

THE SEA BEYOND

A FILM BY ACHERO MAÑAS

LONG SYNOPSIS

Ernesto, an unconventional and eccentric theatre director, is going through a personal and professional crisis. A recent breakup with his wife and poor job perspectives have plunged him into a deep depression. His twenty-year old daughter, Cloe, comes to spend a few days with him in his new apartment in Madrid and tries to cheer him up. Although she understands the situation, she would like things to work out between her parents. In her heart she would like to have a more conventional and peaceful life, but that seems impossible for an atypical family like hers.

The financial situation is becoming unsustainable and Ernesto suggests to his brother Max, a renowned musician, they undertake a joint project based on an original work he has produced. But after Max refuses to help, Ernesto is left with no other option than working on a series for TV, a medium that Ernesto deeply despises. One day, while on set, he receives news of his mother's passing. Carolina, Ernesto's foster mother, an octogenarian actress with an overwhelmingly strong personality, always loved him as her own child. Her death will not just be a devastating blow but also a responsibility, because Ernesto will have to honour a promise to fulfil his mother's last wish.

On the day of the funeral, to the great surprise of his friends and relatives, Ernesto steals his mother's coffin so he can give her body to the ocean, as she wished. Cloe, tired of her father's follies and eccentricities, insists on going with him, determined to change his mind. Together, transporting Carolina's body and accompanied by her little dog Bonnie, they travel to the village of Altea. Throughout the journey, Cloe will try to persuade her father to abandon the idea and return to Madrid. But an unexpected accident which nearly costs them their lives will make Cloe see things in a completely different light. She finally comes to understand that her father is not mad and the importance of being true to one's spirit, even if this means being different and going against social conventions.

CHARACTERS

ERNESTO

Ernesto is nearly fifty, attractive, bohemian and with a fun, sarcastic and eccentric personality. But his character, occasionally hot-headed and with strong convictions, is just a shield hiding a sensitive and emotionally fragile person. He is currently in the midst of a deep personal and professional crisis. After breaking up with his wife, he has been forced to give in and renounce his deepest principles to make ends meet. The sudden death of his foster mother, who took care of him since he was a small child and to whom he owes most of his life, will force him to face a complicated dilemma. Ernesto, going against everyone else's opinion, decides to fulfil her last wish. To do it, he will have to challenge social conventions and be true to the principles he had renounced.

CLOE

Cloe is a sensitive and complex girl, surrounded by family ties and influences which she sometimes wishes she could cast off to become a normal person. She greatly admires her grandmother, who has become her closest and indispensable confidant. When she dies, Cloe decides to travel with her father in an attempt to prevent him from committing the folly of fulfilling her last wish. The journey will help her to discover that being different can be a virtue and should not be rejected, because it means going against one's true essence.

JULIA

Julia is a sober and rational woman, with plenty of common sense. Together with Ernesto's mother, she is the family's emotional anchor and the one who normally brings order to the general chaos. Although she never abandoned her profession as an actress, she has often sacrificed opportunities in favour of her family. She has finally decided to leave Ernesto because she needs to clear her mind and reconsider her life. The death of her mother in law and subsequent events will be the catalyst for her to understand why her destiny is linked to her family's.

CAROLINA

Carolina, is nearly eighty and still has an overwhelming personality. Her passion has always been art, particularly theatre, where she developed most of her career. If there is one thing she has learned in her long life it's that rules, both personal and professional, are made to be broken. The death of many of her friends has made her realise that her time could come at any moment. For that reason, she makes Ernesto, her adopted son, promise to fulfil her last wish once she dies. She doesn't want to be buried or incinerated, let alone a pompous and conventional ceremony. Her firm desire is to be cast into the ocean near her birthplace, the village of Altea.

MAX

Max is an internationally renowned musician. His career has always been linked to the interpretation of classical pieces rather than his own compositions and this has caused him great frustration. His mother's death will bring a confrontation with Ernesto, his adoptive brother, and will also make him face the struggle that has been latent for many years. He will eventually reconcile with his brother and take the reins of his career, following his true vocation.

CAST

Ernesto	ERNESTO ALTERIO
Cloe	GALA AMYACH
Julia	RUTH DÍAZ
Max	PAU DÚRA
Carolina	MAGÜI MIRA

ACHERO MAÑAS

Born in Madrid in 1966 to actress Paloma Lorena and writer Alfredo Mañas, Acheró grew up in an environment surrounded by art, theatre and literature, and this had a deep influence on his worldview, life and personality. As an adolescent, he made his debut in theatre and cinema, where he began to get small roles.

In 1984, he moved with his family to New York, where he attended the Real Stage Theatre School. Upon his return to Spain, he worked under directors like Carlos Saura, Adolfo Aristarain, José Luis Cuerda and Manolo Gutiérrez Aragón.

During that period, Acheró began to complement his acting work with his first attempts at directing. In 1995, he directed his first short film "Metro." In 1996, he wrote and produced his second short film "Cazadores" which won several awards, including a Goya to the best short film. The following year, he wrote, produced and directed "Paraísos Artificiales" which was also successful and received several national and international awards.

His first feature film as screenwriter and director was "El Bola," a big hit with both critics and audiences, which garnered multiple awards including four Goyas; best new director, best original screenplay, best new actor and best film.

His next feature film "Noviembre" followed the same trajectory and also received several awards at international events, including a FIPRESCI at the Toronto Film Festival.

His following project was not a fiction film, but a documentary commissioned by Canal+ on the peace process in Northern Ireland. He dedicated several years to studying, documenting and creating this work.

After this project, he wrote, produced and directed a third film, "Todo lo que tú quieras," which was praised by critics and took part in numerous national and international festivals. An American producer recently acquired the rights to shoot a remake for the US.

GOYA AWARDS 2001:

- BEST FILM: EL BOLA
- BEST NEW DIRECTOR: ACHERO MAÑAS – EL BOLA.
- BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: ACHERO MAÑAS – EL BOLA.
- BEST NEW ACTOR: JUAN JOSÉ BALLESTA – EL BOLA.

FILM "NOVIEMBRE":

- FIPRESCI AWARDS –TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2003
- YOUTH AWARD– SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2003
- BEST ACTOR – TOULOUSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2004
- BEST NEW ACTOR– TOULOUSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2004
- BEST MUSIC – TOULOUSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2004
- AUDIENCE AWARD - ANNENCY FILM FESTIVAL 2004
- LUIS BUÑUEL CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD 2004

FILM "TODO LO QUE TÚ QUIERAS":

- TIFF 2010 "OFFICIAL SELECTION" - TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.
- PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (USA)
- RIFF "OFFICIAL SELECTION" - ROME INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

- AUSTRALIA SPANISH FESTIVAL (AUSTRALIA)
- SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (USA)
- JEONJU INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SOUTH KOREA)

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In his famous work *Civil Disobedience*, philosopher Henry David Thoreau wrote that a man who is right constitutes a majority. His eloquent discussion pointed out very clearly that an individual's thoughts could be absolutely legitimate even against the majority's opinion, and thus encouraged disobeying laws. Throughout history, we have seen some people who have challenged established views to defend their ideas. These individuals, whether in the political, scientific, artistic or social arena, have often been considered anti-system, traitors, rebels and even madmen. This may seem an exceptional situation in most people's reality, but in fact is very common in everyday life and raises serious problems for coexistence. How often have we thought about ignoring social conventions and doing what we really believed we should do? How many times have we had to control our impulses and desires? Being different, behaving differently to the rest of our citizens, is a risk that not everyone is prepared to assume. Most of us face this dilemma at some point in our lives and, generally, end up repressing our desires in favour of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence. But we are all different and singular and the betrayal of our spirit often produces frustration, impotence and despair. Eventually, that which initially seemed to be a value for social cohesion ends up becoming the main cause of confrontation.

This situation faced by human beings during their lives is the essence and main theme of the film *The Sea Beyond*. It is a metaphor that portrays, in a tone of dramatic black comedy, the dilemma of a man who, faced by special circumstances, must act outside the law and against the beliefs of his closest circle. A man turned by destiny into a Don Quixote who, guided by passion, will act against the established rules. Rules which, while created for an abstract body of individuals, for the most part do not take into account their particularities.

In spite of these rules and the general opinion, Ernesto, the protagonist of *The Sea Beyond*, will decide to remain faithful to himself, to his true spirit. A spirit which, unfortunately, for various reasons, we end up silencing most of the time. His courage and rebelliousness will teach us, with a good dose of controversy, that in life we sometimes have to act according to our convictions, without fear of being different, even if it means going against the majority's opinion. A majority which appears to be homogeneous, but which, paradoxically, is revealed to be made up of singularities.

- Achero Mañas (Director, Screenwriter) -