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BERBERIAN

SOUND STUDIO

A FEATURE FILM BY PETER STRICKLAND



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CAST

Toby Jones – Gilderoy
Cosimo Fusco – Francesco
Fatma Mohamed – Silvia
Eugenia Caruso – Claudia
Antonio Mancino – Santini
Tonia Sotiropoulou – Elena
Jean-Michel Van Schouwborg – The Goblin
Katalin Ladik – Resurrected Witch
Salvatore Li Causi – Fabio
Chiara D’Anna – Elisa as Teresa
Susanna Cappellaro – Veronica as Accused Witch
Jozef Cseres – Massimo
Pál Tóth – Massimo
Lara Parmiani – Chiara as Signora Collatina

CREW

Writer / Director: Peter Strickland
Producers: Keith Griffiths, Mary Burke
Co-Producer: Hans W. Geißendörfer
Executive Producers: Robin Gutch, Hugo Heppell,
Katherine Butler, Michael Weber
Production Designer: Jennifer Kernke
Director of Photography: Nic Knowland BSC
Casting Director: Shaheen Baig
UK Casting Director: Shaheen Baig
Italian Casting Director: Beatrice Kruger
Costume Designer: Julian Day
Editor: Chris Dickens
Supervising Sound Editor: Joakim Sundström
Sound Recordist: Steve Haywood
Hair & Make-Up: Karen Hartley Thomas
Original Music by Broadcast
Written & Performed by James Cargill and Trish Keenan

SYNOPSIS

1976: Berberian Sound Studio is one of the cheapest, sleaziest post-production studios in Italy.

Only the most sordid horror films have their sound processed and sharpened in this studio. Gilderoy, a naive and introverted sound engineer from England is hired to orchestrate the sound mix for the latest film by horror maestro, Santini.

Thrown from the innocent world of local documentaries into a foreign environment fuelled by exploitation, Gilderoy soon finds himself caught up in a forbidding world of bitter actresses, capricious technicians and confounding bureaucracy.

Obliged to work with the hot-headed producer Francesco, whose tempestuous relationships with certain members of his female cast threaten to boil over at any time, Gilderoy begins to record the sound for 'The Equestrian Vortex', a hammy tale of witchcraft and unholy murder typical of the 'giallo' genre of horror that's all the rage in Italy.

Only when he's testing microphones or poring over tape spooling around his machines does this timid man from Surrey seem at ease. Surrounded by Mediterranean machismo and, for the first time in his life, beautiful women, Gilderoy, very much an Englishman abroad, devotes all his attention to his work.

But the longer Gilderoy spends mixing screams and the blood-curdling sounds of hacked vegetables, the more homesick he becomes for his garden shed studio in his hometown of Dorking.

His mother's letters alternate between banal gossip and an

ominous hysteria, which gradually mirrors the black magic of Santini's film.

The violence on the screen Gilderoy is exposed to, day in, day out, in which he himself is implicated, has a disturbing effect on his psyche. He finds himself corrupted, yet he's the one carrying out the violence.

As both time and realities shift, Gilderoy finds himself lost in an otherworldly spiral of sonic and personal mayhem, and has to confront his own demons in order to stay afloat in an environment ruled by exploitation both on and off screen.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For a film that follows a team of people creating a horror soundtrack in a post-production studio, *BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO* doesn't deliver the scares or the blood. Despite being bombarded with the sounds of extreme violence, we're denied the very images that Gilderoy, the film's central character is forced to witness as he supervises the music overdubs and the gut-wrenching foley effects, in which vegetables are pummelled, hacked and ripped in order to mimic whatever on-screen mutilation there might be.

The world of *BERBERIAN* is steeped in analogue iconography. The film harks back to a time before digital plug-ins. It took a whole room of machinery to do what a single laptop can do now. But what we sometimes forget is how visually powerful and other-worldly these reel-to-reels, oscillators, patch bays and even dubbing cue sheets looked. In this film, sound often comes with its visual

counterpart – we see the process of tape loops being assembled, musicians working on gongs, foley artists destroying vegetables. What is just a process in the making of any other film becomes the centrepiece in *BERBERIAN* as we find ourselves caught in the sprockets of a soundtrack.

Despite the heightened nature of many sounds, there is a tangible sonic reality to everything since the soundtrack is diegetic.

Beyond the gore of pummelled and discarded vegetables, *BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO* is a portrayal of life inside a particular studio, revealing its milieu/hierarchy: the bored secretary, the territorial in-house sound engineer and the famous director's son who is paid to do nothing. In that sense, if the film is about anything, it could be just a simple drama centred on a working environment, albeit a profoundly dysfunctional one.

The decision to choose Italy for the location of the studio is because of its horror tradition during the '70s. What was so unique in Italy was the marriage of horror with incredibly advanced and often experimental music. No other country had such a range of horror soundtracks, ranging from lush pop to atonal electro acoustic. Riz Ortolani, Goblin, Bruno Nicolai, Stelvio Cipriani, Claudia Gizzi, Nicola Piovani, Fabio Frizzi and Nora Orlandi all created spectacularly idiosyncratic soundtracks for Italian horror films during the '60s/'70s and this film is partly an unashamed tribute to that period and specific climate. Other horror composers such as Bruno Maderna and Ennio Morricone had a background in avant garde composition and it was this meeting of the two worlds of high art music and B-grade horror that

fused to such thrilling effect. Added to the mix is an English sound eccentric who comes from a 'garden shed' tradition of sonic alchemists such as Desmond Leslie, Fred Judd, Graham Bond, Joe Meek, Trevor Wishart and Basil Kirchin whose work often veered into the esoteric.

Maybe celebration is the wrong word, but I certainly wanted to instill *BERBERIAN* with my awe of sound and its power to manipulate, confound and deceive.

Peter Strickland, November 29th 2011

CAST



Toby Jones – Gilderoy

British actor Toby Jones enjoyed critical acclaim and a Best Actor award from the London Critic's Circle for his portrayal of Truman Capote in *INFAMOUS* (2005), followed by roles in *THE PAINTED VEIL*, *AMAZING GRACE*, *ELIZABETH I* and *THE MIST*. Most recently he has appeared in *SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN*, *THE HUNGER GAMES* and Steven Spielberg's *THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN*, as well as Simon Curtis' *MY WEEK WITH MARILYN* and *TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY* opposite Colin Firth and Gary Oldman. He portrayed Hollywood super agent Swifty Lazar in *FROST/NIXON* and Karl Rove in Oliver Stone's Bush biopic *W*. Toby voiced Dobby in the *HARRY POTTER* movies and appeared in *DOCTOR WHO* as The Dream Lord. His forthcoming films include Julian Jarrold's *THE GIRL* and Susanne Bier's *SERENA*. On stage Toby starred in 'The Play What I Wrote' in 2001, receiving an Olivier award for his performance as Arthur. He has since appeared on stage in plays including 'Every Good Boy Deserves Favour', 'Parlour Song' and 'The Painter'.



Fatma Mohamed – Silvia

Fatma graduated from the Faculty of Theatre and Television at the University of Babes-Bolyai in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca in 2002. She has performed in many plays and in theater-dance performances. A small role in director Peter Strickland's 2007 debut *KATALIN VARGA* led to her playing the part of Sylvia in his second feature *BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO*.



Cosimo Fusco - Francesco

Born in Matero and resident in Rome, Francesco is perhaps best known for his role as Paolo in the US sitcom 'Friends'. He has starred in the Dan Brown adaptation *ANGELS AND DEMONS*, *GONE IN 60 SECONDS* and *COCO CHANEL* and has had roles in several Italian, German and American TV series, including the role of Judge Somaschi in the Italian series 'The Good and the Bad' ('Il bene e il male') in 2008.



Eugenia Caruso – Claudia

Born in Rome, Eugenia trained as an actress in the UK at East 15 Acting School. Screen credits include appearing in *I DEMONI DI SAN PIETROBURGO* (The Demons of St Petersburg) directed by Giuliano Montaldo, in *THE SILVER ROPE* (FilmFour and Sky Television) and in the Italian TV series 'Nati Ieri'. In 2007 Eugenia jointly won the Stage Award for Best Actress at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for her performance in 'Truckstop' directed by Chris Rolls. The production toured the UK extensively at various venues including Hampstead Theatre. Other stage credits include 'More Light' at the Arcola Theatre and 'Hurried Steps' (New Shoes Theatre Company in association with the Finborough Theatre and Amnesty International).



Antonio Mancino - Santini

An Italian who calls London home, before landing the role of Santini in Peter Strickland's *BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO*, Antonio had starred in numerous commercials and soap operas in Italy, including a leading role as Nicola Lanza in the popular series 'Un posto al sole'. He is also an experienced theatrical actor.

Tonia Sotiropoulou – Elena

London-based Greek newcomer Tonia can be seen on screens later this year in Sam Mendes' James Bond thriller *SKYFALL*. Aside from *BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO*, her credits include TV and film roles in Greece.





Katalin Ladik

Katalin Ladik is a world-renowned poet, actress and performance artist who emigrated to Hungary in 1992 from Novi Sad in the former Yugoslavia (now Serbia). She has performed, published and exhibited her work throughout Europe and the US across five decades. As well as written poems, she creates phonetic poems and visual poems and makes performances, writes and performs music (experimental music and sound plays). She explores language through visual, auditory and gesticular models, with her works ranging from collages, photography, records, performances and happenings.

Jean-Michel Van Schouwburg

Born in Brussels in 1955, Jean-Michel Van Schouwburg is one of the world's foremost artists working in the fields of vocal performance and improvised music. A member of Brussels' Inaudible Collective & Workshops since 1984, Jean-Michel has developed vocal improvisation and voice-extended techniques from low throat singing to high falsetto, overtones and yodels, mouth noises and much more. He has performed solo in London, Lille, Slovakia, Liege and Brussels, and has an interest in telepathic interplay and adapting his sounds with different partners and groups. He currently performs with Surreau, Marjolaine Charbin, Audrey Lauro and MouthWind. His voice samples are used in the soundtrack of Peter Strickland's KATALIN VARGA and he has a more prominent vocal role in Strickland's BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO.





MUSIC

Giallo movies often had tremendous soundtracks, and a vital ingredient in Peter's film is the music, composed by James Cargill of Broadcast, whose enchanting pieces heighten the sense of spooked, sleight-of-hand intrigue.

"I've been listening to giallo soundtracks for years and it only just hit me how beautiful and ethereal and spacey they are," says Peter. "The composers were involved in musique concrete, free jazz, avant-garde music, so in their work they had this weird parallel between this kind of academia high-art and this completely sleazy, b-grade exploitation low-art. They did some of their most advanced work for these films."

From the start, Peter had Broadcast in mind for Berberian. In fact, it was Peter's desire to work with Broadcast that introduced Warp Films to the project. The director approached Warp for this connection to the band. For James, an admirer of those same 70s soundtracks and a fan of Katalin Varga, working on the score was almost a dream commission.

"We loved the script, and the ideas Peter had for sound and music in the film were very exciting," he says. "That we would be creating the music for the 'film within the film' was really fascinating particularly in the way sound and music was crossing back and forth from the reality of the studio into the giallo Gilderoy was working on."

"Peter would send us references he wanted us to consider for certain scenes, moods he wanted to create, mostly 70s Italian. Then we would go back and forth until we felt the music was doing the right thing," says James, who happens to own a copy of the book 'Composing With Tape Recorders' that sits on Gilderoy's bedside table in the film. Broadcast composed brand new material for the film, which Warp Records will release as part of a deluxe edition soundtrack worldwide to coincide with the DVD release of the film in the UK.

Original Music in Memory of TRISH KEENAN (1968-2011)



Crew



Peter Strickland – Writer / Director

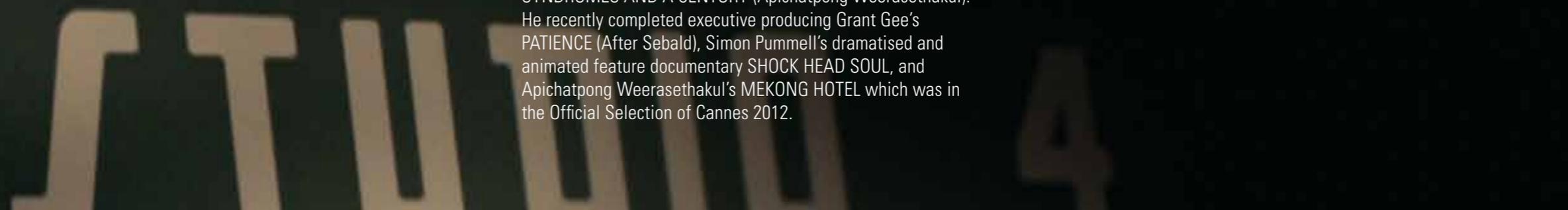
Reading-born writer/director Peter Strickland's first feature film KATALIN VARGA was made entirely independently over a four year period. It went on to win many awards including a Silver Bear in Berlin and The European Film Academy's Discovery of the Year award in 2009. Prior to this, Strickland made a number of short films including BUBBLEGUM and A METAPHYSICAL EDUCATION. He also founded the musique-culinary group, The Sonic Catering Band in 1996, releasing several records and performing live throughout Europe. The band also released field recordings, sound poetry and modern classical in very limited vinyl editions.

Keith Griffiths – Producer

Over the last 35 years producer Keith Griffiths has been bringing to the screen work by some of the most innovative directors including the Brothers Quay, Patrick Keiller, Chris Petit, the Czech animator Jan Svankmajer and, most recently, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, whose film UNCLE BOONMEE WHO CAN RECALL HIS PAST LIVES won them the Palme D'Or at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival. During the 70s Griffiths produced numerous films including Chris Petit's RADIO ON, before founding the London-based Koninck Studios and producing the Brothers Quay's breakthrough short STREET OF CROCODILES (1986) and their feature debut INSTITUTE BENJAMENTA (1995). He helped establish Jan Svankmajer's feature film career with ALICE (1987) whose subsequent films Griffiths executive produced. He also produced Patrick Keiller's features LONDON (1994), ROBINSON IN SPACE (1997) and ROBINSON IN RUINS (2010) and the Chris Petit & Iain Sinclair collaborations THE FALCONER (1997), ASYLUM (2000), LONDON ORBITAL (2002) and CONTENT (2009). More recently, Griffiths co-produced six features to mark the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth in 2006. They were DRY SEASON (Mahamat-Saleh Haroun), HALF MOON (Bahman Ghobadi), I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP ALONE (Tsai Ming-Liang), OPERA JAWA (Garin Nugroho), PARAGUAYAN HAMMOCK (Paz Encina) and SYNDROMES AND A CENTURY (Apichatpong Weerasethakul). He recently completed executive producing Grant Gee's PATIENCE (After Sebald), Simon Pummell's dramatised and animated feature documentary SHOCK HEAD SOUL, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul's MEKONG HOTEL which was in the Official Selection of Cannes 2012.

Mary Burke – Producer

Mary Burke produces across both the Warp X and Warp Films slates, where she has been responsible for cultivating fresh UK talent since the company's inception in 2002. Mary's third feature, Richard Ayoade's critically acclaimed SUBMARINE (2011), distributed by StudioCanal UK and the Weinstein Company, won her the accolade of Variety's "10 Producers to Watch" in 2010, and followed on from her successes of Paul King's BUNNY AND THE BULL (2009) and Chris Waitt's A COMPLETE HISTORY OF MY SEXUAL FAILURES (2008). Mary's second project with Chris Waitt was 'Fur TV' – a dirty puppet comedy television series for MTV. Peter Strickland's psychological anti-horror feature BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO is Mary's fourth feature. Originally joining Warp to work on Chris Morris' BAFTA award-winning short MY WRONGS 8245-8249 and 117, Mary also produced the short RUBBER JOHNNY for maverick video director Chris Cunningham in 2005 and since then has worked on a raft of core Warp projects including Shane Meadows' DEAD MAN'S SHOES and THIS IS ENGLAND, Oilly Blackburn's DONKEY PUNCH and the ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES FILM. Mary recently produced 'The Midnight Beast', a new music-driven six part comedy series, which will premiere in July on E4. She begins shooting on Paul Wright's debut feature set in Scotland in summer 2012.



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A FILM BY PETER STRICKLAND
"BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO"
TOBY JONES

COSIMO FUSCO ANTONIO MANCINO FATMA MOHAMED SALVATORE LI CAUSI CHIARA D'ANNA TONIA SOTIROPOULOU
LINE PRODUCER Nicky Earnshaw COSTUME DESIGNER Julian Day HAIR & MAKE UP DESIGNER Karen Hartley Thomas UK CASTING DIRECTOR Shaheen Baig ITALIAN CASTING Beatrice Kruger
SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR Joakim Sundström SOUND RECORDIST Steve Haywood ORIGINAL MUSIC BY Broadcast PRODUCTION DESIGN Jennifer Kerne EDITOR Chris Dickens CINEMATOGRAPHER Nic Knowland B.S.C.
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Robin Gutch Katherine Butler Hugo Heppell Michael Weber CO-PRODUCER Hans Geißendörfer PRODUCED BY Keith Griffiths & Mary Burke
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY Peter Strickland

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