

THESSALONIKI
DOCUMENTARY
FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2022

THE STUDENTS OF UMBERTO PRIMO

a docudrama by **ALESSANDRA MAIOLETTI**



THE STUDENTS OF UMBERTO PRIMO



Film Synopsis

In Thessaloniki, Greece, under Nazi occupation, 96 percent of the Jewish population was sent to Auschwitz. This film documents the previously untold stories of nine of the many young Jewish students attending the Italian school, Umberto Primo, who must put their hopes and dreams on hold and focus only on how they will survive. By recreating their stories, we also tell the history of the Holocaust in Greece.

The docudrama is based on previously undiscovered archival material found by an Italian professor, and the testimonies of surviving protagonists.

ALBERTO



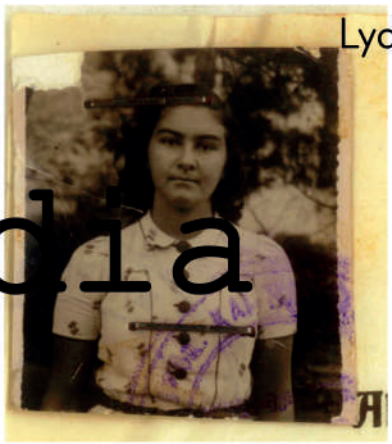
Alberto Modiano
25-12-1927

Modiano



Daniel Bennahmias
1923-1994

Daniel
Ben



Lydia Moissis
1923-1943

Lydia

Moissis



Matilde Bennahmias
1925-1973

Benr
Matilde

Director's Note

The story begins in 2003, when Professor Antonio Crescenzi discovered boxes of long-forgotten documents in the basement of the Italian Cultural Institute in Thessaloniki. Until 1942, this building housed the Italian school Umberto Primo, which was attended by thousands of Jewish students.

These newly discovered boxes were filled with the students' photographs, essays and assignments, identification cards, and undelivered graduation diplomas. I believe that the discovery of these documents was not accidental. After looking through their contents, I knew we had to make a film about the lives of these students during the Holocaust.

In this docudrama, *The Students of Umberto Primo*, I wanted to respectfully depict and lovingly recreate at least some of these "little-big stories." I sought to give voice to nine of these young Jewish students who got lost in the vortex of history. I tried, symbolically, to give them back their past, and their right to future remembrance. Because everything we remember will always exist.

The protagonists of this film are played by nine young actors. My wish is that viewers develop an experiential relationship with these students, to get to know them, and to identify them with their first names.

For the choice of the protagonists, I gave more importance on the similarity of each character rather than on the external appearance.

The photography, music and sound design is directly related to the mood and the tension of every situation.

Laetitia

Est



Laetitia Matalon
1923-1943

alon



Ester Saporta
1926-1943

Sapor



Alberto Simantov
1924-2011

Simantov

Alberto

Director's Note

In the film there are also interviews of two eyewitnesses of these events.

The first interview is with Alberto Modiano who is the only living student of the main protagonists of the film.

The second testimony is that of Drita Giomo. She was, at the time, a secretary at the Italian Consulate in Thessaloniki, and she helped to complete the false certificates of "salvation" - saving hundreds of Jewish people and among them some of Umberto Primo's students.

In this film, we follow the lives of Alberto Modiano, Lydia Moissis, Claudio Morpurgo, Giovanni Fernandez, Matilde Bennahmias, Letitia Matalon, Alberto Simantov, Ester Saporta and Daniel Bennahmias.

We hope that, after you view this film, you will also remember their names.



Morpurgo



Claudio Morpurgo
1924-1990

Claudio



Giovanni Fernandez
1926-1943

Giovanni

Fernandez



Credits

Director: **Alessandra Maioletti**

Concept & Script: **Antonio Crescenzi, Alessandra Maioletti**

Director of Photography: **Dimitris Katsaitis**

Original Music: **Christos David Daoulas**

Scenography-Art Direction: **Giorgos Georgiou, Lucas Economopoulos**

Costume Designer: **Vasilias Rozana**

Editing Supervisor: **Angelos Angelopoulos**

Editing: **Vangelis Pырpylis, Christos Ouzounis**

Casting Director: **Alessandra Maioletti**

Make up artist: **Maria Ioannidou**

Hair Styling: **Kaiti Aravatinou**

Director Assistant: **Evgenia Marangou**

Sound Recording: **Vangelis Pырpylis, Stelios Michailidis**

Sound Design: **Anastasios Katsaris, Tonia Vlackou**

Camera: **Stelios Orfanidis, Iakovos Avdoulos**

Stagehand: **Vasilis Koukouravas, Thomas Papanikolaou**

Graphic Design: **Christos Ouzounis**

Research: **Antonio Crescenzi**

Historical Consultants: **Nikos Marantzidis, Andreas Bouroutis**



Students: Actors

(in order of appearance)

Alberto Modiano: **Giannis Triantakis**
Laetitia Matalon: **Christina Mathioulaki**
Ester Saporta: **Dimitra Derzekou**
Alberto Simantov: **Lefteris Kolitsos**
Matilde Bennahmias: **Sofia Skaramanga**
Daniel Bennahmias: **Dinos Gkelameris**
Lydia Moissis: **Vina Sergi**
Claudio Morpurgo: **Tzortzis Papadoloulos**
Giovanni Fernandez: **Kostas Kaloudiotis**
Narrator: **Antonio Crescenzi**



Director/Co - writer

Alessandra Maioretta is a graduate of the National Dance Academy of Rome. She studied Theater and Cinema History at La Sapienza University in Rome. Diploma in Dance History and choreography at the Sorbonne University in Paris. Studied with Dario Fo, Peter Stein.

Assistant Director, Casting Director and Production Director of Documentaries of French, Italian, Greek and American production.

In 1996 she founded the Oneiro Company in Athens. The freedom of the spirit, the new diseases of the time, the female identity, the historical memory are the main themes.

Alessandra Maioretta has directed many theatrical plays and contemporary dance performances, that have been performed in Italy, Greece, France, Spain, Norway.

"The Students of Umberto Primo" is her first feature film.

Co - writer

Antonio Crescenzi got a degree in Economics from "La Sapienza" University in Rome.

He taught Italian Language and History at the Italian Cultural Institute of Thessaloniki until 2008. He has written articles in various magazines and newspapers about both the presence and traditions of Greeks in Italy and also about Italian culture and the presence of Italians in Greece.

He is author of the theatre play "The students of Umberto Primo", dedicated to the Holocaust victims (2017).

Presently he is employed in the Administration department of the Italian Cultural Institute in Athens.



Production: **Oneiro Company**
Co-Production: **ERT, Cosmote TV**
Executive Production: **Blacklight Productions**
Executive Producers: **Antonio Crescenzi,**
Diane Boulanger, Tasos Katsaris
Line Producer: **Tasos Katsaris**
Production Manager: **Kostas Prekezes**



Docudrama

Technical Specifications:

Format: DCP

Color: Color & B/W

Sound: Dolby Digital

Duration: 80 minutes

Languages: Italian, Greek

Subtitles: English, Greek, Italian, German, French, Spanish

The docudrama **THE STUDENTS OF UMBERTO PRIMO**

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EKOME Italian Embassy in Athens DESFA Italian Institute of Culture in Athens KickStarter Lollo's RFG and Fais Group
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We warmly thank all our collaborators and those who believed in our work

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www.thestudentsofumbertoprime.com

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