

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME

LUCA GUADAGNINO <DIRECTOR>

What impact did André Aciman's book have on you when you first read it?

I was shooting *I Am Love* when I was asked to help. They asked, 'Can you help us understand where this book is set and how we can make this movie in Italy?' So I read the book and I thought, 'Oh, good book, I like it'.

What were the challenges of bringing it to the screen?

The only challenge was that we had not much time and not much money and eventually when we started shooting we were meant to convey summer but it was basically raining every day. Those were the challenges – challenges of practicality rather than intellectual challenges.

Did you change much of James Ivory's original script?

The script started with me and James working together. James was supposed to direct the film but unfortunately he couldn't find the money to finance it. It was a bigger movie with a longer schedule and it wasn't possible to find the money in the marketplace. We worked so hard on the script and I was so sad when it didn't happen, but at the eleventh hour the producers came to me and said, 'Luca, this movie can happen if you do it and it can happen if you do it for, like, a fourth of the budget'. They asked me: 'Would you do it because we want to see this movie we've fought for ten years to make? Help us.' That's when I agreed to direct it.

The *Love My Way* dance scene isn't in the book. What was the inspiration for that?

I love the song, I love The Psychedelic Furs, I think that song can transport you someplace and I think that Oliver [Armie Hammer] at that moment is transported to some place that speaks to him about himself. But it's not something from my own experience. I didn't dance in public until I was much older. The movie isn't autobiographical. Well, it's autobiographical in the way I connected with these people and it's autobiographical because I'm not shy when it comes to relationships, but the events happening in the film didn't happen to me.

What feedback have you had from the LGBT+ community about the film?

They've reacted to it with an enthusiasm and a passion that has dwarfed my sense of ego. It makes me very humble and happy.

Do you think a film this honest and frank about a gay relationship could have been made, say, five or ten years ago?

I would have made this movie in 1999 if I could. My visions are not related to what's contemporary and to acceptance. I do what I feel that I have to do. If you want to say something you'll find a way.

What do you feel are the film's universal themes?

I think it's a movie about the transmission of knowledge and an encounter with 'the other'. It's about what it means to be family and to transmit knowledge to another person and it's about the transformative nature of accepting someone else into your life. It's about saying, 'I love you for who are you and how you are. I don't want to change you and you should be happy with who you are.'

What do Armie Hammer and Timothée Chalamet, who plays Elio, bring to their respective roles?

Armie and Timmy bring so much to it but I'd say it's the same with everybody: Michael Stuhlbarg [Mr Perlman], Esther Garrel [Marzia]. They bring complete, unbiased honesty, letting the camera grab what's inside of them. Armie brings an internal turmoil and what Timothée brings is feverish

ambition. Michael brings his transformative qualities and Esther brings a kind of capacity of being driven by an intelligent reflection on reality.

Armie has been cast in some big blockbusters as the square-jawed lead. What made you think he was right for this role?

I've always found that Armie's performances are really nuanced and full of insight about human nature. With him and Timothée I thought they were absolutely perfect to play Oliver and Elio. Timothée's amazing, a truly wonderful actor. The actors could tell how much I cared about them so they were really open to me.

The final shot of the film is a very bold move. What was the inspiration for it and how many takes did Timothée do?

We did three or four takes, I think. 'Dry, wet, very wet' – that was my direction. As for the idea behind it, I think the human face is so fascinating. It's so beautiful to stare at faces. You're seeing a movie where in a couple of hours you witness this boy's coming of age and you're given the privilege at the end of having four minutes of his turmoils. It's not intrusive because you're participating in his emotions and you see it all in his face. I think it's fantastic.

You've spoken about location as character. How did you settle on the specific locations here?

I hand-picked every location. They weren't in the book; the book is set in another region. When it came to choosing them it was about instinct, familiarity and a sense of place. I knew that this countryside was going to be a great image for the film – this envelopment of soft green nature.

How do you feel about comparisons between *Call Me By Your Name* and *Moonlight*?

I think *Moonlight* is mostly about acceptance and soothing wounds that are very deep down in your identity. This is more about the triumph of 'the other' and how 'the other' transforms you. Yet both movies are very interested in giving the characters time to breathe on screen.

Did you have any reservations about including the peach scene?

I had great reservations about that because I thought it might become ridiculous. Then I remembered this great movie by Manoel de Oliveira called *Abraham's Valley* which is a sort of *Madame Bovary* set in Portugal. He shows sexual tension by showing a close-up of a flower and a woman's finger reaming it for a long, long time. That is what I thought about when I was thinking of how to put this scene together.

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