

Mongrel Media
Presents

VOLVER

a film by Pedro Almodóvar

(2006, Spain, 120 mins)

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SYNOPSIS

Three generations of women survive the east wind, fire, insanity, superstition and even death by means of goodness, lies and boundless vitality.

They are Raimunda (Pénelope Cruz), who is married to an unemployed labourer and has a teenage daughter (Yohana Cobo); Sole (Lola Dueñas), her sister, who makes a living as a hairdresser; and the mother of both (Carmen Maura), who died in a fire along with her husband. This character appears first to her sister (Chus Lampreave) and then to Sole, although the people with whom she has some unresolved matters are Raimunda and her neighbour in the village, Agustina (Blanca Portillo).

VOLVER is not a surrealistic comedy although it may seem so at times. The living and the dead coexist without any discord, causing situations that are either hilarious or filled with a deep, genuine emotion. It's a film about the culture of death in my native La Mancha. The people there practice it with an admirable naturalness. The way in which the dead continue to be present in their lives, the richness and humanity of their rites mean that the dead never die.

VOLVER destroys all the clichés about "black" Spain and offers a Spain that is as real as it is the opposite. A Spain that is white, spontaneous, funny, intrepid, supportive and fair.

ABOUT THE SCRIPT

Most of the writers I know are very interested in cinema. Some of them are friends of mine. Lola, my assistant, sent the script of "Volver" to Juan José Millás and Gustavo Martín Garzo. These were their replies, words which they never thought I would use parasitically in this pressbook.

From: Juan José Millás
To: Lola García
Re: Volver

Dear Lola,

I read the script in no time. The hyperrealism of the first scenes places you in a situation of great emotional tension. Hyperrealist painting has been given that name because they didn't know exactly how it differs from realist painting. In this country, we have always confused realism with the portrayal of local customs. Flemish painting is hyperrealist because it is fantastic, because it places us in a dimension of reality that allows us to be surprised by the most everyday situations. Once Pedro has placed us in that situation at the beginning, which is resolved with the appearance of the ghost in the trunk of the car, he can do what he wants with the spectator. And that's what he does. "Volver" is a permanent narrative conjuring trick, a prodigious device. And you never know where the trick is.

In this script there is no frontier that Pedro hasn't dared cross. He moves on the line that separates life from death like a tightrope walker. He mixes narrative materials from apparently incompatible origins with an amazing naturalness. And the more materials he adds, the greater the internal logic of the story...

P.S. I couldn't help, while reading "Volver", recalling "Pedro Páramo". Rulfo's novel has got nothing to do with Pedro's script, except in the naturalness with which both manage to have the dead co-existing with the living; the real with the unreal; the fantastic with the mundane; the imagined with the experienced; sleep with wakefulness. While reading the script, as happens while reading Rulfo's novel, the reader has a permanent oneiric sensation. He is awake, of course, but trapped in a dream, the story he is reading. The strange thing is that Rulfo's novel is furiously Mexican in the same way that Pedro's script is furiously Manchegan...

SHOOTING VOLVER

The most difficult thing about “Volver” has been writing its synopsis.

My films are becoming more and more difficult to tell and summarize in a few lines. Fortunately, this difficulty has not been reflected in the work of the actors, or of the crew. The shooting of “Volver” went like clockwork.

I guess I enjoyed it more because the last shoot (“Bad Education”) was absolute hell. I had forgotten what it was like to shoot without having the feeling of being permanently on the edge of the abyss. This doesn’t mean that “Volver” is better than my previous film, (in fact, I’m very proud of having made “Bad Education”), just that this time I suffered less. In fact, I didn’t suffer at all.

In any case, “Bad Education” confirmed something essential for me (which I had discovered already, in “Matador” and “Live Flesh”): you can’t throw in the towel. Even if you’re convinced that your work is a disaster, you have to keep fighting for every shot, every repetition, every look, every silence, every tear. You mustn’t lose an iota of enthusiasm even if you’re in despair. The passing of time gives you another perspective and at times things weren’t as bad as you thought.

5. CONFESSION

“Volver” (Coming back) is a title that includes several kinds of coming back for me. I have come back, a bit more, to comedy. I have come back to the female world, to La Mancha (undoubtedly this is my most strictly Manchegan film, the language, the customs, the patios, the sobriety of the facades, the cobbled paving in the streets). I am working again with Carmen Maura (after seventeen years), with Penélope Cruz, Lola Dueñas and Chus Lampreave. I have come back to maternity, as the origin of life and of fiction. And naturally, I have come back to my mother. Coming back to La Mancha is always to come back to the maternal breast.

During the writing of the script and the filming, my mother was always present and very near. I don't know if the film is good (I'm not the one to say), but I'm sure that it did me a lot of good to make it.

I have the impression, and I hope it's not a passing feeling, that I have managed to slot in a piece whose misalignment has caused me a lot of pain and anxiety throughout my life, I would even say that in recent years it had damaged my existence, dramatizing it too much). The piece I am talking about is “death”, not just mine and that of my loved ones but the merciless disappearance of all that is alive. I have never accepted or understood it. And that puts you in a distressing situation when faced with the increasingly faster passing of time.

The most important thing that comes back in “Volver” is the ghost of a mother, who appears to her daughters. In my village those things happen (I grew up hearing stories of apparitions), yet I don't believe in apparitions. Only when they happen to others, or when they happen in fiction. And this fiction, the one in my film (and here comes my confession) has produced a serenity in me such as I haven't felt for a long time (really, serenity is a word whose meaning is a mystery to me).

I have never in my life been a serene person (and it's never mattered to me in the slightest). My innate restlessness, along with a galloping dissatisfaction, has generally acted as a stimulus. It's been in recent years that my life has gradually deteriorated, consumed by a terrible anxiety. And that wasn't good either for living or for working. In order to direct a film, it's more important to have patience than to have talent. And I had lost all patience a long time ago, particularly with trivial things which are what require most patience. This doesn't mean that I have become less of a perfectionist or more complacent, not at all. But I believe that with “Volver” I have recovered part of my “patience”, a word which naturally entails many other things.

I have the impression that, through this film, I have gone through a mourning period that I needed, a painless mourning (like that of the character of Agustina the neighbor). I have filled a vacuum, I have said goodbye to something (my youth?) to which I had not yet said goodbye and needed to, I don't know. There is nothing paranormal in all this. My mother hasn't appeared to me, although, as I said, I felt her presence closer than ever.

“Volver” is a tribute to the social rites practiced by the people of my village with regard to death and the dead. The dead never die. I have always admired and envied the naturalness with which my neighbors talk of the dead, cultivate their memory and tend their graves constantly. Like the character of Agustina in the film, many of them look after their own grave for years, while they are alive. I have the optimistic feeling that I have been impregnated with all that and that some of it has stayed with me.

I never accepted death, I've never understood it (I've said that already). For the first time, I think I can look at it without fear, although I continue to neither understand nor accept it. I'm starting to get the idea that it exists.

Despite being a non-believer, I've tried to bring the character (of Carmen Maura) from the other world. And I've made her talk about heaven, hell and purgatory. And, I'm not the first one to discover this, the other world is here. The other world is this one. We are hell, heaven or purgatory, they are inside us. Sartre put it better than I.

LETTER FROM GUSTAVO MARTÍN GARZO

Dear Pedro, I really liked the script of your new film. Everything in it seems very familiar to me, very much you. It reminds me of the world of "What Have I Done to Deserve This?!" But it is less baroque, there is a transparency in it that situates us again in that world, it couldn't be otherwise, but at the same time in a different, more poetic, wiser, more touching way. That mixture of horror and happiness is wonderful. As if your characters could always find in the midst of hell, as Calvino wanted, that which isn't hell, and they'll always manage to make it last in their lives. That mixture, so typically yours, of candor and perverseness which makes the most dreadful things funny, and manages to find beauty and hope where it seems they can't exist, seems to me one of the most marvelous things in your films.

Your script reminded me of a story that Tolstoi tells somewhere. A priest visits an isolated monastery in the Greek islands and finds four monks. He discovers that they don't know the Our Father and, shocked, he teaches it to them. Then he takes his leave of them. When he is far from the coast he sees something gliding rapidly across the water towards his boat. He looks harder and sees that it is the monks whom he has just visited. They are running over the water! When they catch up with him they tell him they have forgotten the prayer he has just taught them, and ask him to repeat it. The priest, filled with emotion, replies that they don't have to remember it, they don't need it. That is how the characters in your film seem to me. They come to us, vulnerable and lost, to ask us for help, but they do it running over the water. They don't realize, but that is the strange, wonderful path they follow to reach us. And then, what can we tell them? That it doesn't matter what happens to them, what they suffer, what strange, terrible things may happen to them, we are not the ones to judge them. What's more, they are the ones who could judge us, even though we know they never will, because they aren't obsessed with justice but with love. And the best thing they can do is to continue being as they are.

That is how I see this script, like a tale. There are terrible things in tales: people being chopped up, fathers who want to sleep with their adolescent daughters, children who are abandoned in a forest, fierce creatures who devour human flesh... The most extreme has a place in them, and yet, alongside that horror, there is always that rare thing we call innocence. It's very hard to define what it is but there is nothing easier to identify when it appears. I think that art exists to pursue that innocence, which usually appears in the darkest places...

THE RIVER

The happiest memories of my childhood are related to the river.

My mother used to take me with her when she went to wash clothes there because I was very little and she had no one with whom to leave me. There were always several women washing clothes and spreading them out on the grass. I would sit near my mother and put my hand in the water, trying to stroke the fish that answered the call of the fortuitously ecological soap the women used back then and which they made themselves.

The river, the rivers, they were always a celebration. It was also in the waters of a river where, a few years later, I discovered sensuality.

Undoubtedly the river is what I miss most from my childhood and adolescence.

The women would sing while they were washing. I've always liked female choirs. My mother used to sing a song about some gleaners who would greet the dawn working in the fields and singing like joyful little birds. I sang the fragments that I remembered to the composer of "Volver", my faithful Alberto Iglesias, and he told me it was a song from the operetta "La rosa del azafrán". In my ignorance, I would never have thought that that heavenly music was an operetta. That is how the theme has become the music that accompanies the opening credits.

In "Volver", Raimunda is looking for a place to bury her husband and she decides to do it on the banks of the river where they met as children.

The river, like the graphics of any transport, like tunnels or endless passageways, is one of many metaphors for time.

GENRE AND TONE

I suppose that "Volver" is a dramatic comedy. It has funny sequences and dramatic sequences. Its tone imitates "real life" but it isn't a portrayal of local customs. Rather it has a surreal naturalism, if that were possible. I've always mixed genres and I still do. For me, it's something natural.

The idea of including a ghost in the plot is a basically comic element, particularly if you treat it in a realistic way. All of Sole's attempts to hide the ghost from her sister, or the way she introduces her to her clients, give rise to very comic scenes.

Although what happens in Raimunda's house (the death of the husband) is terrible, the way in which she fights so that no one should find out and the way she tries to get rid of him also create comic situations.

Although mixing genres is something natural for me, that doesn't mean it's free of risk (the grotesque and the "grand guignol" are always a threat). When you move between genres and cross opposing tones in a matter of seconds, the best thing is to adopt a naturalistic interpretation that manages to make the most ludicrous situation plausible. The only weapon that you have, apart from a realistic setting, are the actors, or rather, the actresses, in this case. I had the good fortune that they are all in a constant state of grace.

They are the great spectacle in "Volver".

FAMILY

“Volver” is a film about the family, and made with the family. My own sisters were the advisers on what happened both in La Mancha and inside the houses in Madrid (the hair salon, the meals, cleaning materials, etc.)

Although they were more fortunate, my family, like that of Sole and Raimunda, is a migrant family which came from the village to the big city in search of prosperity. Fortunately my sisters have continued to cultivate the culture of our childhood and have kept intact the inheritance received from my mother. I moved away from home very young and became an inveterate urbanite. When I return to the habits and customs of La Mancha, they are my guides.

The family in “Volver” is a family of women. The grandmother who has come back is Carmen Maura, her two daughters are Lola Dueñas and Penélope Cruz. Yohana Cobo is the granddaughter and Chus Lampreave is Aunt Paula, who still lives in the village. This group would have to include Agustina, the neighbor in the village (Blanca Portillo), the one who knows many of the family’s secrets, the one who has heard so many things, the one who, as soon as she gets up, taps on Aunt Paula’s window and doesn’t let up until the old lady answers, the one who brings her a full stick of bread every day, the one who finds her dead and calls Sole in Madrid. The one who opens her home to the corpse in order to give it a proper wake until the nieces arrive. The one who converts her mourning for the neighbor into mourning for her own mother, who disappeared years before, she doesn’t know where. The character of Agustina is, in her own right, part of the family that is headed by Carmen Maura.

Agustina represents a very important element in this female universe: the solidarity of neighboring women. The women in the village spread out problems, they share them. And they manage to make life much more bearable. The opposite also happens (the neighbor who hates the neighbor and stores his hatred from generation to generation until one day the tragedy explodes and even they don’t know why). I have only paid attention to the positive part of that Deep Spain, which is what I experienced as a child. In fact, “Volver” pays tribute to the supportive neighbor, that unmarried or widowed woman who lives alone and makes the life of the old lady next door her own life. For a great part of her final years, my mother was helped by her closest neighbors.

Those women were the inspiration for Agustina, a magnificent creation thanks to Blanca Portillo. For me she is the real revelation, because I didn’t know her. I had only seen her in a play and I liked her, but I couldn’t imagine that, with barely any film experience, she would be such a precise, polished actress, overwhelming in her continence. Agustina, alone in the empty street, watching as Sole’s car disappears, is the image of rural solitude, stripped of all adornment.

Blanca absorbed the essence of all the good neighbors in my village and made it her own.

THE STRENGTH AND FRAGILITY OF PENÉLOPE CRUZ

And her beauty. Penélope is at the height of her beauty. It's a cliché but in her case it's true. (Those eyes, her neck, her shoulders, her breasts!! Penélope has got one of the most spectacular cleavages in world cinema). Looking at her has been one of the great pleasures of this shoot. Although she has become stylized in the last few years, Penélope showed (from her debut in "Jamón, jamón") that she has more force in plebeian characters than in very refined ones. Seven or eight years ago, in "Live Flesh", she played an uncouth hooker who goes into labor and gives birth on a bus. They were the first eight minutes of the film and Penélope literally devoured the screen. Her Raimunda in "Volver" belongs to the same stock as Carmen Maura's character in "What Have I done to Deserve This?!", a force of nature that isn't daunted by anything. Penélope can come up with that overwhelming energy, but Raimunda is also a fragile woman, very fragile. She can (and must, because of the script) be furious and a moment later collapse like a defenseless child. This disarming vulnerability is what surprised me most about Penélope-actress, and the speed with which she can get in touch with it. There isn't a more impressive spectacle than watching in the same shot how a pair of dry, threatening eyes suddenly start to fill with tears, tears that at times spill over like a torrent or, as in some sequences, only fill her eyes without ever spilling over. Witnessing that balance in imbalance has been thrilling.

Penélope Cruz is a strong minded actress, but it is the mixture with that sudden, devastating emotion which makes her indispensable in "Volver".

It was a pleasure to dress, comb and make up the character and the person. Penélope's body ennobles whatever you put on it. We decided on straight skirts and cardigans because they are classic garments, very feminine and popular in any decade, from the 1950s to 2000. And, it also must be said, because they reminded us of Sophia Loren, in her beginnings as a Neapolitan fish seller. We have to thank the hairdresser Massimo Gattabrusi for the wonderful disheveled hair-dos and Ana Lozano for the make-up. The extended eye line was a real find. There is just one false element in Raimunda's body, her ass. These characters are always big-assed women and Penélope is too slim. The rest is all heart, emotion, talent, truth, and a face that the camera adores. As I do.

THE RETURN OF CARMEN

I never imagined that there was so much expectation about our re-encounter. I'm surprised by the number of people who told me how happy they were that Carmen and I were working together again! A song by Chavela says: "you always go back to the old places where you loved life". That can also be applied to people.

There is always uncertainty, but fortunately Carmen's disappeared at our first work meetings.

There is a long sequence in the script of "Volver", almost a monologue, because only Carmen's character, the grandmother's ghost, speaks. In this sequence, Carmen explains to her beloved daughter, Penélope Cruz, the reasons for her death and her return, over the course of six intense pages and six equally intense shots. This sequence is one of the reasons why I wanted to make the film. I cried each and every time I corrected the text (like the character played by Kathleen Turner in "Romancing the Stone", a ridiculous writer of very kitsch, romantic novels who cried while she was writing).

The night we filmed it, the whole crew was aware of its importance. There was a lot of expectation. That made Carmen a bit nervous and she wanted it to tackle it as soon as she could.

We took a whole night to film it and everyone from the trainee to me had that extreme concentration you get with difficult scenes and which precisely because of that makes them the easiest scenes, because we all give the most of ourselves.

Once again I felt that sacred complicity with Carmen, that marvelous feeling of being in front of an instrument that was perfectly tuned for my hands. All the takes were good, and many of them were extraordinary. Penélope is listening to her, at times with her head down. In the film, there is a lot of talking, there is a lot that is hidden and, for a comedy (so the crew says) there is a lot of crying.

From "Women on the Verge..." to the monologue in "Volver", Carmen hasn't changed as an actress, and it was wonderful to discover that. She hasn't learned anything because she knew it all already, but keeping that fire intact over two decades is an admirable, difficult task that can't be said of all the actors with whom I've worked.

The rest of the cast has been on a level with their companions. Lola Dueñas probably gives one of her most complex performances. She is the most eccentric of the four women in her family. Lola undertook personally to dominate the complicated Manchegan accent. She learned the secrets of the hairdressing trade and developed a comic streak unknown in her. She is intense, authentic and rare, in the best sense of the word.

Another of the blessings on this shoot was that all the girls lived and worked very closely. They had a wonderful relationship, like a family. And the lens captured that too. I'm very moved by young Yohana Cobo's performance. She is present in almost all the sequences but as a witness. She does one of the most complicated things in acting, which is listening and being present. And her presence is eloquent while doing hardly anything. But Yohana's work is conscious, subtle and very rich. Apart from "her" sequences, her monologue in front of her dead father... etc, the rest, always close to her mother, understanding her without knowing what is wrong with her, provokes a great tenderness in me. She also has an abrasive look. I hope everything goes well for her.

Chus Lampreave, María Isabel Díaz, Neus Sanz, Pepa Aniorte and Yolanda Ramos complete the cast, along with Antonio de la Torre, Carlos Blanco and Leandro Rivera. José Luís Alcaine, behind the camera, Alberto Iglesias, with the music, and Pepe Salcedo, as editor, have once again tuned in to my secret intentions, each one in his respective area.

PEDRO ALMODÓVAR – BIOGRAPHY

He was born in Calzada de Calatrava, province of Ciudad Real, in the heart of La Mancha, in the 50s. When he was eight, he emigrated with his family to Estremadura. There he studied for his elementary and high school diplomas in spite of the Salesian Fathers and the Franciscans.

At seventeen, he left home and moved to Madrid, with no money and no job, but with a very specific project in mind: to study cinema and direct films. It was impossible to enroll in the Official Film School because Franco had just closed it. As he couldn't learn the language, he decided to learn the content, that is, life, living... Despite the dictatorship that was suffocating the country, for an adolescent from the provinces Madrid represented culture, independence and freedom. He worked at many, sporadic jobs but couldn't buy his first Super-8mm camera until he got a "serious" job at the National Telephone Company of Spain where he worked for twelve years as an administrative assistant, twelve years which he also devoted to multiple activities which provided his real training as a filmmaker and as a person. In the mornings, in the Telephone Company, he got an in-depth knowledge of the Spanish middle class at the start of the consumer era, its dramas and its misfortunes, a real gold mine for a future story teller. In the evenings and nights, he wrote, loved, acted with the mythical independent theater group Los Goliardos and made films in Super-8 (his only school as a filmmaker). He collaborated with various underground magazines and wrote stories, some of which were published. He was a member of a parodic punk-rock group, Almodóvar and McNamara, etc.

He had the good fortune that the opening of his first film in commercial cinemas coincided with the beginning of democracy in Spain. After 18 months of eventful shooting on 16mm, in 1980 he opened "Pepi, Luci, Bom...", a no-budget film made as a cooperative effort with the rest of the crew and the cast, all beginners, except for Carmen Maura. In 1986, he founded the production company El Deseo S.A. with his brother Agustín. Their first project was "Law of Desire". Since then, they have produced all the films that Pedro has written and directed, and have also produced other young directors.

In 1988, "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" brought him international recognition. Since then, his films have opened all around the world. With "All About my Mother" he won his first Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, and also the Golden Globe, the César, 3 European Film Awards, the David de Donatello, 2 BAFTAs, 7 Goyas and 45 other awards. Three years later, "Talk to Her" had the same or better fortune (Academy Award for Best Script, 5 European Film Awards, 2 BAFTAs, the Nastro de Argento, the César and many other awards throughout the world but not in Spain).

He produced three very special films, highly rated throughout the world for their valor and delicacy ("My Life Without Me", "The Holy Girl" and "The Secret Life of Words"). In 2004, "Bad Education" was chosen to open the Cannes Festival. It received extraordinary reviews throughout the world, was nominated for numerous awards (Independent Spirit Awards, BAFTAs, César, European Film Awards) and won the prestigious Award for Best Foreign Film given by the New York Critics' Circle, and also the Nastro de Argento. Today, he is probably the director who enjoys the greatest freedom and independence when working.

FILMOGRAPHY

1974-1979	Various films of differing lengths on Super-8mm, including some on 16mm (Salomé)
1980	Pepi, Luci, Bom
1982	Labyrinth of Passions
1983	Dark Habits
1984-5	What Have I Done to Deserve This?!
1985	Trayler para amantes de lo prohibido (medium length, on video, for TVE)
1985-86	Matador
1986	Law of Desire
1987	Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown
1989	Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down
1991	High Heels
1992	Acción mutante (Producer)
1993	Kika
1995	The Flower of my Secret
1995	Tengo una casa (Producer)
1996	Pasajes (Producer)
1997	Live Flesh
1999	All About my Mother
2000	The Devil's Backbone (Producer)
2001	Talk to Her
2002	My Life Without Me (Producer)
2003	Descongélate (Producer)
2003	Bad Education
2004	The Holy Girl (Producer)
2005	The Secret Life of Words (Producer)
2006	Volver

ABOUT THE CAST

PENÉLOPE CRUZ

After having participated in “Live Flesh” and “All About my Mother”, Penélope has worked with Pedro Almodóvar again.

After studying acting in Cristina Rota’s school, she worked with some of the most important directors in Spain: Bigas Luna, in “Jamón, jamón” and “Volaverunt”, Fernando Trueba, in “Belle Epoque” and “The Girl of your Dreams” (for which she received the Goya for Best Actress), Alejandro Amenábar in “Open Your Eyes”, and Agustín Díaz Yanes in “Don’t Tempt Me”. Added to this is a more than notable international career that includes films like “The Hi-Lo Country” (Stephen Frears), “All the Pretty Horses” (Billy Bob Thornton), “Blow” (Jonathan Demme), “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin” (John Madden) and “Vanilla Sky” (Cameron Crowe).

With “Don’t Move”, by Sergio Castellito, she won the David di Donatello award and the Best Actress Award from the Academy of European Cinema (People’s Choice Award). The New York Times chose her performance in this film as one of the ten best female performances of the year. After “Volver”, she worked in “The Good Night” (Jake Paltrow) and is about to begin shooting on “Manolete” (Meno Meyjes). With her sophisticated, Mediterranean beauty, she has been the image of Ralph Lauren for years. Her interests include that of becoming a photographer.

CARMEN MAURA

She began in one of the most difficult areas, the one where you learn most, café theatre. Her portrayal of Marilyn Monroe was one of the milestones in this sub-genre in the 70s. At the end of the 70s and the start of the 80s, she became the queen of what was known as Madrid comedy, working with Colomo, Trueba and Almodóvar.

She and Pedro Almodóvar shared the most important moments of their careers in the 80s (“Pepi, Luci, Bom”, “Dark Habits”, “What Have I Don’t to Deserve This?!”), “Matador” and “Law of Desire”). It culminated with the international success of “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” (for which she won, among others, the Goya, the Ciak, the Fotogramas de Plata and the European Film Award for Best Actress).

With a career that spans over thirty years, it is impossible to summarize the national and international productions, in cinema, theatre and television, in which Carmen has participated, or the awards she has won.

We would mention “Ay, Carmela” (Carlos Saura) with which she won both the Goya and the European Film Academy’s Award for Best Actress, and “La comunidad” (Alex de la Iglesia) for which she won, among others, the Silver Concha (San Sebastian Film Festival) and the Goya for Best Actress. Recently she finished shooting “Nos chères têtes blondes” in France, with director Charlotte Silvera.

LOLA DUEÑAS

Lola Dueñas is also working again with Pedro Almodóvar after a small part in “Talk to Her”.

After studying with Juan Carlos Corazza, Lola began her career with Salvador García Ruiz in “Mensaka”, for which she won the Best Actress Award at the Toulouse Festival and the Most Promising Actress Award from the Actors’ Union. She has also appeared in “Marta y alrededores” (Nacho Pérez de la Paz and Jesús Ruíz), “Las razones de mis amigos” (Gerardo Herrero), “Piedras” and “Veinte centímetros” (both by Ramón Salazar) and, above all, “The Sea Inside” (Alejandro Amenábar). For this last film, she received the Goya for Best Actress and also the Award for Best Supporting Actress from both the Film Writers’ Circle and the Actors’ Union.

At present she is shooting “Lo que sé de Lola”, by Javier Rebollo, for whom she already worked in his award-winning short films, “En medio de ninguna parte”, “El equipaje abierto” and “En camas separadas”.

BLANCA PORTILLO

Born in Madrid in 1963, she studied at the Royal School of Dramatic Art where she began a successful theater career for which she has received such recognition as the Celestina and Max awards for “Madre, el drama padre”, the Max award, the Actors’ Union award and the Teatro de Rojas award for “Family Ressemblances”, or the Miguel Mihura and Actors’ Union awards for “La hija del aire”, directed by the prestigious Jorge Lavelli.

Very popular thanks to the television series “Siete vidas”, Blanca has also appeared in several films. In fact, she was nominated for a Goya as Most Promising Actress for “El color de las nubes” (Mario Camus). She has also appeared in the films “Alatriste” (Agustín Díaz Yanes) and “Goya’s Ghosts” (Milos Forman), both of which are in post production.

YOHANA COBO

Gifted with an abrasive look, young Yohana Cobo, who is from Madrid, has appeared in several television series, but her talent was really noticed in “La vida mancha” (Enrique Urbizu). It was confirmed with her leading role in “El séptimo día” (Carlos Saura) for which she was nominated as Most Promising Actress by the Film Writers’ Circle.

ABOUT THE CREW

AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR

He was born in La Mancha and graduated in Chemical Science from Madrid's Complutense University.

He began participating actively in cinema in 1985 and joined the crew of "Sé infiel y no mires con quien" (Fernando Trueba) at a production trainee. That same year he began his participation in his brother's films, working as assistant director on "Matador" and in 1986 he and Pedro founded their own production company, El Deseo.

Since then, he has been responsible for the production of all of Pedro's feature films (winning the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film for "All About my Mother") and has combined this with producing other directors (Alex de la Iglesia, Mónica Laguna, Daniel Calparsoro, Guillermo del Toro, Isabel Coixet, Félix Sabroso and Dunia Ayaso, and Lucrecia Martel). With El Deseo he has also been involved in many co-productions with France.

ESTHER GARCÍA

Esther, who was born in Segovia, has won three Goyas as production manager on "Acción Mutante", "All About my Mother" and "The Secret Life of Words". She has been associate producer on over ninety films and television series since she began in 1976 with "Curro Jiménez".

She has worked at every level in production, from trainee to executive producer, a position she has held since the film "My Life Without Me" (Isabel Coixet). As well as working uninterruptedly with Pedro since "Matador", she has done production work for Fernando Trueba, Mariano Ozores, Luis María Delgado, Gonzalo Suárez, Emilio Martínez Lázaro and Fernando Colomo.

As part of El Deseo's team, she has been associate producer on "Acción Mutante" (Alex de la Iglesia), "Tengo una casa" (Mónica Laguna), "Pasajes" (Daniel Calparsoro), "The Devil's Backbone" (Guillermo del Toro) and "Descongélate" (Felix Sabroso and Dunia Ayaso).

Together with Agustín Almodóvar, she has gone into television production ("Mujeres", by Dunia Ayaso and Félix Sabroso) and international production ("My Life Without Me" and "The Secret Life of Words", by Isabel Coixet, and "The Holy Girl", by Lucrecia Martel).

ALBERTO IGLESIAS

He was born in San Sebastian in 1955 and studied piano, guitar, counterpoint and harmony with Blanca Burgaleta and Francisco Escudero in his home city. He furthered his studies in Paris with Francis Schwartz and in Barcelona with Gabriel BrnCic. He has collaborated with Carlos Saura, Bigas Luna, Julio Medem and Iciar Bollain, among others.

He has collaborated closely with Pedro since they first worked together on "The Flower of my Secret", and has been the regular composer for his films.

His most notable soundtracks include “The Lovers from the North Pole” (Julio Medem), “All About my Mother” and “Talk to Her” (Pedro Almodóvar). He has received six Goyas for his work in the above mentioned films as well as for his scores for Julio Medem’s films, “The Red Squirrel”, “Tierra” and “Sex and Lucía”. He has recently worked on “The Constant Gardener” (Fernando Mireilles), for which he has been nominated to the best original score at the BAFTAs and the Academy Awards. In addition to his film work, he has composed symphonic and chamber music, and several ballets for the National Dance Company.

JOSÉ SALCEDO

He has edited over ninety films to date, including the entire filmography of Pedro Almodóvar.

He worked as assistant editor for Pedro del Rey and Pablo del Amo. He began his career with the film “Una mujer prohibida” and since then has received three Goyas for his work in “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” (Pedro Almodóvar), “Nobody Hill Speak of Us When We’re Dead” (Agustín Díaz Yanes) and “All About my Mother” (Pedro Almodóvar). He has worked with the most important Spanish directors, including Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Eloy de la Iglesia, Pedro Olea, Gonzalo Suárez, Jaime Chávarri, José Luis Borau and Manuel Gómez Pereira.

JOSÉ LUIS ALCÁINE

Born in Morocco, José Luis is one of our most prolific and international directors of photography. He studied at the Official Film School in Madrid and is a member of the Spanish Association of Cinematography.

He has worked with a multitude of directors in various countries and languages. In Spain he has collaborated with Vicente Aranda, Fernando Trueba, Bigas Luna, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Fernando Colomo, John Malkovich, Pilar Miró, Víctor Erice, Carlos Saura, Fernando Fernán-Gómez and Montxo Armendáriz, among others. Responsible for lighting on over one hundred films, he is working with Pedro again on “Volver” after having collaborated on “Bad Education”, “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” and “Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down”

To date he has received three Goyas for his excellent work behind the camera on films such as “El pájaro de la felicidad” (Pilar Miró), “El sueño del mono loco” (Fernando Trueba) and “El caballero Don Quijote” (Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón).

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**JUNTA DE COMUNIDADES DE CASTILLA – LA MANCHA
CONSEJERÍA DE PRESIDENCIA DE LA JCCLM
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA DE LA JCCLM**

EL DESEO presents

an Almodóvar film

VOLVER

Penélope Cruz

Carmen Maura

Lola Dueñas

Blanca Portillo

Yohana Cobo

and Chus Lampreave

**executive producer
Agustín Almodóvar**

produced by
Esther García

original score
Alberto Iglesias

editing
José Salcedo

director of photography
José Luis Alcaine

art director
Salvador Parra

production manager
Toni Novella

camera operator
Joaquín Manchado

sound
Miguel Rejas

mixing
José Antonio Bermúdez

head of make-up
Ana Lozano

hair-stylist
Máximo Gattabrusi

costume designer
Bina Daigeler

and with
Antonio de la Torre
Carlos Blanco
María Isabel Díaz
Neus Sanz
Leandro Rivera
Pepa Aniorte
Yolanda Ramos
Elvira Cuadrapani
Alfonsa Rosso

Fanny de Castro
Eli Iranzo
Carlos García Cambero
Magdalena Broto
Isabel Ayucar
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