DE FEDERICO FELLINI



IL BIDONIE

avec **BRODERICK CRAWFORD**
GIULIETTA MASINA

LA NOUVELLE REALISATION
DU CELEBRE METTEUR EN SCENE
DE
LA STRADA

FRANCO FABRIZI
RICHARD BASEHART



TITANUS
S.C.C.



Giulietta Masina, Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart

lights). Along with her husband Giulietta gains international fame in the role of Gelsomina in the Oscar winning film *La strada*, 1954, where she acts with Anthony Quinn and Richard Basehart. Giulietta Masina remembers how difficult it was for Fellini to obtain this role for her at a time when, in 1953, the most famous actresses were very different from her: voluptuous glamorous beauty queens that were highly sought after. Her success is replicated with *Il bidone (The swindle and the swindlers)*, in 1955, in which she acts alongside Broderick Crawford and Basehart again. In 1957 she reaches the peak of her career in the role of Cabiria, which gains another Oscar, in *Le notti di Cabiria*, a role that she had already partly played in the first film her husband directed *Lo sceicco bianco (The white sheik)* in 1951, for which she gains a Golden Palm in Cannes. She is directed by Eduardo De Filippo and acts alongside Alberto Sordi in another film in 1958 entitled *Nella città l'inferno* by Renato Castellani, in which she acts with Anna Magnani. Fellini also directs her in his first colour film, *Giulietta degli spiriti* in 1965 with Mario Pisu, and twenty years later in the melancholy *Ginger e Fred* released in 1985 alongside Marcello Mastroianni, in the part of two former *tip-tap* dancers who were extremely popular during the war with stage names taken from the renowned couple Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Giulietta also worked for television with great success. Her last film for cinema was shot in 1991. She defines herself as an extrovert in her behaviour, but introverted in her feelings, and declares that in this she is like her husband Federico, whose intellectual honesty she extols. She would always state the following about Fellini: "More than a film director, Fellini is an Auteur of Cinema". An attentive wife, Giulietta is very patient with Federico, who does not disdain occasional flirtations with actresses. She forgives his many infidelities "anyway - she says - he always comes back to me in the end".

The Jesuit Priest Angelo Arpa, a friend of Fellini's will say: "We must get Fellini's presumed love affairs into perspective. They would often be born of his inability to mark a distinction between reality and scenic fiction. If her husband betrayed her with his body, his heart was always faithful to her".

Once the film director declared: "Right from the start, Giulietta was a mysterious person to me who tugged at my nostalgia for innocence. Giulietta is the key to much enchantment, magic, vision, and clarity. She

leads me by the hand to places I would never reach alone". And: "I don't remember our first encounter, because, truly, I was born on the day that I met Giulietta".

Their partnership was truly extraordinary, indissoluble to the point that even illness and death took hold of them at almost the same time. Giulietta personally organized Fellini's funeral and laying-in-state in Theatre no. 5 in Cinecittà. Devoid of all strength, she attended the farewell ceremony on 3rd November in the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli. From that day onwards she let herself go. Having accomplished her mission, she began to die. She passed away on 23rd March 1994, five months after Federico (who died on 31st October 1993) at the age of 74 due to a lung disease which she had kept hidden from her husband until the end. The awarding of an Oscar to Fellini's Career in Hollywood six months before the film director died, has remained in our memories. While the public acclaimed Fellini with a standing ovation, from the stage, in world vision Fellini spoke these words to his Giulietta, who was in tears: "There now, Giulietta, please stop crying". Then he turned to the audience and said: "The Oscar does not belong to me, but to Giulietta. She is the one I must thank". Giulietta was buried with the sequined dress she wore on the night of the Oscars, holding a red rose in her hand and a photo of Federico smiling.

3. Iconography of a love story ***Fellini's words about Giulietta***

I have always considered that meeting Giulietta was a design of fate. I do not think that events could have turned out any differently. Our relationship is ancient, and I am led to believe that it predates the day we met.

Federico Fellini from *Amarcord Fellini*, Cosmopoli, 1994

Giulietta Masina

To me Giulietta will always be a projection of wounded innocence that triumphs in the end.

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.
I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003





Giulietta degli spiriti

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* I wanted Giulietta to play a character on the edge of magnetic dimensions that scarcely come to terms with the different levels of reality. In real life Giulietta has always seemed very down to earth and childlike to me, the opposite of puerile. By making up a character called Giulietta, I felt that the contrast of her innocent, practical nature with a harsh, relentless reality would result in a series of fantastical mental projections that may have destabilized her for a while, but which she would eventually master. Thus the film is about the struggle that transforms her into a mature and independent woman with the gift of a second innocence that is based on her experience. I must admit I made a great mistake; that of choosing my wife to play a simple housewife who is totally dependent on her husband. (...) I don't remember ever fighting so much with Giulietta as we did during the production of this film. She kept on telling me that she didn't feel comfortable in the role, and I carried on telling her to be herself. I never thought that "herself" meant being a wife and an actress - the key to the film. How could I have been so stubborn? The moral is: never judge your wife with hindsight... (...)

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.

I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003

Giulietta

She has the levity of a dream, of an idea. She is an actress with a clownlike cadence and movements. She has the same looks of amazement and surprise, and the sudden bursts of glee and sadness of a clown. (...) Giulietta is down to earth and extremely ambiguous at the same time. She is a typical example of her star sign (...).

Fellini. Raccontando di me. Conversazioni (Conversations with Fellini) by Costanzo Costantini, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1996

Fidelity

It is easier to be faithful to a restaurant than to a woman.

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.

I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003

Guilt

You cannot love someone who always makes you feel guilty.

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.

I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003

Casanova

Regarding the film Damian Pettigrew asks Fellini: "The film ends with Casanova in the arms of a mechanical doll that occasionally looks like a stylized version of Giulietta in the late 50s. Is it just my perverse imagination?"

Fellini replies: "Poor Giulietta!" Casanova is the product of the disarming intent of a film director to take parts of his life and shout his deep understanding of them from the rooftops of Rome. The film taught me that the absence of love is the worst form of suffering we can bear".

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.

I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003

Looking good

Last weekend Giulietta and I were invited to an elegant reception and she criticized my attire. "Your dinner jacket has a hole in it", she whispered to me mortified. "You should be pleased" I replied "There's an aristocratic moth in our house; it only makes holes in excellent evening wear".

Federico Fellini from *Federico Fellini*.

I'm a born liar, Elleu, Rome, 2003



CHAPTER VII
**THE MASTER
OF CINEMA**

‘... and the Oscar goes to...’

Fellini brings innovation to the cinema. His films are unlike anyone else's. He introduces a new exuberant and humorous style, a kind of magic realism with a dreamlike quality. Unfortunately his style is not appreciated right away, though after a few years it is understood and valued worldwide. Fellini's films gain many international prizes. In the U.S.A. he is granted five Oscars, the most famous award ever, four for his films, and a fifth to his career. He also receives awards from other countries, including Japan, where the Emperor in person presents him with the prize. He receives the most prized international Arts Award: the *Praemium Imperiale*, for "his unanimously recognized and significant contribution to the progress of the Art of Cinematography". The Emperor's words to Fellini are: "I award you this prize in the name of an invisible multitude". To which Fellini replies: "... as the son of a travelling salesman from Gambettola, I can't complain about how far I have come". At the start of his career in 1939, Fellini does not turn to film directing right away. At first he writes humorous sketches for cinema, including some of the gags in the films shot by Macario from the late thirties to the early forties: *Lo vedi come sei*, *Non me lo dire*, *Il pirata sono io* (*The pirate's dream*). During the war years he co-writes screenplays for a number of films including *Avanti c'è posto* (*Before the postman*) and *Campo de' fiori* (*The peddler and the lady*) by Mario Bonnard and *Chi l'ha visto?* by Goffredo Alessandrini. After the war he writes screenplays for some of the most important Italian Neorealist films and becomes a prominent figure in this field. With Roberto Rossellini Fellini writes masterpieces such as *Roma città aperta* (*Rome, open city*) in 1945, and *Paisà* (*Paisan*) in 1946.

With Pietro Germi he writes *In nome della legge* (*In the name of the Law*), which is released in 1948, *Il cammino della speranza* (*The path of hope*) in 1950, and *La città si difende* (*Four ways out*) in 1951. With Alberto Lattuada he writes *Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* (*Flesh will surrender*) in 1947, *Senza pietà* (*Without pity*) released in 1948, and *Il mulino del Po* (*The mill on the Po*) in 1949. The turning point in his career as a film director comes in 1950 with *Luci del varietà* (*Variety lights*), which Fellini co-directs with Lattuada. This film reveals his autobiographical inspiration and his interest in curtain raiser variety shows. The following year Fellini begins directing his first solo film *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The white sheik*), which is released in 1952, and his poetic talent finds its true expression. In this film he analyses the milieu of the petty bourgeoisie and his own dreams with a great sense of irony and emotional involvement.

From this point onwards Fellini's career as a film director is unstoppable, and his name becomes legendary.

above
**A flier for the film
Lo sceicco bianco
(*The white sheik*)**

below left
**A French poster for
the film *Luci del varietà*
(*Variety lights*)**

below right
**A poster for the film
*I vitelloni***

1. The beginnings

In the early forties (1941-1942) Fellini meets Tullio Pinelli, a theatre playwright, and a collaboration is soon born. Fellini elaborates ideas and outlines, while Pinelli arranges them into structured scripts. During these years, Fellini and his friend write screenplays for the first highly successful films by Aldo Fabrizi including *Avanti c'è posto* (*Before the postman*), and *Campo de' fiori* by Mario Bonnard in 1942. In 1944, during the war, Fellini paints caricatures of allied soldiers in an inn in Via Margutta, a side street that leads off Via del Corso, with the journalist Guglielmo Guasta, and the painters Carlo Ludovico Bompiani and Fernando Della Rocca. In 1945 Fellini meets Roberto Rossellini, which marks a turning point in his career.

Fellini collaborates on the screenplays of *Roma città aperta* and *Paisà* which are considered the first Italian Neorealist films. In *Paisà* Fellini also works as a set assistant. It is believed that when Rossellini was absent, Fellini shot some linking scenes for the film. It is certain that he directed a long framing shot in the sequence set by the Po River, which marks his debut as a film director. Subsequently, Fellini writes other screenplays. In 1948 a screenplay co-written with Pinelli is filmed: "*Il Miracolo*" (*The Miracle*) one of two episodes in "*L'amore*" ("*Love*"), a film directed by Roberto Rossellini. Fellini also acts in this episode. Other scripts soon follow such as *In nome della legge*, *Il cammino della speranza*, and *La città si difende* by Pietro Germi. Fellini writes other screenplays with Alberto Lattuada for *Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo*, *Senza pietà*, and *Il mulino del Po*. In 1950 he co-writes *Luci del varietà*, and co-directs it with Alberto Lattuada. The co-direction of this film is one of his most important achievements as a film director for many years to come. Two years later, he debuts as a solo director with *Lo sceicco bianco*, which he co-writes with Tullio Pinelli. From this moment on, film direction takes over from screenwriting. It is important to highlight that Fellini's great talent for drawing, which earned him a living during his early years in Rome, serves him greatly as a film director, since he habitually sketches the scenes of his films, as the multitude of drawings he has left us shows.

"I have always doodled and drawn, mostly caricatures of friends. I have always had the uncontrollable urge to capture a face with a pen. Ever since *Luci del varietà* I started drawing and tinkering with the actors' facial



LO SCEICCO BIANCO

ALBERTO SORDI BRUNELLA BOVO LEOPOLDO TRIESTE

LEA CARU - ENRICO SIMONTE - OLGA PETTITTE - ERIC MARELLI - ARBON MARCHITTI - GIANLUIGI JOLLIARD
 con GIULIETTA MASINA in un film di FEDERICO FELLINI





a Rieko
Sei

Los Angeles
May 1997

expressions. I have never drawn a storyboard; rather, my sketches have served as suggestions for the makeup artist, the costume designer, and the project designer. (...) I have never attempted to draw anything other than the essence in the form of a caricature. (...) Drawing allows me to envision a film; it is a sort of Ariadne's thread, a graphic line that leads me to the theatre. At the end of the day I realize I have filled a hundred sheets of paper (...) a sort of unconscious graphic mess with which I vent a need that has no particular aim”.

The following film *I vitelloni*, which recounts the provincial lives of a group of friends from Rimini, is received with great acclaim. At the Venice Film Festival it is awarded a Silver Lion. Fellini's fame thus begins to spread abroad. It is 1953 and this is only Fellini's second film, yet, in his early thirties, he already draws inspiration from his memories and from the events of his adolescence; events that are full of characters that are destined to become engraved in our memories. During this same year, Fellini collaborates on a film in segments by Cesare Zavattini, Riccardo Ghione, and Marco Ferreri *L'amore in città (Love in the city)*. The episode shot by Fellini *Agenzia matrimoniale (Matrimonial agency)* is according to many critics, the best of the three. But what really carries Fellini's reputation far afield is another film in which his wife acts. The film is *La strada*, in 1954, which is partly filmed in the famous Saltanò Circus with actors and walk-ons from the circus itself. Fellini even changes Anthony Quinn's name from Saltanò to Zampanò by combining it with Zamperla, the surname of another family of circus artists. The film is a huge success. It receives an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, a category that was first created in the 1957 edition.

2. Worldwide fame

Worldwide fame comes in 1957 with Fellini's first Oscar. The film that obtains an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, first awarded in the 1957 edition of the ceremony, is *La strada*, 1954, produced by Dino De Laurentis. It is a very poetic film about the tender, yet turbulent relationship between Gelsomina, acted by Giulietta Masina, and Zampanò, played by Anthony Quinn; two eccentric street artists who travel the length of Italy just after the war. Fellini's success is confirmed with another Oscar the following year for *Le notti di Cabiria (Nights of Cabiria)* by the same producer. Here the main character

is again played by Giulietta Masina, who often appeared in Fellini's early films. This film, together with *Il bidone* (*The swindle and the swindlers*) (1955) completes the trilogy set in the humble world of dropouts. In the 60s Fellini's creative talent expresses itself with all its might, revolutionizing the aesthetic principles of cinema. This decade sees Fellini's most shocking films, which are produced by Angelo Rizzoli. In 1960 *La dolce vita* is released. Fellini himself defines it as a "Picassoesque" film (like "creating a statue just to smash it with a hammer" he declared). The film, which cut loose from traditional narrative schemes, caused a scandal and much heated debate, not only for its portrayal of highly erotic situations, but also for its harsh descriptions of a form of moral decadence that was in strong contrast with the wealth of the Italian society of the time. The main actress, who plays alongside Marcello Mastroianni, is "an actress come from the cold" the Swedish Anita Ekberg, whose scene bathing in the Trevi Fountain has become part of our collective memory. Anita Ekberg acted again for Fellini in 1962 in an episode of the film *Boccaccio '70*, "*Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio*" (*The temptations of Dr. Antonio*) alongside an hilarious Peppino De Filippo. *La dolce vita* was awarded a Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival, and an Oscar for Best Costume Design. It was to become one of the most renowned films in the history of cinema, and it marked a turning point in Fellini's style from the Neorealism of his first films to the later style of his Art Films.

The questions that a man and an author of forty may ask himself, Fellini's age in 1963, are expressed in what is considered to be his most powerful film *8 ½*, which also won an Oscar, actually two Oscars, one for Best Foreign Film and another which was assigned to Piero Gherardi for the Costumes. The film received three Nominations for its Direction, Screenplay, and Project Design. Today it is still considered one of the greatest films in the history of cinema, one of the best films ever made, a world cinema masterpiece, and has inspired generations of film directors. It is so loved that the prestigious English *Sight & Sound* Magazine ranked it 9th in the list of best films ever made, and 3^d in the list compiled by film directors.

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the spirits*), which once again sees Giulietta Masina in a prominent role (1965) Fellini employs colour with an expressionist function, as he had done in the episode he directed in *Boccaccio '70*. This is Fellini's second colour film and is influenced by his





A celebration in Rimini for the presentation of the film *E la nave va* (*And the ship sails on*) (1983).

A lit up reconstruction of the Rex on the roof of the Grand Hotel, and a written homage to the Master of

Cinema projected onto the skyscraper (The Gambalunga Library Archive)

ever increasing interest in the supernatural. Indeed, Fellini's association with magicians and soothsayers is well known, in particular his friendship with Gustavo Adolfo Rol, a painter and bank director and renowned medium. During the making of this film, Fellini takes the advice of his psychoanalyst Emilio Servadio and experiments with LSD for therapeutic reasons. The day after the release of the film in Italy, at a time when the Italians were only just beginning to accept a new reality, without managing to commit to it fully, critics were not tender with Fellini's film. Perhaps no one had as yet fully understood his work and his enchanted and visionary world. While abroad, in France and in Great Britain, for instance, countries that were more socially advanced at the time, the film gained many favourable reviews. Though Fellini always took note of what was said and written about him, he managed then and some year later to ignore negative opinions and pursue his own ideas.

The following film *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna* (*The journey of G. Mastorna*), Fellini works on but never makes, for which, at the age of forty-five, he has to pay a heavy penalty. However, he soon makes up for it at the end of the decade. The late 60s and early 70s are intensely creative years. Back on set, having completely changed his technical and artistic team in 1968, he films the segment *Toby Dammit* of the film "*Tre passi nel delirio*" (*Spirits of the dead*). The following year he creates a TV documentary *Block-notes di un regista* (*A director's notebook*), which is followed by the film *Fellini Satyricon* (1969). Once again his film is highly acclaimed, and the problems of the previous years are definitely over.

Fellini's subsequent production again follows a ternary rhythm: *I clowns* (*The clowns*) (filmed for TV in 1970), *Roma* (*Fellini's Roma*) (1972) and *Amarcord* (1973), which are all centered on the theme of memory.

Fellini seeks the origins of his poetic inspiration by exploring these three "cities" of his soul: the Circus, the Capital City, and Rimini.

The last film of the triad is *Amarcord*, which gains an Oscar, Fellini's fourth. With this film Rimini establishes itself as the place of Fellini's memories par excellence and as the town which inspired him with the symbols and characters that have nourished the whole body of his work. This film turns Fellini's memories into legends, and in returning from his past, they point to the origins of the grand and fantastical world of Fellini's *tòpoi*.

A photo from the set
of the film *E la nave va*
(*And the ship sails on*).
The film director

is giving instructions
for a take (The
Gambalunga Library
Archive)

3. The Oscars

The Oscar Fellini receives in Hollywood for the film *Amarcord* confirms the extraordinary talent of the film director from Romagna, and consecrates him as a “giant of world cinema”. It is his fourth Oscar and he is only 53 years old. His fame reaches its peak.

Fellini does not go to Los Angeles to receive the statue. Later he would say that he had been too busy “celebrating the third anniversary of the preparation for the film *Casanova* (*Fellini’s Casanova*)”, a film that had been put off many times due to production problems.

About *Amarcord* he will declare: “I feel that the characters in *Amarcord*, the protagonists of a small town quarter, precisely because they are from a limited area - a quarter I know so well, and characters whom, whether made up or real, I have either known or invented well - suddenly are no longer exclusively mine, rather, they belong to everyone”.

The film’s planetary success brings fame to Fellini and to his hometown Rimini, in all corners of the world. Furthermore, with these films “he manages to get rid of another stone from the magical boot of his uncontainable and unstoppable creative genius”. He states: “with “*I clowns*” I managed to rid myself of the circus, with “*Roma*” I rid myself of Rome, and with “*Amarcord*” I rid myself of the province. Now I will make a film about women, so I will get them out of my system, too”.

Fellini’s Casanova is finally underway, and is released in 1976. *Fellini’s Casanova*, considered by many to be the apex of Fellini’s visionary talent, is followed by *Prova d’orchestra* (*Orchestra rehearsal*) (1979) and *La città delle donne* (*City of women*) in 1980; the last decade of his work will produce yet as many masterpieces: *E la nave va* (*And the ship sails on*) (1983), *Ginger e Fred* (1985), *Intervista* (*The interview*) (1987), and his farewell film *La voce della luna* (*The voice of the moon*) (1990), drawn from “*Il poema dei lunatici*” (*The poem of the Lunatics T.N.*) by Ermanno Cavazzoni.

“Cinema is a figurative expression, the materialization of one’s fantasies, by fantasies I mean the most real and authentic part of a human being”. This is Fellini’s opinion. That Fellini and Italian cinematography with him gradually moved away from Realism towards the fantastical is clearly seen in his films, the medium most suited to an expressionist use of images. In other words, though Fellini adhered to the rules of Neorealism,





he managed to surpass them by introducing an unconscious dimension in his films, creating characters that feed on dreams and fantasies, and portraying a “joie de vivre” that is both creature-like and detrimental.

In 1993, on 29th March, Fellini receives his fifth and final Oscar from the *American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. This Oscar is the most important and prestigious one as it is to his career. It honours his genius and his place in the history of cinema. The announcement of this Award was as follows: “As a recognition to the filmmaking skills that have enthralled and delighted the public worldwide”. The announcement was made on 20th January, on his 73rd birthday.

Fellini’s talent had previously been recognized by the members of the *Hollywood Academy* four times for four works that had won Oscars for Best Foreign Film: *La strada* in 1956 with Giulietta Masina and Anthony Quinn; *Le notti di Cabiria* in 1957 with Giulietta Masina again cast as the main protagonist; *8 ½* in 1963 with Fellini’s unforgettable alter ego Marcello Mastroianni; and *Amarcord* in 1974. All these films are much loved by the Americans for whom Fellini is still synonymous with Italian cinema, European cinema, and Art Films, in contrast with the more commercial Hollywood film industry.

“Another Oscar, isn’t it a bit much? I’d rather be the one to ask this question before someone else does less jokingly. I don’t know if my films, which I thoroughly enjoyed making, really deserve such a prestigious award again. Of course I’d like to think so. (...) This Oscar seems to materialize itself in the form of a friendly and vigorous shaking as though to say: “Come on, stop lazing about, now you’ll really have to prove that you deserve this prize”. He is talking about the Oscar to his career, and his words are contained in the book entitled *Fellini* by Vincenzo Mollica, published by Einaudi.

It was on this evening in the U.S. that from the stage Fellini told his Giulietta not to cry. “I had foreseen Giulietta’s tears. She is such an emotional being. «Please stop crying» I said to her instinctively; she was too far from the stage to see if she was crying or not. I know her better than I know myself. We have lived together for nearly half a century. The audience at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion was moved. Giulietta is much more popular and better loved than I am”.

above
**A photo from the set
of the film *Amarcord*
(The Gambalunga
Library Archive)**

below left
**A portrait of Fellini
by Ettore Scola
employed by the
Fellini Foundation**

below right
**A self-portrait
employed in the film
Il lungo viaggio
(*The long journey*)**

On that occasion Fellini was already unwell, in fact he said to Costanzo Costantini: "It was a challenge for me to come to Los Angeles in my condition". And about that evening he added: "I made a great effort to look fit, to say those few words. What could I have said in the little time I had, just thirty seconds? (...) The organization of the Oscar Ceremony is very precise. It is governed by time, pace, and the rules of show business; it is a show within a show, dedicated to those who do show business. If it weren't governed by such strict timing I might have been able to give a clever, witty, entertaining, detached, and moving speech, *Felliniesque* so to speak. I could have overcome my fear of not living up to the image that the Americans have of me both as a person and as a film director. But the ceremony does not allow for it, everything is calculated like the sequences of a film".

To be *Felliniesque*, right, but how? He also points this out to Mollica, who quotes it in his book. "The latter is the most difficult role for me, because though I am flattered to have become an adjective, I don't know what it means".

Fellini died that same year at the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome. They said his death was due to a banal accident, that he suffocated on a small piece of mozzarella which obstructed his trachea, causing irreparable brain damage. In actual fact he had not been well for some time, he had endured arthritis and blood pressure and circulation problems for many years, and the aneurysm he suffered in his abdominal aorta in the autumn of 1992 had had an adverse effect on his health.



CHAPTER VIII
**AIROPORTS
AND
AIRPLANES**

The long journey with Tonino Guerra

“Tonino can’t you see that we are making the planes, but there are no longer any airports?” This sentence ended the last long chat between Federico Fellini and the screenwriter Tonino Guerra; two great friends first and foremost.

They were aware that a world of cinema had come to an end, and that they were no longer part of it; a world that they had contributed to make great.

Guerra and Fellini, as the poet recounts, were born 10 kilometres apart, the distance between Rimini and Santarcangelo di Romagna, which Fellini would often joke about. Rimini was already a place of important business affairs and errands, from doctors to lawyers, and hospitals to law courts. While Santarcangelo, the town of Pope Clement XIV, the suppressor of the Jesuits, with its poor, rundown Medieval centre, had a lively cultural scene populated by fascinating characters like the actress Teresa Franchini, and the revered Professor and writer Augusto Campana, to mention but a few.

Both men were born in the same year, 1920. Fellini on 20th January, and Guerra on 16th March, and both had enjoyed a carefree childhood and adolescence, though the poet from Santarcangelo experienced a dramatic epilogue to his youth when he was deported to a German concentration camp. When Federico was already in Rome, Guerra was still studying in Urbino, where he had lived since 1941, and where he was attending the Teacher Training Faculty. But the war was on, and he had to interrupt his studies because he was called to arms on 12th December 1942. He went home but was evacuated to the countryside due to the bombings, and on a fleeting visit to his house, he was captured in the streets of Santarcangelo and imprisoned in the Troisdorf concentration camp from 1944 to 1945.

The two men met in Rome when they were older and more mature, and shared a daily existence of precariousness and hope. Guerra also spoke of the financial help Fellini gave him, and of their walks along the Ostia seafront, that reminded each man of their childhood sea. Later on as both men became successful, their paths met often, but professionally they only coincided at the end of 1972 when they decided to co-write *Amarcord*, which was released on 13th December 1973. The screenplay was published by Rizzoli in the August of the same year. From that moment onwards, their names were linked throughout the world.

above

**Federico Fellini with
Tonino Guerra, a photo
from the set of the film
Amarcord (The**

**Gambalunga Library
Archive)
below left
A drawing-caricature
by Federico Fellini**

**that portrays Tonino
Guerra on the sofa
of the film director's
study in Rome**

below right

**Federico Fellini
and Tonino Guerra**

1. Films co-directed by Fellini

Amarcord

Thus the first film to bind them forever is *Amarcord*.

"Io mi ricordo" is a three word sentence in Italian that in Romagna dialect is translated as "a m'arcórd" with an accent on the letter o, which for the two screenwriters becomes one word with no accent. Regarding the title of the film, Guerra has often told of how it originated through the sound of a name that was often mentioned at the time. "We'd go to the bar and when the barman asked: "Comanda?" (What would you like?) you'd hear people ordering 'un amaro Cora' (another bitter Cora). The sound of the words "amaro Cora" was so frequent that it eventually brought to mind our dialect word *amarcord*".

Regarding this Fellini writes: "I have often simplified the cabalistic meanings of the word *amarcord* saying that it is Romagna dialect for "I remember". But that is not entirely true. I think that I had the original idea after reading something about the Swedish abortionist *Hammercord*. The sound of the name set the whole process in motion. If you join the words *amare* (to love), *core* (heart), *ricordare* and *amaro* (remember and bitter) you get *Amarcord*".

We must also point out, however, that the title of the film is the same as Guerra's poem: "*Io mi ricordo*" in dialect "*A m'arcórd*" that recites: "I know, I know, I know/ that a man of fifty/always has clean hands/I wash mine two or three times a day/but it is only when they are dirty/that I remember/when I was a boy". Fellini greatly loved these poems in dialect because "they reminded him of the musicality of our homeland - the poet would often state - especially the sincerity of the people, which only dialect can truly express". Many real events are entwined with imaginary ones, and many stories about the making of the film have become legendary, so it is impossible to distinguish reality from fantasy. Here we will limit ourselves to writing that the international success of the film was such that the relationship between the two friends was never the same again, since the film literally changed their lives. We only need mention the numerous prizes it gained, which are contained in the first chapter, to understand what an impact the film had. One of the most famous scenes is the one of the mad uncle who is taken on a Sunday outing by his family, and who hides up a tree and shouts in dialect:





“Á vói una dòna” (I want a woman). He refuses to come down, and neither the father nor the brother manage to persuade him to. Only the young nun from the insane asylum manages to bring him back down to earth and to normality. The story for this scene was suggested by Guerra, who had read it in a newspaper article that stated that a mad man in Turin had shouted the same words while threatening to jump out of a window. “I would cut articles out of weekly and daily papers about unusual and interesting events that would give me ideas for fictional stories, since they were so unlikely and bizarre”. Guerra’s personality, which “wanted spectators to step right into a dream”, as he himself declared, completely pervades this film, so numerous are the ideas, suggestions, and poetic images that he brings to it. All his contributions are clearly recognizable from the thick fog in which the grandfather gets lost, to the “little hands” pollen that drifts in the spring air, to the priest who blesses the animals in the name of Saint Anthony, the Saint whom his mother worshipped. The nursery rhyme that Calzinàzz makes up is also Guerra’s invention: “My grandfather made bricks, my father made bricks, I make bricks, too, yet where is my house?” taken from the renowned poem “*I madéun*” (*The bricks*) in the collection entitled “*I bu*” (*The oxen*). The artistic bond between Fellini and Guerra is so strong that their cooperation prevails. *Amarcord*, an unrivalled masterpiece, is one of the top 100 Italian films to preserve for posterity. It is a unique work in which the contributions of both authors are clearly recognizable. No other film of theirs is the result of such a collaborative effort as this one.

After *Amarcord* the poet was often asked how much of his Romagna heritage Fellini had preserved, and this is what he would answer: “He has the tenderness of the Rimini sea and air, of the flavours, the tremors and flights of birds that make him even more Riminese, a truer Romagnolo than anyone else. Federico’s gestures were unique, and he made original choices; he loved certain profiles and places whose precious and enchanted atmospheres he could capture”.

And to the question put to Guerra on what *Amarcord* represented he replied: “With *Amarcord* I think we gave the world a childhood. Everyone really believed that on that evening the Rex Ocean Liner sailed past the Grand Hotel in Rimini, and as Sergio Zavoli wrote, no one had ever seen anything quite as visionary and real”.

above

**A photo from the set
of the film *E la nave va*
(*And the ship sails on*)
(The Gambalunga
Library Archive)**

below

**A poster of the film
*Ginger and Fred***

E la nave va (And the ship sails on)

Ten years later, in 1983, another film is released. The two men from Romagna work together on the screenplay together with the Veneto poet Andrea Zanzotto from Pieve di Soglio (born in 1921). The latter wrote the lyrics to the operas. Guerra said that Federico's main idea was a film about a parade of officers in high uniform, of carabinieri wearing plumed hats, which would somehow be about a celebration or a funeral perhaps. Together they came up with the idea of a funeral on a ship, which resulted in the "Gloria N. steamship" that sails from quay number 10 from an unspecified Italian port. The ship is carrying the ashes of the "divine" opera singer Edmea Tetua, and the cruise is heading for the small Island of Erimo in the Aegean Sea, whose waters will welcome her ashes according to her wishes. There are many celebrities on board, friends of the deceased, who are accompanying her on her last journey. Fellini's sympathetic yet unforgiving irony is portrayed by the journalist Orlando, who is on board the ship to write an article about the last farewell. There is even a lovesick rhinoceros on board, which becomes an object of curiosity for the passengers. History suddenly breaks onto the scene, thus ruining Edmea's small drama. In Sarajevo the Grand Duke Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, is killed and the First World War breaks out. The ship's Commander is obliged to save the shipwrecked Serbs. But as the liner is nearing its destination, it crosses the path of an Austrian battleship and is hit and sunk. In the last scene, the journalist informs the public that not all the passengers have died. The rhinoceros, who is finally content, eats a tuft of grass. This baroque work of art is a brilliant metaphor about artists and their detachment from reality. It has been defined as Fellini's journey into a world of ghosts who know that they are such, and who are completely detached from reality. A reality in which everything is clearly false, but appears incredibly real, in a fiction in which humour turns into melancholy. Fellini and his wife attend the world première on 25th September 1983 in Rimini. During this memorable celebration Fellini said: "To repay all these people, I should at least perform a miracle, fly, walk on the water like Christ, or part the sea before me". Fellini was extolled in his hometown and in Venice, though the film was praised even more highly in France, where it gained "unanimous acclaim", as Fellini himself declared. Some







ETHEROGLICE - TECNOLOGICO CINEMATOGRAFICO



ALBERTO GRIMALDI
presenta

FEDERICO FELINI GINGER E FRED



MARCELLO MASTROIANNI con **GIULIETTA MASINA**

Regia di FEDERICO FELINI - Sceneggiatura di FEDERICO FELINI - TIZIANO GUERRA - TULLIO PINELLI - Musica di NICOLA PIGNA
 Montaggio di ALBERTO GRIMALDI - Distribuzione I.P.A. S.p.A. - 20121 CINISELLO B. (Bg) - 20121 LONATE SEB. (Bg) - Distribuzione italiana: UNICE



GIULIETTA MASINA - MARCELLO MASTROIANNI

FEDERICO FELLINI
GINGER
UND FRED

French critics said that the film was “fascination in its purest form”; others paraphrased the title as “Fellini the genius sails on”. The film inspired the monument in the Rimini cemetery, where Federico and Giulietta are buried with their son Federichino, who died prematurely. The sculpture by Arnaldo Pomodoro is called *The Prow*. Though the film was not as successful as other of Fellini’s works, it gained numerous awards including 5 Silver Ribbons in 1984 for Best Direction, Best Photography, Best Production Design, Best Costumes, and Best Special Effects; 4 David di Donatello 1984: for Best Film, Best Screenplay, Best Photography, Best Production Design; and the *Sant Jordi Award* in 1986 for Best Film.

Ginger e Fred

Twelve years have gone by since *Amarcord*, and two years since *E la nave va*. The two men from Romagna have written the material for the film *Ginger e Fred*, released in 1985. Fellini wants to make a film to denounce the growing phenomenon of trash TV. The film is indeed a ferocious satire on consumerism and on the world of private TV channels which the film director especially hated for their bad habit of interrupting films with advertisements. He was not against advertising, he himself made some adverts, but he hated its abuse of power and coined the slogan: “You can’t interrupt a feeling”. With *Ginger e Fred* he wanted to show that the abuse of power by advertising suffocates dignity and poetry, which, along with TV quiz shows, represent the predomination and alienation of the new subculture of the mass. The film, which is a forerunner, describes the reality that was to manifest itself in the following years in all its worst and most wretched aspects. The film, which is both dreamlike and disturbing, is deeply pessimistic, though this aspect is mitigated by the delicate tenderness of the two protagonists and by their memories of their love story and of their youth. The main characters are Amelia Bonetti and Pippo Botticella aka *Ginger e Fred*, two ageing tip-tap dancers and doubles of the renowned American stars. They are romantic and eccentric, and magnificently acted by Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni. The main characters are invited to take part in a nostalgic TV show by a private TV channel, where everything revolves around advertising and the presenter. When they start dancing, a blackout interrupts their act,

above
**A detail of the
film poster *Fellini's
Casanova***

below
**A poster of the film
*Prova d'orchestra
(Orchestra rehearsal)***

which is when Fred persuades Ginger to leave the unpleasant situation, but they do not manage to as the light comes back on and they are obliged to carry on with their performance, which ends sadly and pitilessly. The film received numerous awards including in 1986 the David di Donatello for Best Main Actor (Marcello Mastroianni), Best Soundtrack by Nicola Piovani, Best Costume Design by Danilo Donati, David René Clair and Federico Fellini, Golden Globes for Best Film to Federico Fellini, Best Actor to Marcello Mastroianni, Best Actress to Giulietta Masina, Silver Ribbons for Best Main Actor to Marcello Mastroianni, Best Main Actress to Giulietta Masina, Best Production Design by Dante Ferretti, and Best Costume Design by Danilo Donati.

2. Fellini's *Casanova* and *Prova d'Orchestra* (Orchestra Rehearsal)

Tonino Guerra's name does not appear in the screenplays of these two films though he worked on both of them. His contribution is easy to perceive and his words confirm it. *Fellini's Casanova* was released 1976, but had been in Fellini's mind for the twenty years leading up to its making. The film was finally started on the basis of a blank contract. In it Guerra's contribution is perceived in the poem written in Veneto dialect entitled "*La móna*" (*The fanny*) but which in Romagna dialect is "*La figa*". This poem is recited along with others that are in keeping with the theme of the film, by Guerra and Zanzotto. In actual fact, Guerra was working with Fellini when he was suddenly distracted by something that made him break the contract and return the full advance payment he had received. He says that Fellini told him off for making a decision based on "a pair of knickers". Guerra repeatedly tried to explain that he was not chasing after a woman, but we do not know that for certain. What we do know is that this film, which had been planned for years, was finished without him. Fellini involved the screenwriter Bernardino Zapponi and asked the Veneto poet Andrea Zanzotto to write some rhymes for his *Casanova*: "I'd like to try to break up the opaqueness, the convention of the Veneto dialect, which, like all dialects, has become frozen into an unemotional, sickly form. I would like to lend it a new freshness and a new lease of life, I'd like it to be more piercing, mercurial, and tenacious... by inventing phonetic





and linguistic combinations, so the meaning of the words may reflect the glare of an eccentric vision". Upon Fellini's request Zanzotto carried out extensive research on the Veneto dialect, not only in its original and new forms, but also in the possibility of bringing new emotions to language through more penetrating sounds. Thus the verses for *Fellini's Casanova* are born from the blending of the languages of Goldoni and Ruzante. The film is a free adaptation of "*Storia della mia vita*" (*The story of my life*) by Giacomo Casanova. During the Carnival in Venice, Giacomo Casanova, played by Donald Sutherland, decides to prove his sexual prowess with Sister Maddalena to please her voyeuristic lover, the French Ambassador, who Casanova hopes to obtain some favours from. But he is arrested by the inquisition and accused of performing black magic. He escapes from the Piombi Prison, and in Paris he is a guest of the Marquise d'Urfé, who wants to acquire his secrets of immortality. Casanova then leaves Paris and once again takes up his frenetic activity as a seducer. One of his affairs includes an unhappy experience with Henriette, who makes him suffer and abandons him. In Rome he takes part in a sex competition and wins. Here he also meets the Pope and his mother, who is no longer very interested in him. Finally old age catches up with him. He is working as a librarian. His looks have faded and the courts no longer remember him. He is lonely and dances with a mechanical doll, which represents his memories of an increasingly distant past. The film, which was entirely shot in Cinecittà, opens and ends on the Canal Grande in Venice; a cold, glacial city, to which Casanova, now old and ill, imagines returning. The story ends with a glimpse of his youth, as he dances with a mechanical doll and two mannequins on the frozen Canal Grande. This Casanova is loutish and whining; he is desperate and obsessed, a sexual athlete, a gymnast of the sexual act. He is pervaded by obtuse male qualities to the point of being only half a man. Fellini is aware that nowadays Don Juan is no longer an antihero but more of an anachronistic figure, who, when reenacted, risks becoming a sort of caricature. His attitude towards Casanova is thus ambivalent; he loves and hates him at the same time. In the daily paper published on 11th December 1976 Morando Morandini writes: "*Casanova* is Fellini's best film after 8 ½. It is probably the least "Felliniesque" of his films. It is certainly more unitary and compact in its richness and in

above
**Drawings-caricatures
by Federico Fellini**

below
**Federico Fellini with
Tonino Guerra outside
the poet's main**

**entrance in Pennabilli,
September 1991 (The
Archive of the Tonino
Guerra Association)**

the genius of its figurative ideas, narrative pace, and skill in fusing the horrible with the tender, and the fabulous with the ironic, and in its ability to shift from the grotesque to the visionary". In 1977 the film won an Oscar for Best Costume Design by Danilo Donati, two Silver Ribbons for the Project Design by Donati and Fellini and for the Costumes, and a David di Donatello for Best Soundtrack by Nino Rota.

Prova d'orchestra (*Orchestra rehearsal*) is the other film that Tonino Guerra works on but does not sign. His friend Federico once more rebukes him accusing him of letting his feelings take over. On this occasion Guerra once again does not explain the reasons for his abandonment of the project in detail, he just mentions that he must go on a trip to Russia. The screenplay is thus handed over to Brunello Rondi.

His words are: "It is only my fault if my name is not in the *Prova d'orchestra* screenplay. At the time I was in love and would often run off to Moscow. One morning Fellini came to me with thirty pages about an orchestra who had a problem with their conductor. He wanted me to write another thirty pages. I did and he gave me a cheque, which I tore up. He was very angry with me and gave me another cheque for a smaller amount. As I was leaving for Moscow I told him not to bother to include my name in the screenplay. I wrote the orchestra conductor's long interview with the help of the poet Roberto Roversi. I noticed that Fellini used a lot of it". These words are true because those pages contain the main idea of the film's ending as well as a sketch of the enormous ball that demolishes the wall of the oratory where the rehearsals take place. A file that apparently dates back to 1977-78, one of the few that the poet kept, which contains much of the film that was produced by RAI and filmed in the record time of a mere four weeks.

For instance, Guerra suggests some alternative titles, one of which Fellini chooses. "I wouldn't mind a misleading title that makes you think of something else like the title of one of the five pieces of music that are being rehearsed «La Primavera calda» for instance". Then at the end he adds: "I prefer «THE ORCHESTRA»".

With regard to the ending of the film, the screenwriter declares: "I don't like the machine we see through the hole (...). I'd prefer a large metal sphere like one of those that demolish buildings; a dark, abstract,



FRANCO
CRISTALDI
PRESENTA

FEDERICO FELLINI AMARCORD



DIRETTORE E SCRITTORE
FEDERICO FELLINI TONINO GUERRA

CON
MAGGIOLI

F.C. P.E.C.F.

PRODOTTO DA
FRANCO CRISTALDI

REGIA DI
FEDERICO FELLINI

TECHNICOLOR

UNA ESCLUSIVITA' P.I.C.

metaphysical pendulum that looks like the uvula of a cave with debris in the background; after all it is the horrible and probable throat of an instrument”.

And: “I’d rather the back wall weren’t recomposed, the hole must remain, we are already on the rubble; it is not just a mental picture”.

The story is unique and highly symbolic. The result of painful historical events that had taken place in Italy (ten years earlier there had been the revolt of 1968, then the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro and his escort, and a climate of political instability and destructive social tensions instigating irresponsible actions). It is not by chance that some wrote that this was Fellini’s most political film, though most disagreed. In the political chaos and degeneration that exaggerates individuality and that suppresses the ethical principle of a job well done, an idea dear to Fellini, an external element intervenes. This element is unexpected and frightening (the famous iron ball) and a prelude to the advent of a new order. Fellini’s idea is general and starts with the function of the individual in society, of an individual’s needs and development, and includes the role of our means of communication. Music as art represents all of this. For Fellini art is a means to reach beyond the ephemeral, beyond death and banality. To him mediocrity is unbearable, thus we must return to the order of symbolism, to the language of certainty, and to the compactness of a work of art. Fellini’s is a harrowing search for hope, which, as always, is also a plea and a stigmatization. The huge iron ball also represents cinema crashing into TV and bringing with it the special effects and powerful emotions that are its true essence. In a 13th Century oratory, which was turned into an auditorium in the 18th Century, rehearsals for a symphonic concert are taking place. The musicians arrive in small groups and take their seats. In a corner there are also some trade union representatives. The rehearsals are being filmed for TV and a journalist interviews the musicians. They each talk of their instrument and unparalleled experiences. When the conductor arrives, speaking in a distinctly German accent, the rehearsal begins in a peaceful atmosphere, but it is suddenly interrupted by the protests of the musicians. The atmosphere, which has suffered a sudden blackout, is no longer reparable. A revolution takes place to the shouting of popular slogans: “Musicians at last! Freedom from the past!”. The defeated conductor is made fun of and humiliated by his musicians.

The walls are covered in writing and anarchy reigns. Someone shoots a firearm that they are bearing legally. Someone else ignores the situation and continues listening to the radio (like the uncle in *Amarcord* who carries on eating while he is surrounded by chaos). When the situation has degenerated and the musicians have turned against each other, the conductor returns with a patronising attitude to reestablish the peace, and they begin playing again. Everything seems to be going well when there is a dramatic turn of events. Suddenly the building begins to shake, jolted by harsher and harsher blows, until a huge steel ball breaks through the walls and the harp player dies in their collapse. After some confusion and screams of terror, silence returns, and the rehearsal continues. Once again on the podium, the conductor imparts his orders like a dictator. "The portrayal of the musicians - writes Tullio Kezich - confirms Fellini's talent for caricature, highlighted by a Gogolesque dimension, while the figure of the conductor is partly an autobiographical outlet and partly a self-criticism taken to paradoxical limits (after an inspired Jungian speech on the need to play one's instrument well, the conductor shouts a series of orders in German). On the whole, the film, shot with unrivalled skill, is a brilliantly contradictory essay. It is entertaining, yet poignantly sad, positive and desperate, and captivating and peevish at the same time".

The critics spoke of it at length, and in especially positive terms in the U.S.A. The film was well received at the 32nd Cannes Film Festival, where it was hors concours.

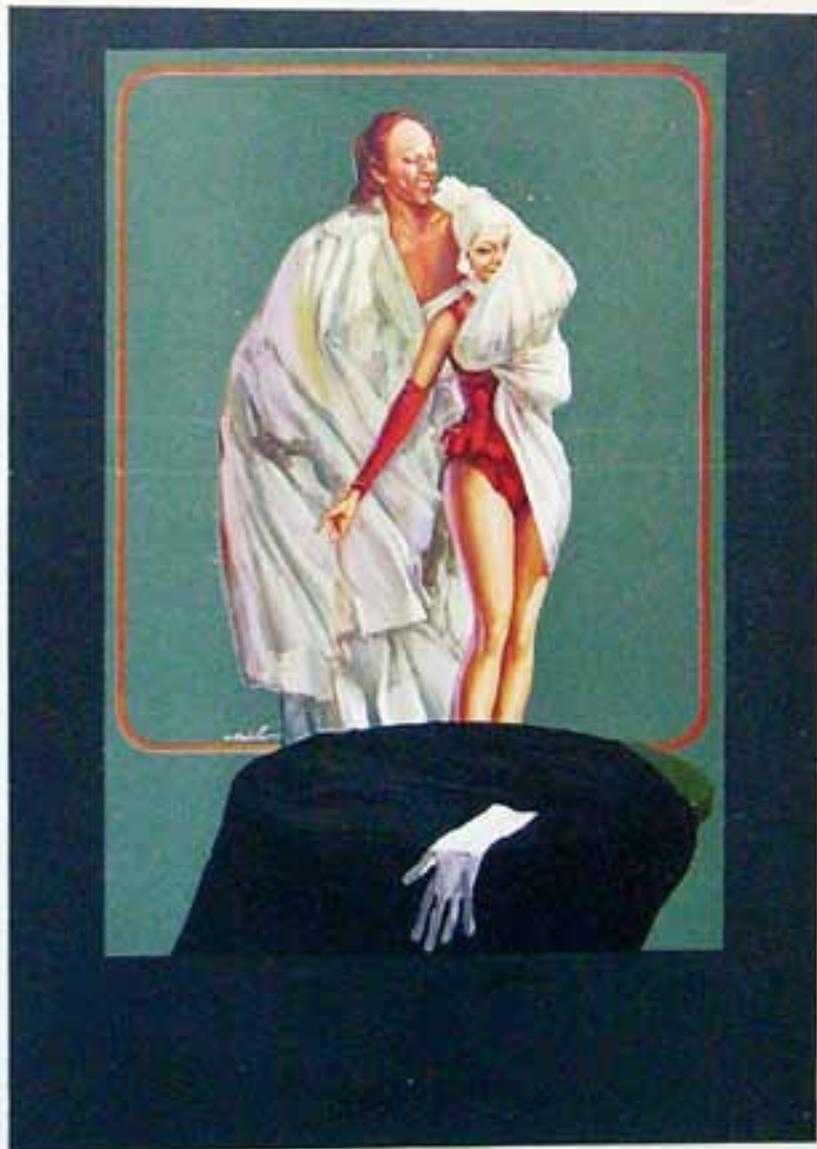
Awards were not very generous just after its release in 1979, the film only won one Silver Ribbon for Best Soundtrack by Nino Rota.

This is what Fellini said about the film in his confessions to Damian Pettigrew (Elleu, Roma, 2003):

"It is curious how many people have attacked me for making *Prova d'orchestra* stating that it is an apologia of Fascism. I am aghast at the thought! Others declared that I had finally shown an interest in politics and that this film was my first political essay; that I had to erase my naivety. Others criticised the film saying that it was reactionary, conservative, or even a hotchpotch of mystical ideas, or a political allegory. *Orchestra Rehearsal* is nothing of the kind. It is a parable inspired by "*The orchestra conductor*" in "*Mass and Power*" by Elias Canetti, a monumental analysis

Titania

ALBERTO GRIMALDI



**IL
CASANOVA**
DI FEDERICO FELLINI

DONALD SUTHERLAND

FEDERICO FELLINI - BERNARDINO ZAPPONÉ - GIUSEPPE ROTUNDO - DANIELE BONATI - NINO ROTA

UFA

UNA D'UTENZA UFA - ARATILLO - L'ESCLUSIVA UFA



on the nature of violence; a classic that my cultured friend Brunello Rondi advised me to read during the making of *Casanova*. Thus the conductor is the literal incarnation of the work that the orchestra is playing, the simultaneous sounds and their sequence; and since during the performance nothing exists outside this job, at that moment the conductor is the lord of the world. I did wonder whether to include this quote in the credits, but then I thought better of it. It is not my style”.

3. The last meetings of the two great Masters

While they would often meet in Rome from the 50s to the 80s, after 1990, once Guerra had returned to his Romagna, the film director and the screenwriter saw each other less frequently.

At first in Rome they would meet in Federico's home, while later, at the time of *Amarcord* and afterwards, they worked in the film director's study. Fellini would often fetch Guerra in the morning, usually early. Regarding which Guerra used to recount an anecdote: “One day I left my flat in Piazzale Clodio a bit early, before I heard the bell ring. I found Federico waiting in the car. When he saw me he told me off: “What are you doing? There, now you've ruined it!”. I knew then that the time he spent waiting was important to him; he needed to get ready before meeting people”.

Regarding this Fellini writes: “I wake up early, around six. I get up and try to do some exercise - I try and then I give up. I walk around the house (...) I make some coffee and phone friends. Then the driver in the producer's car is waiting for me nearby. I get into it and ask him to take the longer route, because it is on this trip, during this half hour, that I try telling myself what I must do, what I want to achieve that day. During the car trip (...) I feel that the bustle, the people, trams, cars, and life that is waking up in the city help me by obliging me to tell myself that I must go to work and do certain things.”

During the times we spent together slouched on the sofas in his various offices - Fellini draws his friend sitting on the sofa - Federico would sometimes suggest that I “visit certain places, for instance Bagno Vignoni, where there is a piazza which is like a pool filled with hot water, where Catherine of Siena bathed, which he loved greatly”.

above
**Tonino Guerra,
Titta Benzi, and
Sergio Zavoli at**

**Fellini's funeral
in Rimini
(The Gambalunga
Library Archive)**

below
**Federico Fellini with
Sergio Zavoli at the**

**Grand Hotel
(The Gambalunga
Library Archive)**

On the rare occasions Fellini returned to Rimini, he would visit his friend in Pennabilli, after the poet had moved there. Guerra would often recount their last meeting in the Montefeltro area. Fellini had not been well, but he was worried about something else, which affected his health. He couldn't find any producers for his new films, and he hated not working; the cinema was his whole life. A sentence Fellini said struck Guerra, and was to remain engraved in his memory: "We're in the car on our way to Pennabilli from Santarcangelo. It's raining. We're quiet as we listen to the rain. Then suddenly he says, maybe provoked by the three years he had spent looking for a film editor to work on a film he hadn't managed to make: "Tonino can't you see that we are making the planes, but there are no longer any airports?"

His work was everything to him, it was his life, and he kept on trying to create something that was no longer understood, something, of which, apparently no one could see the significance. His films were a vital form of art, which is how Fellini saw art. "To say that a work of art is vital, that is the definition that best suits me. If a work is vital, then it will have a mysterious life of its own".

Thus the years that preceded Fellini's illness were sombre ones in terms of a lack of attention from the producers and from the Italian film industry.

Indeed this period was followed by illness, and Guerra would visit him while he was in hospital. Then there was their last meeting, the one during which Fellini asked Guerra if he was curious to know what there was afterwards. When the poet asked: "After what?" he replied: "After death of course".

Tonino Guerra recounts the following: "In the pages Zavoli wrote about Fellini there is a revealing sentence of Federico's. This is what he replied to his friend when he asked him if he was afraid of dying: «Aren't you curious to see how it ends?». It is extraordinary to say this about death. It is incredibly beautiful, like the words he said to Enzo Biagi, who visited him two days before he died. Federico said: "It's like falling in love again". I like that. It is as though he were suggesting that life counts and that it is wonderful only when you are possessed by a powerful feeling for someone or for something that you want to create. The idea of clinging to a moment





Drawings by Federico
Fellini used as frames
in the animated film

written by Tonino
Guerra *Il Lungo viaggio*
(*The long journey*)

when you lose your balance, a moment of loss, the idea of being a slave to something huge is extraordinary. Falling in love means losing a precise dimension and sailing away, becoming like a scent that fills the air”.

This concept was etched in Guerra’s memory. The idea that a dying man could think of falling in love was the most beautiful declaration of a love for life that one could possibly make; the thought of clinging to such a vital and regenerating force such as love in its nascent form, which can be one’s love for a child, a mother, a partner, or for God.

When Fellini died the poet was near his friend in the chamber where he lay in state and at the funeral.

But the poet from Santarcangelo did more than that. He paid his friend homage with an extraordinarily powerful work, a film he wrote the screenplay for, which was directed by a friend of his, a Russian film director. The film tells the world who Fellini really was and why he is eternal.

The title of the film is *A long voyage (Dolgoe puteshestvie)* by Andrej Khrzhanovskij based on an idea by Guerra, who is also the voiceover of the narrator. Considered a veritable jewel of animated cinema, in 2006 it was awarded the “Targa del Presidente della Repubblica” at the Palazzo Venezia Festival for Best Documentary on Italian Art. This is how Guerra explained the film: “Some time ago, I dreamed that all of Federico’s sketches, the ones he would use to find the right actors for his films, got onto the Rex Ocean Liner, on a cruise to an enchanted Island; and Giulietta and Federico were among them. They got to the Island and descended to have a joyous holiday. «At a certain point the lawyer from *Amarcord* wonders why the Master of cinema and the great actress have not got off the ship. Maybe they want to travel to a much further away island». “I am sure Federico’s name is eternal and that his journey is a voyage through memory, including the memories of those who will come after us”.

Tonino Guerra speaks about Federico Fellini

"We worked together for about twenty years". In the early stages I was the beggar who had come to Rome from Romagna who needed help, while he was the powerful one.

Sometimes he would hand me some money with nonchalance.

He was very generous.

He had a unique way of thinking, of creating. Our working relationship was friendly and respectful.

For instance Federico says: "Tonino let's make *City of women*".

I reply: "I don't like it" and he says: "What do you mean, you don't like it? It's been hanging around for days". "I don't like *City of women*. I'm sorry Federico I really can't help you, I don't like it, I just don't like it". So he shot it and I didn't.

A second instance. He comes to me with thirty pages and says:

"Have a look at these and write another thirty pages for *Orchestra rehearsal*". I reply: "But I have to leave". "Write the thirty pages", he repeats. I wrote the thirty pages. "Where on earth are you going?". "I have to go to Russia". "To Russia? Are you crazy? We've got to finish..." "I can't, I can't do anything at all". He wants to give me some money. I leave. He wanted me to write the ending, the ball that breaks everything and the final speech, which was really difficult. *Orchestra rehearsal* is a wonderful film, and I'm sorry I didn't co-sign it. I didn't sign it but everyone knows the truth. On the other hand, I can't blame him, he always used to say to me "Are you crazy Tonino, what are you doing? Are you chasing a pair of knickers?".

For many years he talked about this film, which I want to call the dark film. Regarding which he always said: "Let's talk about the film, but remember that it brings bad luck". He wasn't joking either. Right, so it's summer, we start working in his study in Via Sistina. He was lying on a sofa. There was a glass table with some roses that were shedding their petals on it. I was at the typewriter. At a certain point there was a phone call for me. It was Dr. Rusca the dentist. "Hello, listen Tonino, do you remember what I told you when you came to me and I removed that white dot from your gum? I've had it analysed and unfortunately it's serious". Federico said: "What's wrong?". "Oh, nothing... Dr. Rusca phoned" and I explained the story about the white dot I'd had removed from my gum. Federico raised a hand as though to cool it off because a slight breeze was blowing through the shutters that overlooked Via Sistina. He picked up all the rose petals that had fallen; he came closer





above
Federico Fellini
with **Tonino Guerra**

below
Tonino Guerra
with **Titta Benzi**

and started throwing the roses among the sheets we had written on and said: "You know, this job is difficult, let's think about it. I may work on *Casanova*". "But I'm leaving" - I replied. "Again. You're crazy... There's a contract, forty million Lire...". "I don't care, I'm leaving". Then I come back. He had done a divine job, because *Casanova* is a masterpiece and he says to me: "Tonino listen, I want you in this film, write a free poem". "What about?" I ask and he says: "About the fanny". "Federico..." He carries on: "It must be a sweet vision, magical...". I write the poem, he puts it in the film, then he has a doubt and calls this great poet Zanzotto and the word "figa" (the fanny) becomes "mona" (Veneto dialect) and he puts it in the film, in the credits".

In the early years, Federico had an old green car and he'd take me to Ostia to see two houses built in a fascist style that were really exceptional. I might have been a bit suspicious at the time, because I was partly a partisan. I had been caught with some fliers in my pocket and a woman had saved me, but I paid for it by spending a year in a concentration camp in Germany.

To be honest, those two houses were incredibly beautiful; two square blocks standing on the edge of large round terraces like the lips of huge black people.

He has always been very affectionate and tender, extremely generous, not just with me, with everyone. He tried to meet the requests of all those who asked him for help. He also enjoyed the company of strange people at home, simple people whom he thus described when I questioned him about them: "You don't know how darkness, can be full of shards of light". Ever since he said this, I have had a great respect for ignorance. I would also like to talk about his kindness. He was affectionate and very tender. We wouldn't start work right away in the morning. First we would spend an hour answering phone calls and requests for help. He wanted to help everybody".

CHAPTER 1/2

I KNEW

HIM WELL

Fellini seen from the moon

From June 1993 onwards, after undergoing an operation on an aneurysm of the abdominal aorta, in Switzerland, Federico Fellini never fully recovered; and while he was convalescing in Rimini, at his beloved Grand Hotel, he suffered a stroke. He was taken to the Rimini Infermi Hospital, where he staid until 9th October. The Mayor of the time, Giuseppe Chicchi, as reported in the book *Guida alla Rimini di Fellini (A Guide to Fellini's Rimini)* said this: "The people of Rimini, who are so cynical and suspicious, so unwilling to recognize the merits of their fellow citizens, got to know and love Federico more than they ever had before.... Maybe due to the clamour of the media, or perhaps out of a sense of responsibility, they felt involved in a collective enterprise that the whole world was looking to with great apprehension, the job of "saving Fellini's life". He could have chosen a clinic in Zurich or Los Angeles. What was the obscure symbolic meaning behind Federico's decision to return to his hometown to get better? (...) I think Federico felt the affection of his townspeople. Before leaving for the hospital in Ferrara, where he was to undergo physiotherapy, he wrote a letter to me to thank the people of Rimini through me. In the letter he said he had found out that the loudspeaker system on the beach had announced his improvement, and then he added: "They told me of a tourist who had just jumped off a diving board; as they spoke of my improvement, he stopped mid-air to applaud"; an extraordinary image of Felliniesque fantasy".

Having undergone physiotherapy in Ferrara, Fellini was taken to the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome, as he had wished for some time to be near his Giulietta. But on 17th October at 5.45 pm he fell into a coma that lasted until his death on 31st October at 12 pm. Thus Fellini died in the capital and was taken to Rimini on 4th November. The whole town paid its farewells in a manner suited to its greatest son. Fellini lay in state in the Sala delle Colonne, formerly the foyer of the Galli Theatre, which was followed by a long procession along Corso d'Augusto, which passed in front of the Fulgor Cinema. A few days before, on 1st November Fellini had lain in state in Cinecittà in Rome in the legendary Theatre no. 5, where he had created most of his masterpieces, while a religious funeral was held in the Basilica di S. Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in Rome, officiated by Cardinal Silvestrini. Fellini's friend Sergio Zavoli pronounced the following words at the funeral: "Soon you will be taken along a street that you have loved so much; the street where the Fulgor stands. Shortly after we will say farewell. That familiar street belongs to us all. It has witnessed all our comings and goings for eons". The crowd in Rimini was huge on that

wintery November afternoon. "Everyone is here (...) the *Amarcord* fellows, too. (...) Titta is present - Federico's lifelong confidant and friend - who represents the whole group of friends, those present and those absent, and those who have passed away (...) along with hundreds more, starting with the Mayor down to the fisherman who every day at the end of the harbour stubbornly awaits an event on our behalf, too, perhaps, that we have never really understood". Zavoli also explained how the crowd of people present represented "the universal expression of grief" that "silently, speechlessly, and discretely watched over Fellini for weeks from afar, when he was struck by the final illness at the Grand Hotel". In his funeral speech Tonino Guerra with regard to Rimini, the hometown Federico had left but never forgotten, reminisced on how they would chat about Romagna during the Sundays they spent together in Cinecittà in Theatre no. 5. "Only now do I realize that in the void of that theatre he was creating the walls of Rimini, he was creating the city of his soul". Most certainly Rimini was a part of Fellini as he was a part of Rimini, more than anyone could have imagined before seeing the crowds that attended his deeply moving funeral.

On 1st November newspapers around the world announced his death on their front pages in large capitals, and some wrote:

- Fellini broke all Hollywood's narrative rules with the films he crafted with brilliant skill. *The Independent*

- Though the world of Fellini's films was created in the film studios, it reveals the essence of the real world: it is a circus. *New York Times*

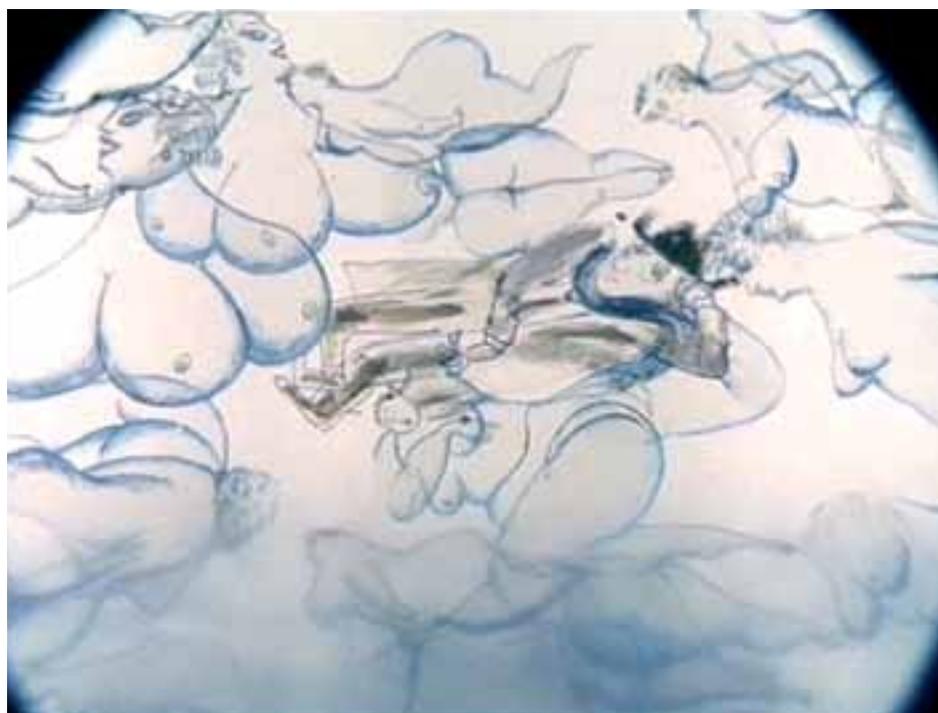
- Fellini was the greatest creator of legends of European cinema. *Frankfurter Zeitung*

- Master of the Cinema, Italy loses a great poet. *Liberation*

When asked whether he was afraid of dying, Federico Fellini replied: "How should I answer that? Yes, no, it depends, I don't know, I don't remember, what kind? The inexhaustible curiosity that night after night awakes us in the morning, every day of our lives, should not abandon us when we are before the most unfathomable of all experiences; at least let us hope not. We shall see". From *Fellini. Raccontando di me. Conversazioni con Costanzo Costantini*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1996.

Large clouds pass through a blue sky. The coffin stands in the middle on a bier. "The megaphone isn't working... Menicuccio, Menicuccio... Fellini's





above

**An images of the
film director's coffin
crossing the**

**Tiberius Bridge
(The Gambalunga
Library Archive)**

below

**Fellini on his way to
eternity, a frame from
the animated film**

**Il lungo viaggio
(The long journey)
taken from the film
director's drawings**

voice disperses in the painted sky of the chamber where he is laying in state in "his" Theatre no. 5. The camera focuses on the faces. It is strange, it is 2nd November but it isn't a sad day... Today is different, as though humanity were united". This is the opening to *In morte di Federico Fellini (In memory of Federico Fellini)* the documentary that was broadcast by RAI a year after Fellini's death, and which was filmed by Sergio Zavoli to pay him homage. The soundtrack to this wordless documentary comprises music composed by Nino Rota for Fellini's films: *E la nave va (And the ship sails on)*, *8 ½*, *Amarcord*, *Ginger e Fred*, and includes the scene from the night of the Oscars when Giulietta Masina was in tears. The film ends in the Town Hall square in Rimini. About the film Zavoli declared: "Those were tough days, there was a great sense of precariousness. Many had even brought their little children to Cinecittà. It was as though everyone saw a great Italian and a much loved person whom one could trust in that coffin. Fellini's art had deeply struck our imagination. It was as though one of nature's elements were missing. Resorting to a farming metaphor, Benigni said that all the olive oil had vanished". Fellini was also a great citizen, not just a visionary artist. "He knew everything about politics, and he took sides, he had a highly developed civil conscience. The idea of filming the documentary was born on the day of the funeral - Zavoli explains - there were so many people in Theatre no. 5, but not a single camera, just the journalists' cameras. So I asked the Luce Institute for a small crew, and we started filming immediately".

What has been said about Fellini

Woody Allen "I love Fellini's *Lo sceicco bianco (The white sheik)*, *I Vitelloni*, and *La strada*, not to mention *8 ½*, and I never tire of *Amarcord*. Fellini brings his personal memories of Rimini to life in an exaggerated, almost farcical manner that is not just literal and photographic". (1)

Roberto Benigni "My mother always tells me off because I never win a prize. Now, with *La voce della luna (The voice of the moon)*, she will finally stop nagging me. I'm sure I'll get an Oscar. But out of spite, I won't collect it in person. I'll do what Marlon Brando did, but instead of sending a Native American lady, I'll send a country woman from Tuscany to Los Angeles." (2)

Ingmar Bergman "Fellini is more than a friend to me, he is a brother. I have seen some of his films up to ten times". (3)

Italo Calvino “With Fellini the detached form of cinema that nourished our youth is definitively turned upside down into the most intimate form of cinema”. (4)

Pietro Citati “As soon as we get to know Fellini and his films, we feel we have encountered the incarnation of the modern artist and of the “comedic absolute” as Baudelaire imagined them”. (5)

Gerardo Filiberto Dasi “Federico has taught me a lot. I can’t deny that meeting him was a turning point in my life, because he made me think about how we produce and consume culture, about our written and spoken forms of communication, and all other art forms, especially cinema.

But the friendship he honoured me with was a truly human relationship. Federico was ambitious in his art, but humble in his daily life. His reserve was the other facet of the exuberance, the infinite creativity and sense of humour that he poured into his work. He was shy and did not like talking in public, just like me. We both shared a form of reluctance more than shyness that made us prefer the written word to the spoken word. Every time we met, or regularly spoke at length on the phone, I would learn something new. A long time before he died, my wife and I visited him at the Bernardi di San Giorgio Clinic in Ferrara, where he was undergoing physiotherapy. That was when he expressed the wish to eat something that his mother or sister would cook for him: a meatloaf, passatelli, and squares of quince jelly, which he adored. I had some quince sent to me from Friuli, and my wife made the rest. We took it to him on our following visit. As we entered I could see the joy in his eyes, but one of the sisters shouted out and stopped us in our tracks. She said: “If the doctor sees you bringing food to the patient Signor Dasi, he won’t let you back into the clinic. “But we won’t tell him, will we?” Federico replied.

The conversations I had with Federico were always enlivened by his renowned irony. He showed not a hint of sadness for the illness that had struck him.

On many other joyous and private occasions we spoke about all sorts of things, about God in particular, family, art, culture and women....

Thus I have some wonderful memories of him, and a terrible sense of loss. I don’t think the Italians and his townspeople have done enough to honour his memory and carve his name in history. Let us not forget that in





**Francesca Fabbri
Fellini, niece of the
Master of Cinema on
her uncle's shoulders**

**(Francesca Fabbri
Fellini's Archive -
photo by Davide
Minghini)**

the 60s and 70s he was one of the most prominent Ambassadors of Italian style, culture, and character in the world". He was an unparalleled genius, but we mustn't forget the last tragedy he experienced. It occurred when the Roman specialist who was looking after him and his wife Giulietta went to the hospital in Ferrara to tell him personally that Giulietta only had a few more hours to live. Federico threw himself out of bed and asked for his car without even wasting time getting dressed. Then he asked to be taken to Rome, where, after embracing his wife, in order not to neglect anyone, he let his friends take him out to a restaurant, and the rest is history". (6)

Manoel De Oliveira "Fellini is extreme, intolerable, yet profoundly human. The elements in his films are transfigured by an imagination that is halfway between Hell and Paradise. Looking at his work today, I can say that he was very old in his first films and terribly young in his later ones". (7)

Paolo Fabbri "Many cities live in the literary and artistic genres of their mysteries. Despite the overexposure of the media, Rimini also has its own: Caesar and the Rubicon, the Mediaeval drama of Paolo and Francesca, the mystical spoils of Gemisto Pletone, the Malatesta Temple, between the *Cantos* of E. Pound and the zodiac by A. Warburg, the Masonic echo of Cagliostro, and the enigmatic and disconsolate verse of E. Pagliarani: "even the sea dies". To this list of secrets Fellini has added his own ghosts (...). Rimini is a place "we feel" and even the sea's horizon, even when it is reduced to a scenic backdrop, is a "force that generates ghosts". (...) He wants to "experience life by abandoning himself to the seduction of mystery" and seek in our unconscious images information about our conscious minds and true identity. What matters more than his consulting mediums and magicians (...) is his "ghostly" intuition as a filmmaker. The media - photography, phantasmagoria, radio, recording instruments, cinema, and television generalize incorporeal experiences and telepathy. They multiply, spread, and preserve disincarnate ectoplasms and the ghosts of the living and of the dead". (8)

Francesca Fabbri Fellini "Mother told me what uncle Chicco said the first time he saw me: "What a lovely baby, she was born rusty, because she staid there for twelve years". He was referring to my red hair. I was born late in the marriage and became Federico's Goddaughter right away; he and aunt Getta were my Godparents. (...) My Titian hair, green

eyes, and ruddy cheeks could not but tickle the spirit of a great caricature artist who took from reality the intense harmony that governs dreams. Thus I inspired the “gentle giant” to draw me as a cartoon character. He liked to draw me wearing a cape he had given me, which looked like one of those that the carabinieri wear, blue with red stripes on the shoulders. When he returned to Rimini, he would take me to Scacci, the oldest toy shop in town. (...) To me uncle Chicco was the man of my dreams, big and magical. He certainly influenced my creativity. The first time I stuck my little nose in the world of “celluloid” was when I was 8 years old, in Theatre no. 5 in Cinecittà, the largest theatre in Europe. I remember it well. Federico Fellini was shooting *Amarcord*, a film that has marked Italian culture, so much so that the title has even produced a neologism. *Amarcord* is the film I have always loved best. On that occasion, I started to realize that uncle Chicco was not just a playmate, but also the true “Lord” of his sets. (...) He had a unique way of living and of being a “film director”. (...) I never asked him anything except for some advice when I was 19, about what career I should choose. Because of my innate and uncontrollable curiosity, he advised me to graduate in languages and become a journalist. So I got a degree, and now I work as a journalist for radio and TV. I have taken after him in my passion for mysteries and in my curiosity for phenomena that are hard to comprehend. One day he told me about a séance in Treviso that he had taken part in. With a soft voice the medium started to recount episodes from Federico’s childhood that only his father Urbano could have known about. Then the medium told him to ask a question, and Federico said: “What is the condition in which life ends similar to?” And the answer was striking: “It’s like when on a train at night, far from home, I would think of you in a sort of half sleep, a semi-conscious state, on a train that was taking me further and further away”. At the age of 70 (in 1990) he went to Japan with aunt Giulietta to receive the highest International Award for the Arts: the *Praemium Imperiale* for his “significant contribution to the progress of the Art of Cinematography, which is unanimously recognized”. On that occasion he met two Emperors: the real one, Akihito, who welcomed him to his official residence in the Akasaka Palace, and Akira Kurosawa, a colleague of his, known as the Emperor of Japanese Cinema, who invited him to eat sushi at the renowned restaurant *Ten Masa*, seated on a tatami,





above

Federico Fellini with his friends in the Rimini town centre (third from the left)

below

Federico Fellini with his mother Ida Barbiani

barefoot. Emperor Akihito had said to him: "I award you this prize in the name of an invisible multitude". To which Fellini had replied: "... as the son of a travelling salesman from Gambettola, I can't complain about how far I have come". When talking about his fame he would say: "Felliniesque, I always dreamed of becoming an adjective when I grew up". (...) To me (...) uncle Chicco is an inexhaustible fount of wonder". (9)

Dante Ferretti "Internationally Fellini is considered a genius on a par with the great Italian Renaissance artists. It is because I have worked with him that the most famous international film directors now ask me to collaborate as a project designer". (10)

Tonino Guerra "(...) at this moment in time (...) only our fellow townsman Fellini, the Italian, allows us to say that "Italy is also a great country". (...) To live vertically you have to climb the stairs of poetry, and Federico has left us many stairs. Our duty is to climb them, because we will certainly find him there, and we can hug him once more in a powerful living state; Italy, too, must climb these stairs to rediscover its honesty". (11)

Milan Kundera "The conformism of not thinking that is taking a hold of our world at a heady speed can only find Kafka, Heidegger, and Fellini unbearable. It has forgotten about Heidegger; it has distorted Kafka; it has no respect for the last giant of Modern Art, Fellini". (12)

Akiro Kurosawa "A strong admiration links me to Fellini. His capacity to visualise thoughts and ideas is extraordinary and truly unique". (13)

Diane Lane "Fellini? He is like infinity. He cannot be considered finite, something you can capture and store somewhere. How can his freedom and honesty be confined to a pattern? He is the absolute Spiritual Godfather of cinema. Italy's Pride and Joy, and one of the reasons I would like to be Italian". (14)

Sidney Lumet "Fellini is an inspiration more than an influence. He shows us and helps us to understand how wonderful films can be. Fellini is unique because he shows us that the world of films is boundless". (15)

Marcello Mastroianni "With all due respect for the other directors with whom I have worked, with Federico work is so pleasant that it is also great fun. You can always joke with him on set. Working with a great artist who gives you total freedom is like a big game. I think it's a miracle; a quality that surpasses any Oscar. Federico never hands

you a script. He tells you, or rather, he tells me, because he treats me specially, things about the film that he does not tell other actors. It is hard for a foreign actor who doesn't understand this way of working. I go to the set every morning, and each time it is a surprise. He gives me some vague instructions like "you do this", Giulietta Masina "does that", "tell each other these things", and "don't worry, when we dub it we'll sort it out". This takes the pressure off the actors, who don't feel so responsible for their mistakes. When he shoots a close up of you talking to an actress, he sends the actress away and stands next to the camera showing you the facial expressions he wants from you. You just have to copy him. You could be anyone taken off the street. I even dare to smoke near him, though he hates smoking! He is a true friend". (16)

Renzo Renzi "Why (...) has his work crossed all national borders and been acclaimed by the most diverse populations, amusing them, moving them, and maybe even disquieting them? Among the many theories (...) I will only choose one (...). If the province is synonymous with a supportive community, a place where everyone knows each other like in *Amarcord*, then we can say that Fellini is an exponent of the international province described by McLuhan: a global village created by the new means of communication that enable a constant exchange of news to flow around the planet, which should favour the unification of the world, turning it into a village. Just as it did in *Paese* which was at the centre of his exciting, friendly, heartrending, and positive utopia, which is still alive and implicit". (17)

Paolo Villaggio "I am so happy that Fellini has chosen me for this film, but after *La voce della luna* (*The voice of the moon*) I will never work again. Who could I possibly work with? I could work with Bergman or Kurosawa, but the former doesn't make films anymore, and the latter is also about to stop. I am ruined". (18)

Luchino Visconti "I admire Fellini greatly. He is a born filmmaker, whatever the fools may say. When a man is great, he is great". (19)

Sergio Zavoli "He is one of the greatest narrators and poets of our century for the uniqueness of his screenplays and the complexity with which he presents different points of view, forms, ideas, and values. For instance, we must acknowledge the civil value of his work, we need only think of *La dolce vita*, *Fellini's Roma*, *Prova d'orchestra*, *E la nave va* and





La voce della luna. Not merely five of his most wonderful films, but also works that analyse the controversial relationships between ordinary life and History, individuality and society with the understanding that we must always be aware of two dangers: hopeless despair and unfounded hope. The Augustine yet non-dogmatic idea behind these words makes them even more similar to Fellini. (...) Fellini was also this: an Italian you could trust and one to be proud of". (20)

(1) Il Tirreno, 26th June 2012,
Andrea Visconti quotes the interview
by Dave Iltzkoff
from the New York Times

(2) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
Conversazioni con Costanzo Costantini,
Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1996

(3) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(4) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(5) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(6) Gerardo Filiberto Dasi, a contribution
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(8) Paolo Fabbri in Federico Fellini,
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(9) Francesca Fabbri Fellini,
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(10) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(11) *Homage to Federico Fellini*,
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(12) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(13) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(14) An interview given to the National
Associated Press Agency in March 2013
during the gala that celebrated the New
York premiere of "Caro Federico", the play
written by Guido Torlonia and Ludovica
Damiani and presented at *The Pershing
Square Signature Center*. The actress
was one of the narrators' overvoices with
Edward Norton for "Caro Federico",
a journey through Fellini's life and films

(15) *Fellini. Raccontando di me*.
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(16) *La Repubblica*, 21st January 1993,
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(17) *Homage to Federico Fellini*,
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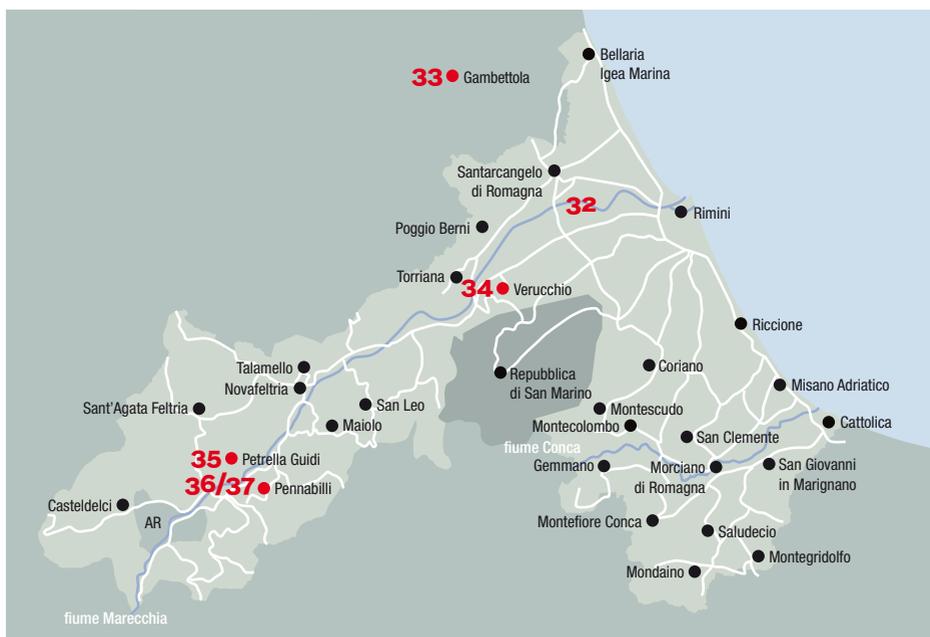
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Our location



The main places linked to Fellini near Rimini



Rimini

32 The Marecchia River

Gambettola

33 Fellini's paternal grandparents' house,
Via Soprarigossa

Verucchio

34 Site of the first camping trip in 1935

Petrella Guidi

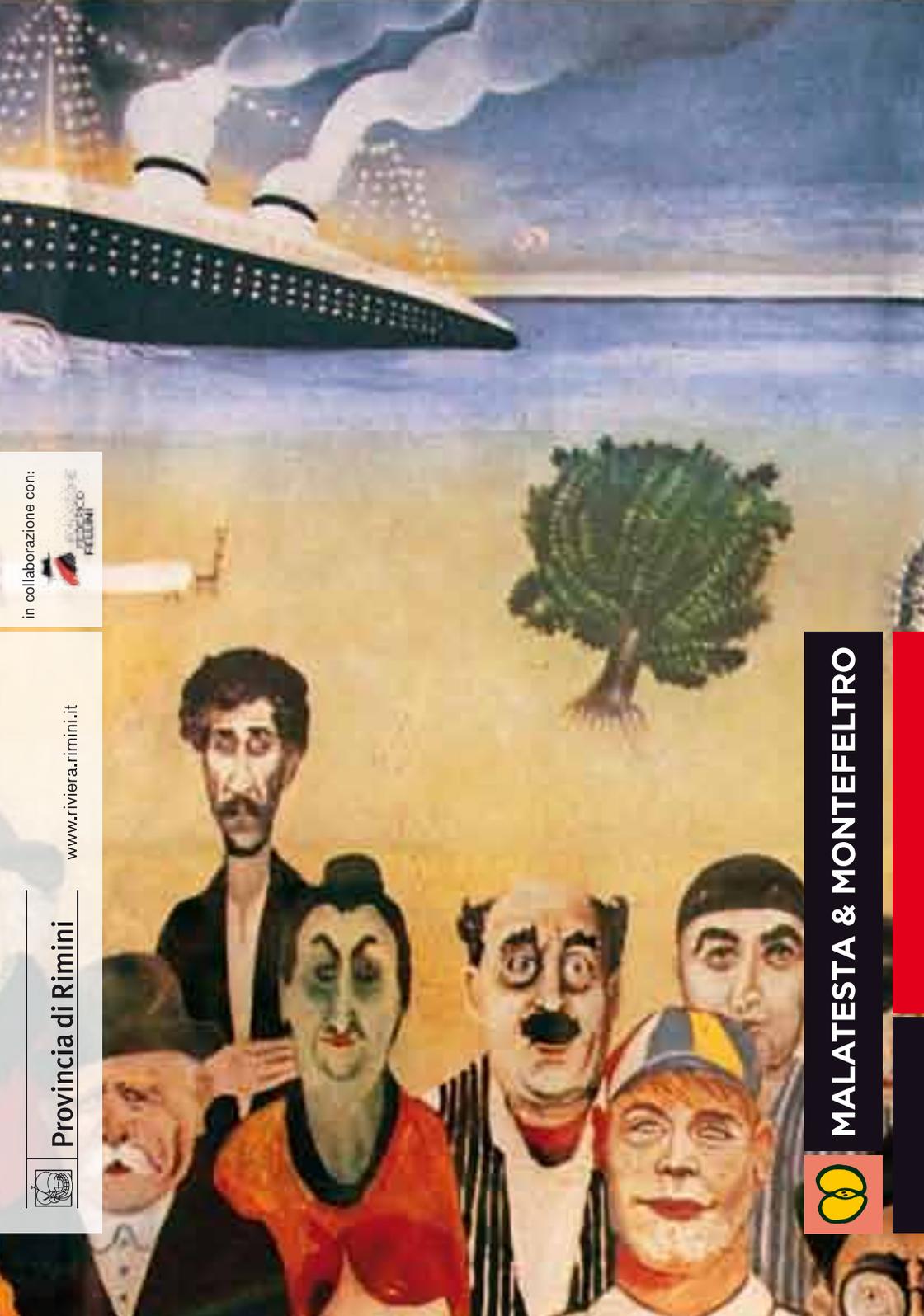
35 Campo dei Nomi (The field of names)

Pennabilli

36 Orto dei Frutti dimenticati
(The orchard of forgotten fruits)

37

Casa dei Mandorli
(The house of the almond trees)



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