



Patron: Jim Broadbent

Registered Charity No. 1156478

Friday January 24th, 2020

An Imperfect Age (no cert)

Dir: Ulisse Lendaro

Starring: Marina Occhionero, Paola Calliari,

The Society is keen to bring the broadest possible programme of film to Lincoln audiences. An Imperfect Age is the first time we've tried an ultra low budget feature as part of our programme, and also represents our desire to work closely with other organisations to achieve this aim.

Tonight's film was first shown at last year's Indie Lincs Festival. We are grateful to Thomas Durrans (MA student/Senior programmer at Indie Lincs) and Dr Mikey Murray (University of Lincoln and founder of Indie Lincs) for these notes and their help in the presentation of this film

Synopsis: North Eastern Italy, present day. Camilla, lives with her family in a quiet town. She dreams of being a dancer. She and Sara, another aspiring dancer are in the same class as each other. Sara is one year older, from a wealthy family, charismatic and impulsive. They become friends. When they hear of an upcoming audition to be accepted to a prestigious academy, they see it as a great opportunity. They spend the week before the audition in each other's company. Camilla is introduced to Sara's friends. They are invited to a party and accept. At the audition, Camilla (recovering from the party) dances poorly. Sara performs well and is offered a place, to Camilla's dismay. Convincing herself that Sara has engineered her failure deliberately, Camilla arranges for Sara to be beaten, to deny her the chance to take up her place.

In a quiet north-eastern Italian town, seventeen-year-old Camilla (Marina Occhionero) dreams of becoming a ballet dancer. However, when she doesn't pass her audition for a ballet college and her friend, Sara (Paola Calliari), does, Camilla becomes convinced that Sara sabotaged her. Fuelled by anger and jealousy, Camilla embarks on a vengeful vendetta against Sara which proves to have disastrous consequences.

Ulisse Lendaro's directorial debut, *Imperfect Age*, examines the sinister consequences of the obsessive pursuit for success whilst simultaneously exploring the internal and external angst caused by the overbearing pressure of youth. Through tackling these provocative themes, Lendaro has fused the troubled artist narrative with the coming of age drama to create a challenging character study centred on a young woman desperate to achieve her dream. *Imperfect Age* received its UK premiere at the 2019 Indie-Lincs International Film Festival, and because of its challenging themes and characters and themes, it is sure to invoke conversation in its subsequent screenings.

Perhaps echoes of Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan* can be heard in *Imperfect Age's* narrative, then. A young ballerina slowly losing her grip on reality as she becomes more and more desperate to outshine her competitors is a synopsis that could easily be applied to both films. Yet there is a much greater sense of ruggedness in *Imperfect Age*. The highly stylised, sleek, modern interiors of a major New York dance studio are swapped for the basic, almost infant whites of the changing rooms and practice spaces of a suburban north-eastern Italian dance college. This is not a story of a



dancer at the peak of her abilities trying to stay at the top, but a story of a young woman at the bottom trying to make her way to the top.

The hand-held camera captures the rawness of Camilla's worldview and the instability of her psyche. Its use as a device to convey a sense of reality is almost deceptive here. We see the world through Camilla's eyes, but what Camilla sees is not necessarily real. There is a sense of cruel irony in the beauty of north-eastern Italy. The sunny warmth of the city contradicts the cold harshness of interiors of the dance college. Not only does this stark juxtaposition add to the confused sense of reality in Camilla's gaze, but also exposes the sinister potential of the competitive nature of the dance industry. The cinematography thus serves to express the incompleteness of a teenager's gaze, or in simpler words; the imperfectness of her age.

The atmospheric ruggedness of *Imperfect Age* benefits from its casting too. Marina Occhionero gives a remarkably balanced performance, offering a subdued yet often unhinged portrayal of a challenging character. Moreover, she is supported well by Paola Calliari and several non-professional actors who all aid in maintaining an unnerving yet grounded depiction of youth and ambition. *Imperfect Age* never strays too far from realism and so conjures fear from its plausibility. Its truth comes from its admission that truth is a subjective concept, one that changes drastically through the experiences an individual faces.

Though its core plot may have been explored before in cinema, *Imperfect Age* captures the contradictions and confusions of youth and so breathes new life into an old narrative. The classic, perfect aura of ballet is corrupted by the adolescent fears and pressures of failure that thrive in young people in modern times. It is an intriguing examination of the social economics of youth and the damaging effect of the pursuit of perfection, whilst also being a provocative study of a sometimes enraging yet deeply conceivable character. *Imperfect Age's* themes remain pertinent and it is a fine example of low-budget, original, independent filmmaking.

Credits

Camilla	Marina Occhionero
Sara	Paola Calliari
Clarissa	Anita Kravos
Marco	Luca Filippi
Ivano	Diego Pagotto,
Simona	Vivian Darlene Grillo
Francesca	Ginevra Lendaro
Serena	Anna Valle
Other characters	Enrico Cavicchioli, Antonio Framarin,, Piergiorgio Piccoli, Ilaria Pravato, Lana Vlady
Director	Ulisse Lendaro
Screenwriter	Cosimo Calamini
Director of Photography	Alberto Marchiori
Editor	Giorgio Franchini
Music	Nicola Tescari

Italy 2017. 96 mins

Our next screening: January 31st 2020, 7.30pm 3 Faces (Iran 2018. Cert 15)

Jafar Panahi continues to defy the house arrest and 20 year ban on film-making imposed on him by the Iranian authorities. 3 Faces is the 4th film he's made in recent years since the ban was imposed. In his latest work, filmed in drama documentary style, he and actress Behnaz Jafari play versions of themselves, trying to find out the truth behind the apparent suicide of a young actress. In doing so, they reveal much about the plight of women and creative women especially in Iran. Subtle and thought-provoking, 3 Faces is the perfect demonstration of Panahi's creative resistance to authoritarian politics.

Another View

As this is a micro budget independent film that - apart from appearing in festivals (including Indie Lincs) - has had no exposure or distribution, it's not been reviewed at all. It was included in our programme after last year's Indie Lincs because we felt it had merit and also because we felt a film society like ours should be willing to go 'off piste' (so to speak) in its programming, from time to time.

We hope members watching the film will tell us what they think of both the film and its inclusion and whether this an innovation to persevere with in future. This year's Indie Lincs Festival - a mixture of short films and full length features - runs from February 14-16. If you are interested to see what else is going on in the world of low-budget, independent film-making, the link to the programme is here.

<https://www.indie-lincs.com/2020-festival>

Passes for the Festival are available from the LPAC and via this link

<https://lpac.co.uk/event/indie-lincs-2020-day-pass/>

Programming news

Voting for the classic film is still possible **until Friday January 31st**. Members can either vote in person or via memberships@lincs.com. Either way, it's important to remember to include your membership number or your vote will not be counted.

The new release film selected for February 21st is **Rojo**, an Argentine suspense drama set on the eve of the 1976 military coup.

The committee is turning its attention to **our 2020/21 season** so we're putting out our usual call to members to let us know of any films released in the last few months, which have not been seen in Lincoln, that they would like to be included on the long list. Nominations can be received up to and including March 7th.