



presents

ARABIAN NIGHTS

THREE FILMS BY MIGUEL GOMES

Volume 1- The Restless One, 125 minutes

Volume 2- The Desolate One, 131 minutes

Volume 3- The Enchanted One, 125 minutes

2015 Cannes Film Festival Directors' Fortnight

2015 Toronto International Film Festival

Portugal, France, Germany, Switzerland | 2014 | In Portuguese
with English subtitles

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Synopsis

In Portugal — a European country in crisis — a film director proposes to build fictional stories from the miserable reality he is immersed in.

However, failing to find meaning in his work, he cowardly runs away and leaves the beautiful Scheherazade to stand in his shoes. She will require enthusiasm and courage so as not to bore the King with sad stories of this country.

As nights go past, restlessness leads to desolation and in turn to enchantment! Therefore Scheherazade organizes the stories she tells the King in three volumes.

She begins like this: “It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in a sad country among all countries...”

Volume 1- The Restless One Synopsis

In which Scheherazade tells of the restlessness that befell the country: “It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in a sad country among all countries, where people dream of mermaids and whales, and unemployment is spreading. In certain places, forests burn into the night despite the falling rain; men and women long to set out to sea in the middle of winter. Sometimes there are animals that talk although it is highly improbable that they are listened to. In this country, where things are not what they appear to be, men of power promenade on camels and hide permanent and shameful erections; they await the moment when taxes are collected so they can pay a certain wizard whom...” And seeing the morning break, Scheherazade fell silent.

Volume 2- The Desolate One Synopsis

In which Scheherazade tells of how desolation invaded men: “It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that a distressed judge will cry instead of giving out her sentence on a night when all three moons are aligned. A runaway murderer will wander through the land for over forty days and will tele transport himself to escape the Police while dreaming of prostitutes and partridges. A wounded cow will reminisce about a thousand-year-old olive tree while saying what she must say, which will sound none less than sad! The residents of a tower block in the suburbs will save parrots and piss inside lifts while surrounded by dead people

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and ghosts; including in fact a dog that..." And seeing the morning break,

Scheherazade fell silent. – "Damned tales! If things continue this way my daughter will surely end up with her throat slit!" – the Grand-Vizier, Scheherazade's father, thinks in his palace in Bagdad.

Volume 3- The Enchanted One Synopsis

In which Scheherazade doubts that she will still be able to tell stories to please the King, given that what she has to tell weighs three thousand tons.

She therefore escapes from the palace and travels the kingdom in search of pleasure and enchantment. Her father, the Grand-Vizier, arranges to meet her at the Ferris wheel and Scheherazade resumes her narration: "O auspicious King, in old shanty towns of Lisbon there was a community of bewitched men who, with all dedication and passion, devoted themselves to teaching birds to sing..." And seeing the morning break, Scheherazade fell silent.



Director Biography

Miguel Gomes was born in Lisbon in 1972. He studied cinema at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School (Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema) and worked as film critic for the Portuguese press until the year 2000.

Miguel has directed several short films and made his first feature *The Face You Deserve* in 2000. *Our Beloved Month of August* (2008) and *Tabu* (2012) came to confirm his success and international recognition. *Tabu* was released at Berlinale's competition, where it won the Alfred Bauer and FIPRESCI award; the movie was sold to over 50 countries and won dozens of awards.

Retrospectives of Miguel's work have been programmed at the Viennale, the BAFICI, the Torino Film Festival, in Germany and in the USA. *Redemption*, his most recent short film, premiered in 2013 at Venice Film Festival.

Arabian Nights, a three-part feature film, premiered in this year's edition of the Directors Fortnight in Cannes.

Cast Biographies

Crista Alfaiate

She embodies and gives voice to Scheherazade but she is also Punk Maria in *The Swim of the Magnificents*, both the Genie and the injured cow in *The Tears of The Judge* and countess Béatriz Hesler of Lancaster in *Hot Forest*. Crista Alfaiate was born in Lisbon in 1981 and graduated in Theatre by Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (Lisbon Theatre and Film School). She collaborates regularly with several theatre production companies (such as O Bando, Mala Voadora, Comédias do Minho and Artistas Unidos). In 2014 she founded the theatrical project 'Lá Fora, a show for infants' in partnership with Carla Galvão. Her film credits include *4 Copas* by Manuel Mozos (2008) and *A Espada e a Rosa* (The Sword and the Rose) by João Nicolau (2010).

Luísa Cruz

She plays the Judge in *The Tears of the Judge* but she also plays one of the prostitutes in *The Men with a Hard-On*. Born in 1962 she graduated in Theatre from the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (Lisbon Theatre and Film School) and began working as an actress in 1985. Since then she has had a constant

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presence in several theatre companies, particularly in Teatro da Cornucópia and Teatro Nacional S. João. She also participated in several operas in Teatro Nacional de São Carlos. In Cinema she acted in films directed by Fernando Matos Silva, Leão Lopes and Teresa Villaverde. In 2005 she recorded a Fado record called Quando Lisboa Acontece (When Lisbon Happens) accompanied by Jeff Cohen on the piano. In 2005 and 2010 she won the Golden Globe for Best Theatre Actress.

Américo Silva

He plays the Grand Vizier who is Scheherazade's father but he is also the representative of the International Monetary Fund in The Men with a Hard-On and a cattle dealer in The Tears of the Judge. He graduated in Theatre at the Instituto de Formação, Investigação e Criação Teatral (Institute of Training, Research and Creation in Theatre) in 1989 and also graduated from the Theatre at the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (Lisbon Theatre and Film School) in 1994. He has since worked in theatre, television and cinema. He has played in over 30 plays by the Artistas Unidos theatre company which he has maintained close ties with since 1996. In Cinema he has acted in films directed by Jorge Silva Melo, Alberto Seixas Santos and Raúl Ruiz (The Mysteries of Lisbon).

Adriano Luz

He plays Luís, the union leader who negotiates with the envoys from the Troika in The Men with a Hard-On and he plays another Luís in The Swim of the Magnificents (or might he be the same?), the organiser of the swim of the 1st of January, a cardiac trade unionist, swimming teacher, a recent divorcee, descendant of 16th Century seafarers, all in all, a haggard romantic. He is also the father of the good thief in The Tears of the Judge was born in Oporto in 1959. He works as an actor and theatre director at the Teatro da Cornucópia, Teatro Monumental, Teatro Villaret and Teatro Nacional D. Maria II. He has directed a musical play for Teatro São Luiz. In Portuguese cinema he has collaborated with the following directors: João Canijo, João Botelho, João Mário Grilo, José Nascimento, Teresa Villaverde, Luís Filipe Rocha, Jorge Cramez, Margarida Cardoso, Margarida Gil and Edgar Pêra. He recently played leading roles in Bille August's Night Train to Lisbon and Raúl Ruiz's The Mysteries of Lisbon.

Chico Chapas

He is Simão 'Without Bowels', the murderer on the run who dreams of prostitutes and partridges, as well as Chico Chapas, bird-trapper highly regarded by all, the best and most trustworthy birdlime handler in The Inebriating Chorus of the Chaffinches. Francisco Gaspar — his real name — was born in the Chelas

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i n c o r p o r a t e d

neighbourhood in Lisbon, one of 14 siblings. His first job was painting electricity boxes and later he worked making blinds. He became a fisherman on the river Tagus soon after that. At 19 he was drafted into the army and fought in the Portuguese colonial war, in Guinea Bissau. He became known for being a fearless soldier, very skillful at catching birds and a brilliant footballer. He returned to Lisbon in 1974. He left the army, sold his boats and dedicated himself exclusively to the business of selling birds. Since then, Chico has endured ups and downs in the bird market but his reputation as a Master is indisputable. The Arabian Nights are Chico Chapas' debut in Cinema.

Gonçalo Waddington

He plays Vânia's boyfriend Vasco and he's one of Dixie's owners in The Owners of Dixie. He's also one of the participants in the chaffinches singing competition in The Inebriating Chorus of the Chaffinches and in The Tears of the Judge he plays the dumb son/pervert husband and he's one of the masked caretos jokers. He is a theatre and film actor and director, playwright, screenwriter and producer. In Cinema he has acted in films directed by Marco Martins, Tiago Guedes and Frederico Serra, Margarida Cardoso, João Canijo and Ivo M. Ferreira.

Lucky

This is Dixie, the happy dog in The Owners of Dixie. Lucky is one of the most famous acting dogs in the Spanish industry. Its acting versatility has been proved many times in roles for drama, comedy and action. He has also featured in various feature films such as Milos Forman's Goya's Ghosts.

Joana de Verona

She plays both the Judge's daughter in The Tears of the Judge and Vânia, one of the various owners of Dixie in The Owners of Dixie. Born in 1989 she studied Theatre in the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (Lisbon Theatre and Film School). Film directors she worked with include: Marco Martins, Raúl Ruiz, João Botelho, João Salaviza, Valeria Sarmiento, Denis Côté, Gabriel Abrantes and now also Miguel Gomes. The roles she's most known for are in Mistérios de Lisboa (The Mysteries of Lisbon) (2010), As Linhas de Wellington (The Wellington's Lines) (2012) and Rafa (Golden Bear for Best Short Film in Berlinale 2012).

Teresa Madruga

She plays Luisa, the depressive owner of Dixie in The Owners of Dixie. She was born in the Portuguese archipelago of the Azores in 1953 and began her acting

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i n c o r p o r a t e d

career in theatre in 1976. In her broad filmography she has worked with directors such as Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, João Canijo, João Pedro Rodrigues, João Botelho and Fernando Lopes among others. Her leading role in Swiss director Alain Tanner's *La Ville Blanche* (1983) brought her international recognition and other roles. In 1995 she acted alongside Marcello Mastroianni in Roberto Faenza's *Afirma Pereira*. In 2012, she played Pilar in Miguel Gomes' film *Tabu*.

João Pedro Bénard

He plays Humberto, the suicidal owner of Dixie in *The Owners of Dixie*. João Pedro Bénard is a cinema producer and production manager, known for his work with Paulo Rocha, Joaquim Pinto and Manuel Mozos. Son of João Bénard da Costa, he is also a film programmer at Cinemateca Portuguesa. He has acted in films by Manuel Mozos, Teresa Villaverde and Rita Azevedo Gomes.

Fernanda Loureiro

Fernanda is the owner of the cockerel in *The Story of the Cockerel and the Fire*. Born in Resende in 1973, she has two children and has been married for 20 years. The family has always raised poultry and never had any complaints. At the end of 2013 she received a letter from her neighbour's lawyer with an order to slaughter her cockerel that sung at dawn. Fernanda never wanted to kill the cockerel; but in 2014 the cockerel developed a bad limp and she killed it out of mercy. It was never eaten. Fernanda and her neighbour have not spoken since.

Jing Jing Guo

She is the speaker for the twelve Chinese ladies in *The Tears of the Judge* and lends her voice to the account of *Hot Forest*. Born in 1992 in Zheijiang, near Shanghai, she has lived in Lisbon for 11 years. She currently works in a Portuguese real estate company, for the Chinese buying market that acquires properties through The Golden Visas Programme.

Carloto Cotta

He plays both the bad Brazilian translator in *The Men with a Hard-On* and Paddleman, the man with the outstanding reproductive organ in *Scheherazade*. He is also one of the masked caretos jokers in *The Tears of the Judge*. He was born in Portugal in 1984. He attended secondary school at Cascais Theatre School and went on to act in more than 30 shorts, films and tv soaps, working with João Pedro Rodrigues, Manuel Mozos and Jorge Cramez among others. He played the leading role in João Salaviza's short film *Arena* (Winner of the Palme d'Or 2009) and also had an important part in the award-winning *Mistérios de*

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Lisboa (Mysteries of Lisbon) by Raul Ruiz. His collaboration with Miguel Gomes began in the short film 31, he then became Texas, one of Francisco's seven companions in The Face That You Deserve and finally young Ventura in Tabu.

Rogério Samora

He plays the Portuguese Prime Minister in The Men with a Hard-On. Born in Lisbon on 1959, he's been a professional actor since 1981 and he's a regular face in series and films on tv and in the theatre. He has acted in almost fifty cinema feature films. He has acted for directors such as Manoel de Oliveira, José Álvaro Morais, João Mário Grilo, João Botelho, Manuel Mozos, António Pedro Vasconcelos, Mariade Medeiros, Luís Filipe Rocha, Margarida Cardoso, José Fonseca e Costa, Jorge Cramez, Raoul Ruiz, and Fernando Lopes (the latter directed him in O Delfim for which he was nominated for the Golden Globe for Best Actor in 2003). His extensive filmography includes participations in O Sapato de Cetim (1985), Os Canibais (1988), Xavier (1992) and Love Torn in a Dream (2000). He also voiced Scar in the Portuguese version of The Lion King.

Bernardo Alves

He plays Alves, the bird-trapper champion who teaches his son how to look after birds and offer his trophies to deceased mates in The Inebriating Chorus of the Chaffinches. Born in Lisbon in 1972, he was raised in the shantytown of North Musgueira as the youngest of 6 siblings. He began working aged 13 as an assistant electrician, then became a locksmith and at 17 started working as a builder. Alves currently works as a window cleaner; he works long hours between 6am and 8pm. He looks after his birds all his spare time. His younger son Armindo accompanies him. Alves became interested in birds after his father died and left them to his children. Alves dedicates his victories to his father's memory.

Basirou Diallo

He plays the wizard in The Men with a Hard-On. Born in Saint Louis, Senegal in 1964, he arrived in Portugal in 2006 after having lived in Italy for 3 years. He started working as a builder and now currently works as a salesman of Senegalese crafts. He lives in Lisbon but relocates to the Algarve during the Summer to work. He was scouted in Rossio by Patrick Mendes, the second assistant director, who showed him the scene in the script. He travels at least once a year to visit his wife and three children.



Sabrina Lopes

She plays Sandra, the betrayed lover who sets the hills on fire in The Story of the Cockerel and the Fire. She is 13 years old and lives in Resende in a house close to the motorway. It takes one hour each day for her to be driven to school. Her mother works in the vineyards.

Carlos Loureiro

He plays Rui Miguel, the boy for whom the hills burn in The Story of the Cockerel and the Fire. Carlos was born in Resende in 2000 and moved to Bordeaux when his parents emigrated to France. He learned how to drive cars, jeeps and tractors at the age of 11 and grew used to helping his mother working in the vineyards. He cycles a lot and wants to become a building site manager.

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Crew

Director.....Miguel Gomes

Screenwriters.....Miguel Gomes, Mariana Ricardo, Telmo Churro

Cinematographer.....Sayombhu Mukdeeprom

Cinematographer (The Inebriating Chorus of the Chaffinches).....Lisa Persson

Cinematographer (The Story of the Cockerel and the Fire)..... Mário Castanheira

Editing.....Telmo Churro, Pedro Filipe Marques, Miguel Gomes

Sound.....Vasco Pimentel

Production design.....Bruno Duarte, Artur Pinheiro

Assistant director.....Bruno Lourenço

Journalists.....Maria José Oliveira, Rita Ferreira, João de Almeida Dias

Research.....Vasco Costa

Costumes.....Silvia Grabowski, Lucha D'Orey

Sound Editing and Mix.....Miguel Martins

Foleys.....Denis Séchaud, Pascal Mazière

Colorist.....Christophe Bousquet

Production Manager.....Isabel Silva

Executive producer.....Luís Urbano

Co-Producers and Associate Producers.....Olivier Père, Remi Burah
ARTE France Cinéma; Meinolf Zurhorst, Alexander Bohr ARTE/ZDF; Nuno Vaz
RTP; Françoise Mayor, Sophie Sallin, Sven Wälti, Gregory Catella RTS Radio
Télévision Suisse – SRG SSR; Robert Guédiguian, Patrick Sobelman, Marc
Bordure AGAT FILMS & Cie Michel Merkt

Producers.....Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar O SOM E A FÚRIA;
Thomas Ordonneau SHELLAC SUD; Jonas Dornbach, Janine Jackowski, Maren
Ade KOMPLIZEN FILM; Elena Tatti, Thierry Spicher, Elodie Brunner BOX
PRODUCTIONS