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35MM Hosts Italian Film Festival

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Seven Italian comedies will be screened in the Moscow movie theater 35MM as part of the film festival "Felicita Italiana," which will run from August 7 to 13.

Felicita Italiana will screen the same films in theaters in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, and Novosibirsk. While the films vary in widely in subject, the festival has selected comedies that loosely focus on the theme of family.

The festival will be opened with a screening of a film from director Pappi Corsicato, "The Face of Another" (Il volto di un'altra), which was recently shown to juries at the Rome Film Festival. Corsicato may be best known for his 2008 film "The Seed of Discord" (Il seme della discordia), a modernization of a novel by Heinrich von Kleist that details the quandary of a faithful Italian woman who discovers that she is pregnant the same day that her husband announces he is sterile. In his latest film, Corsicato has retained the vaguely medical theme of his previous work with a sharp, satirical comedy that tells the story of the TV star who has decided to make a TV show out of his plastic surgery operation.

On the third day of the festival, viewers will be presented with "Benur — A Gladiator for Rent" (Benur — Un gladiatore in affitto). This film from director Massimo Andrei is about a loud-mouthed, grumpy old man named Sergio — once an extra at the legendary Italian film studio Cinecitta — who finds himself reduced to standing in front of the Colosseum in a centurion costume to pay the bills. Interestingly, this seems to be the only one of the films that in some way relates to Russia, or at least the former Soviet Union: The main character eventually finds an exit from his unhappy plight through the fortuitous assistance of a Belarussian engineer.

While Russia may receive scant mention in the films shown at the festival, the U.S. plays a significant role in the film "Us in the U.S." (Mai Statti Uniti) from director Carlo Vanzina. Adapting the classic American trope of the road trip, this film tells the story of the illegitimate children of a millionaire who are thrust together after his death, when they learn they will inherit large sums of money after his death — if they deliver an urn carrying his ashes to the Arizona desert. The unlikely group faces poisonous snakes, grizzly bears, and Las Vegas prostitutes as they try to fulfill their father's last request.

The festival will additionally have viewings of "Every Single Day" (Tutti i santi giorni), a comedy about an unhappy couple; the film "Hello, Dad" (Buongiorno Papa), about a womanizing, irresponsible father who receives a surprise visit from his 17-year-old daughter; and "Red and Blue" (Il rosso e il blu), a comedy about students and teachers from director Giuseppe Piccioni, who previously entered his film "The Life That I Want" (La vita che vorrei) in the 27th Moscow International Film Festival in 2005.

The festival will end with the political comedy "Long live Italy!" (Viva l'Italia) directed by Massimiliano Bruno. This film recounts the exploits of the fictional Spagnolo political dynasty, and through the story of this one conniving family portrays an array of caricatures of corrupt, lying Italian politicians. The patriarch of the family, Michele Spagnolo, and his many relatives serve not only to make fun of politics and Italy but also provide an amusing family comedy.

The films of Felicita Italiana will be screened from August 7-13 at 35MM, 47/24 Ulitsa Pokrovka. M. Krasniye Vorota, Kurskaya. 495-780-9142. A complete schedule can be found at kino35mm.ru/en

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