

# Giulia

A FILM BY RICKY MASTRO

THE SCREENWRITERS: RICKY MASTRO and LÉON DIANA



**Giulia**, 70 years old, transforms her husband's mourning into creative work. Determined, she takes control of her life and decides to write an opera. She overcomes the shock of discovering the teenage gay love story of her companion and also the opposition of her kids to make this piece of work. Through art, Giulia breaks free and experiences a life that she has never had before.



**Giulia**, 70 years old, teaches choir at Toulouse Music Conservatory. For the first time in 40 years, she finds herself alone at home after the death of her husband, Ettore. He was a well-known lyricist and wrote hundreds of songs. They had two children together: Agnes, 44, and Lorenzo, 40. Both live in Paris. Agnès works in a music studio and Lorenzo is a public employee who has three children of his own.

After the funeral service, Giulia tries to go back to her routine. Reorganizing her house, she finds Ettore's last drafts. Trying to escape from her melancholy, Giulia starts to compose some music for the newfound lyrics. Later, in Ettore's hometown, Cerignola, Italy, they play this song. Proud, Giulia is pleased and impressed to hear her work. Cerignola makes an impact in Giulia's creative mind, and lots of songs begin to form in her mind.

Giulia immerses herself in her music to clear her head and at the same time to have a dialogue with her husband. She decides to compose music to many of the songs that Ettore wrote, and she gives them to her students to sing. Not everyone is pleased with this, because they aren't as classical as people are used to. However, three of her students are very excited about singing them. As Giulia creates new melodies, she starts to nourish the idea of writing an opera about her late husband. She wants to write a show about this young man who grew up in Italy during the Years of Lead, and after he moved to France and then he was able to write many popular songs.



Excited about her new project, Giulia talks about it to her kids and Ettore's agent. They are somehow opposed to the idea of exposing Ettore's private life on stage. They tell Giulia that Ettore was a very discreet man, and they aren't sure that he would like to have his words in new songs. Giulia is torn apart but feels good while she composes. She has awakened something that has been asleep since she studied basic music scales and started to date Ettore. However, being alone and in mourning she finds to be blocking her creative imagination.

So, Giulia decides to go back to Cerignola to become inspired and better see the place where Ettore grew up. There she meets Vittorio, Ettore's childhood friend who had a brother Lino. The three kids were best friends; partners in crime. On this trip, Giulia also discovers a notebook with letters from Ettore and Lino. They reveal that Ettore and Lino had a secret relationship in their teens and all the songs that he wrote were inspired by this forbidden love with another man.

Alone back at home, Giulia goes crazy. She burns all of Ettore's belongings in a fit of rage. Once she has calmed down Giulia realizes that in reality this young love didn't affect their thirty-year relationship. She goes from deep anger to creative frenzy. She rewrites her opera with this newly discovered love as its core. She wants to correct this injustice, this torn love. Her students love this new version. They find it very modern. At the same time, Giulia still finds resistance from her children Agnès and Lorenzo. However, she keeps writing and her masterpiece is soon nearly finished.

Finally, it's opening night of Giulia's opera. The audience goes wild with applause. Agnès and Lorenzo are there watching and are finally touched by the story. They make up with their mother. Finally, we realize that after so many years of being apart, Ettore and Lino are once again together. THE END.



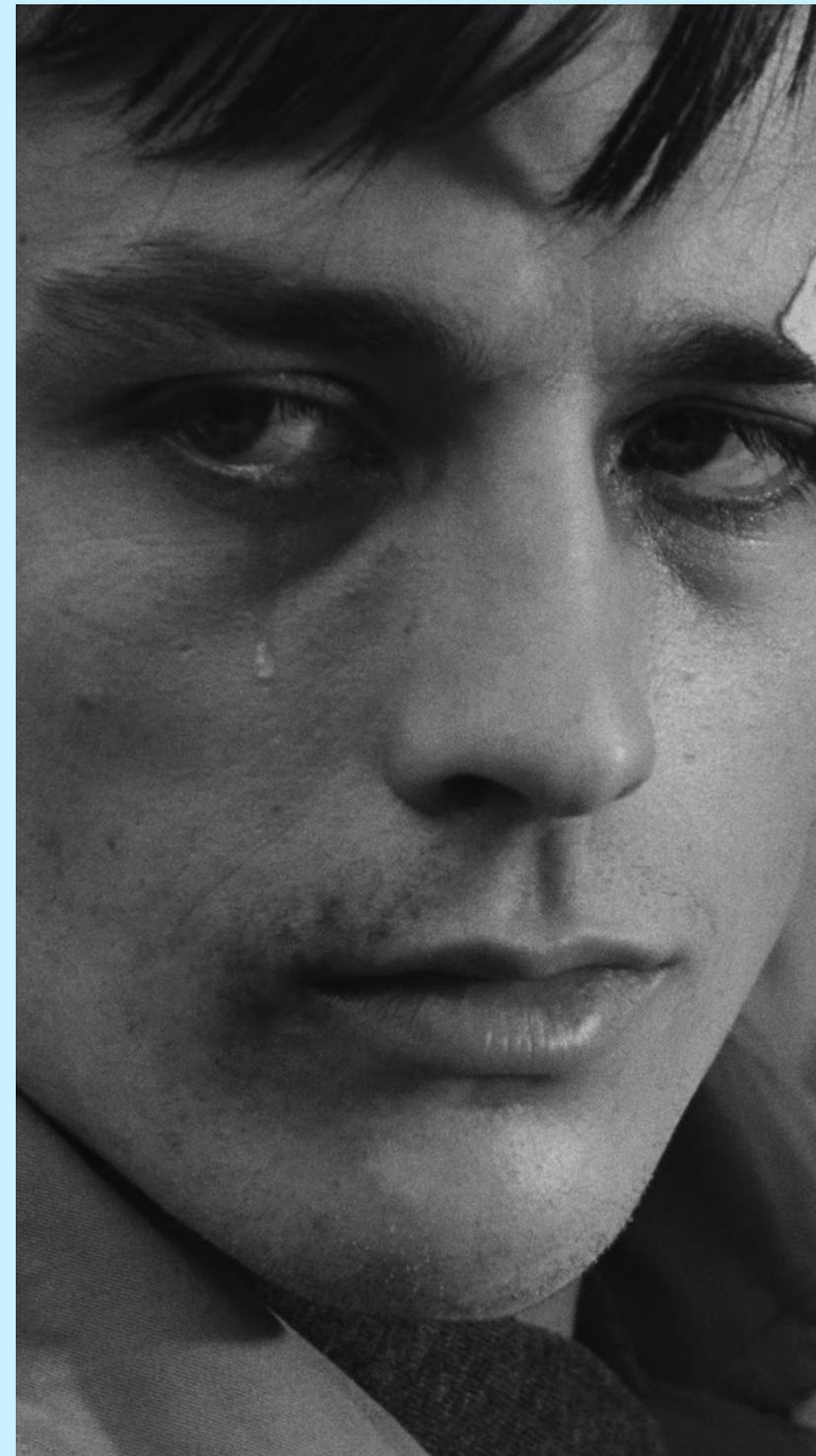
## Screenwriter's notes

*Giulia* is similar to our previous films in which mourning takes an important role. We believe that death can take our characters out of their comfort zones and also make them ask themselves tough questions. With our protagonist, Giulia, 70 years old, we decided to go even further. Giulia will discover herself through her creative force and determination.

In her grief, Giulia doesn't mope, or fall into being nostalgic or depressed. She faces death in her own way; she fills her emptiness writing music. This process allows her to again be with Ettore, her love. This dialogue with Ettore through music will push our lead from grief to love. This same path was lived by Ettore, forty years earlier when he lost Lino and tried to keep him alive through lyrics. Giulia accepts her husband's teenage gay love because she realizes that she is living a similar experience. Giulia is able to go beyond her feelings and deductions. She faces her family, friends, and the hidden past of her husband as revealed by an old notebook.

Throughout the story, Giulia experiences mixed emotions. Creating her own opera is at the same time painful and rewarding, liberating and destructive. Her feelings will be transposed by different variations of the musical themes that she composes. Her life events, her memories, her grief, the kids' relationship with their dad, Ettore's past told by Lino and the notebook will all be transformed into musical notes in her imagination. Songs that she will put on stage to rehearse with her students.





Giulia represents our willingness to write about music, love, and a strong character. It's also about the times that we've lost and that we still have. Some years ago, in Toulouse, we were astonished to see Nelson Freire in concert; a gifted piano player who played as if it was his last time. We were touched by this mature man who vibrated music. We had the same feeling when we met a violoncello teacher during Leon's short film soundtrack recording session. She sweated music, expressing herself in a way that touched our souls. These two people inspired us to transform Giulia's emotions into music, a language that for us is richer, and more complex than words.

Ettore's youth will take place during the Years of Lead, a very fascinating period in Italian history where we have a country divided in two sides. A time where two young men couldn't live their love story. Where they were suffocated by the fascists' rage and for the communist fight. This period will affect Ettore forever, and he will spend the rest of his life looking for stability, far away from chaos. However, he will never be able to forget Lino. To describe Ettore's youth, we have chosen to live this era using Giulia's imagination, somebody who lived these events not herself but through other people's testimonies. Ettore's youth comes back through Giulia's visions.

We would like to have a movie lead by a character who will fascinate the audience by her energy and her vibrancy. We would like to invite the viewers who will be shocked with Giulia in the beginning yet laugh and cry in the end with her. We would like to shoot a film that invites everyone to travel into this creative and passionate journey of composing music. We hope that in the end the spectators will leave the cinema with Giulia's melodies in their head.

Léon Diana and Ricky Mastro

Note: In 2021, Philippe Barrière was the tutor of Giulia for 6 months at a screenwriters' workshop at CEFPP in Paris.



## Mastro and Diana the Duo :

*Ricky Mastro and Léon Diana met while working on 7 Minutes, Ricky's first film produced by the duo. At the shoot, they realized that they wanted to make the same type of films. Moreover, they share the same goal: to bring to reality their stories through focus and hard work. While they were in post-production for 7 minutes, they started to write a new feature film: The Invisibles, produced by Daniel Van Hoogstraten (Syndrome Films). Their partnership became a way to understand cinema and to encourage each other to make films. Ricky and Léon are also writing a new feature film called Giulia.*

