



THE GREAT BEAUTY

'La Grande Bellezza'

Autumn
Season
2013

Release: 2013

Cert (UK): 15

Runtime: 142 mins

Director: Paolo Sorrentino

Screenwriter: Umberto Contarello from the story by Paolo Sorrentino

Cast: Toni Servillo, Carlo Verdone, Sabrina Ferilli

Language: Italian with English subtitles

'*The Great Beauty*' promises to be just that; a film of great beauty.

The story begins at a deliberately bacchanalian 65th birthday party, thrown by Rome's self-proclaimed party-king, Jep Gambardella – *'I didn't just want to attend parties. I*



wanted the power to make them fail'. The following day he begins to look back on his successful life, thinking about the things he no longer wants to do, and trying to decide what of value has mattered in his life. He wrote a very successful novel 40 years earlier; why did he never manage a second? Jep still loves the fine, society life he is part of, but wonders about the people he kept at arm's length; where are they

now?

Using this as a backdrop, director Paolo Sorrentino takes us on a sumptuous trip through Italian life over 40 years and through the city of Rome specifically. Sorrentino has once again got together with his long-time cinematographer, the great Luca Bigazzi, and between them they bring us the great beauty of Rome (As Ron Wilkinson says in 'It's Just Movies' – *'Leave your iPhone at home for this one or you will buy a plane ticket to Rome before you can escape the theatre'*), allowing the camera to pick out Jep's memories – *'The camera swoops, glides and turns upside down, the music, composed and co-opted, never far away. Frames are immaculately composed, the lighting is richly realised, the colours and even the shadows exquisite to look at'* – Roger Clarke, Site & Sound.

The film has been influenced by Fellini's '*La Dolce Vita*' and Antonioni's '*La Notte*', with the big difference that this is not the Bourgeoisie at play, *'this is the vaunting pleasure of the modern 'one percent' reveling in unapologetic wealth'*, as Roger Clarke goes on to say; Sorrentino letting us laugh at the Berlusconi era.

Jep is played by Toni Servillo, veteran actor of 30 movies ('*Il Divo*', '*Gomorrah*'). He gets great reviews here as elsewhere.

Sorrentino continues to be a Cannes Festival favourite. This is the fifth film he has had nominated for the Palme D'Or, though, to be fair, he has yet to win one.

