



Presidenza Italiana
del Consiglio
dell'Unione Europea



To Leave is to Die a Little (1951)

To Leave is to Die a Little is a short comedy film made in 1951 that, with a style half way between science fiction and the surreal, promotes the birth of the European Union. It features an extraordinary Peppino De Filippo alongside Austrian actress Margit Seeber. It was directed by Giacì (Giacinto) Mondaini, painter, illustrator, humourist, screenwriter and author, who has most certainly conveyed to the film most of its satirical vein. The short, which also features the work of one of Italy's top cinematographers, Gianni Di Venanzo, was filmed in the historical premises of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia.

Until not long ago there was next to no information about the film. All we knew was that an incomplete positive was preserved in the Italian National Archives, in the collection of films that belonged to U.S.I.S (the United States Information Service), an organism that between the late 40s and early 50s produced and distributed propaganda films in favour of the European Recovery Program (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan. Recently, however, the original negatives of the film were found in the Cineteca Nazionale of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. The Cineteca Nazionale proceeded to saving this rare document, making it accessible in the new formats, with a 4k digital restoration. At the same time, it also decided to transfer the restored files on 35mm polyester film. Film print, in fact, if preserved according the most advanced standards, as it is in the archives of the Cineteca Nazionale, is still today the base support that offers the best guarantee of duration in time. In this way, the audiences of today and tomorrow will have the opportunity to discover this original and quite unique film that, under many aspects, surprises us for the way it anticipates issues and problems that are still topical today.

Film File

Partire è un po' morire/ To Leave is to Die a Little
Paese | Country: Italia/Italy
Anno | Year: 1951
Colore | Colour /BN | BW: BN
Durata | Runtime: 11',40"
Lingua | Language: italiano/Italian
Interpreti | Cast: Peppino De Filippo, Margit Seeber
Regia | Director: Giacinto Mondaini
Fotografia | Cinematographer: Gianni Di Venanzo

Synopsis:

Year 2001, a female TV announcer presents the next featured programme: an old comedy from 50 years earlier, when travelling between the various nations Europe was "a complicated and quite risky enterprise". We see a crowd of people taking by storm the windows of a public office. Among them we find a man (Peppino De Filippo) and a woman (Margit Seeber) who, in order to obtain a passport and a wedding licence, are forced into an obstacle race between various departments. In the end, after undergoing scrupulous inspections by customs officials, frustrated and exhausted, they decide to go and live on a treetop, hoping that one day customs and borders will cease to exist, and that, on the model of the United States of America, the United States of Europe may see the light.

Sergio Bruno

