

La prima cosa bella

The First Beautiful Thing (Italian: **La prima cosa bella**) / (Türkçe: **Gördüğüm En Güzel Kadın**) it is a 2010 Italian drama film directed by Paolo Virzì, produced by Medusa Film, Motorino Amaranto and Indiana Production, released in Italy on 15th of January 2010.

The title of the film is taken from the song with the same name by Mogol and Nicola Di Bari, successful in 1970 / Dalida & Massimo Ranieri - *La prima cosa bella* (1971).

The singer Malika Ayane created a cover for the film's soundtrack.

Cast

Valerio Mastandrea as Bruno Michelucci
Micaela Ramazzotti as Anna Nigiotti in Michelucci - 1971-1981
Stefania Sandrelli as Anna Nigiotti in Michelucci - 2008
Claudia Pandolfi as Valeria Michelucci
Marco Messeri as Il Nesi
Fabrizia Sacchi as Sandra
Aurora Frasca as Valeria Michelucci - child
Giacomo Bibbiani as Bruno Michelucci - child
Giulia Buralassi as Valeria Michelucci - teenager
Francesco Rapalino as Bruno - teenager
Sergio Albelli as Mario Michelucci
Isabella Cecchi as Zia Leda Nigiotti
Emanuele Barresi as Roberto Lenzi
Dario Ballantini as Avvocato Cenerini
Paolo Ruffini as Cristiano Cenerini

In the role of **Anna Nigiotti** married Michelucci in the seventies and eighties, Micaela Ramazzotti, the director's wife, was chosen. The same character, much older is played by Stefania Sandrelli.

In the cast of the comedy, written by Virzì together with Francesco Bruni and Francesco Piccolo, there are also **Valerio Mastandrea, Marco Messeri, Claudia Pandolfi, Paolo Ruffini** and **Dario Ballantini**.

For the selection of the young actors who interpreted the different ages of **Bruno** and **Valeria**, more than 6500 auditions were made in collaboration with almost all the educational institutions in the territory of Livorno and province, up to choose **Aurora Frasca** and **Giacomo Bibbiani**

(Valeria and Bruno 1971), **Giulia Burgalassi and Francesco Rapalino** (Valeria and Bruno 1980). Other young actors have been chosen for minor roles, such as Jacopo Dini (Giancarlo Barbacci 1980), Alessandra Cantini (Elena Talini 1980) and Edoardo Ferrari (Andrea Baldacci 1980).

Awards and nominations

The film was nominated for 18 **David di Donatello Awards**, and won: **Best Screenplay** (Paolo Virzì, Francesco Bruni, Francesco Piccolo), **Best Actress** Micaela Ramazzotti and **Best Actor** (Valerio Mastandrea).

4 Silver Ribbon (Nastro d'Argento): Director of the best film Paolo Virzì, **Best screenplay, Best Actress** Stefania Sandrelli and Micaela Ramazzotti, **Best Costume** Gabriella Pescucci.

The film was also **nominated** for the **European Film Award for Best Director**.

It was selected as **the Italian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 83rd Academy Awards**, meaning for the Oscar, but it didn't make the final shortlist.

Storyline

Summer 1971, election of Miss Pancaldi, the highlight of the Livorno summer season, celebrated in its most famous bathing establishment. Anna's election as the "most beautiful mother" seems to be the fact that triggers problem in the history of the Michelucci family, giving way to a series of tragicomic events that reach the present day.

Bruno Michelucci, a middle-aged professor of letters in Milan, is an unhappy and fundamentally dissatisfied man with his life. When his younger sister Valeria calls him to Livorno, at the bedside of his mother Anna, who has reached the end of a long fight against cancer, the man, hesitating, prepares to re-establish a relationship that he had interrupted many years before, during his adolescence, when deceived by the defame of his high school classmates, he had convinced himself that his mother was a woman of easy morals.

The occasion for this late rapprochement becomes propitious to retrace the whole existence of his family, from that night to the Pancaldi baths, where the seed of a destructive form of jealousy of the father was planted, passing through the failure of his parents' marriage escapes, quarrels, disordered life but also full of affectivity and moments of joy, lucky encounters, friendships, losses and mourning, up to the definitive separation from a mother never fully understood, although deeply and secretly loved.

Little by little Bruno becomes aware of secrets he never wanted to understand. The last days of his mother Anna's life, forced to give up her overwhelming and whimsical vitality in the face of the relentless progress of evil, are an opportunity to renew loose relationships too abruptly, to reread, from the point of view of a now mature man, facts and behaviors of people who crowded his childhood and youth, to finally give everyone, first of all to himself, a new opportunity and a new beginning, before it is too late and the separation becomes final.

Music

The title of the film is taken from the song with the lyrics by Mogol and music by Gian Franco Reverberi and Nicola Di Bari, brought to success in 1970, of which the singer **Malika Ayane** created a cover for the soundtrack of the film. Other songs that are heard in the film are *L'immensità / The immensity* (music by Mariano Detto and Don Backy, who also wrote the text together with Mogol), *Born to Be Alive* (Patrick Hernandez), two songs by the Chameleons, *L'eternità e L'ora dell'amore / Eternity and The hour of love*, one of Virginia Miller: *L'angelo necessario / The necessary angel*, and three of Livornesi Bad Love Experience, 21st Century Boy, Knowing all the Things I've Known and The Days, which are also present in the film as the group rock beat "The new dimensions". The wedding scene has in the background the interlude of *Cavalleria rusticana* by the greatest Livornese musician: Pietro Mascagni.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OvsVSWB4TI>

***La prima cosa bella*: Paolo Virzì directing one of his most personal films**

Paolo Virzì directs his most intimate and personal film, staging a story with strong autobiographical hues, which with continuous leaps back and forth in time reveals all the nuances and behind the scenes of an atypical family, in constant escape and change. An apparently innocent photo, which sanctions Anna's award as the most beautiful mother of a Livorno seaside resort, becomes the breaker that triggers a chain reaction made of gossip, jealousy and anger, leading to the disintegration of a family at first sight solid and firm.

The guiding thread of the story is the vitality of the protagonist Anna, a woman of fascinating beauty and indestructible courage, who even in the face of the harsh difficulties, always manages to give affection, love and smiles to her two children. In the long search for economic and social stability for her and her children, Anna repeatedly sins of an excess of trust and generosity, granting

all of herself to vain dreams of cinematographic glory and opportunistic exploiters, who punctually leave her with regrets in her hand and broken dreams.

The relationship between the mother and her children

“La prima cosa bella” is the story of Bruno and Valeria, first small children, then teenagers, then finally not too happy adults. Brother and sister “victims” of the too much love of a mother who has made so many mistakes in life, perhaps she was wrong to leave her husband and she did not even notice how her beauty blinded Livorno and had become a species of condemnation in that provincial environment. She dreamed of making films, but she did not have the talent. She was also clumsy in being a secretary to a lawyer, to whom (perhaps) she had been too attached. The only thing she was sure of was the total, determined, absolute affection she had towards her two children. A security that, in the end, costs a lot to the two who, when they grow up, find themselves full of uncertainties and with so much repressed unhappiness.

They grow up differently, of course. But the shadows they carry are the same. Valeria (Claudia Pandolfi) stays in Livorno, starts a family, but probably, she would have dreamed of a better husband. And Bruno (Valerio Mastandrea, went to Milan to be a professor. And if his mother continues to exalt him from a distance, he, the occasional drug user, lives his constant condition of unhappiness with resignation.

Then come the last weeks of Mother Anna’s life and then the accounts with the love received and never returned, the memory of a complicated but “fun” life, they will come back over and over again to demand attention in the lives of the protagonists.

Valerio Mastandrea exceptional in the role of his son confused and overwhelmed by an unforgettable mother. The apathy of her son Bruno, who moved away from his mother in his youth and who is now an unhappy and unsatisfied professor of letters, is the counterpart to the radiance with which Anna faces life. In the role of this character, Valerio Mastandrea confirms himself to be one of the best actors of his generation with an exceptionally measured test, made of long silences and eloquent expressions, which contrast the sweetness of the mother and the humanity of his sister Valeria, eager to recompose the relationship between the two. A contrast brought to light and eviscerated with great tact and sensitivity by the director, who puts everything at stake in the description of the relationship of love and hate with his Livorno and in the lucid analysis of how useless pain the rumors and the climate of suspicion could have caused.

The different time planes fit together and overlap with great effectiveness, gradually revealing, with the right times and ways, the events and emotions that have built the foundations of difficult and tormented existences.

Much of the credit for the success of *La prima cosa bella* goes to the two interpreters of Anna Micaela Ramazzotti and Stefania Sandrelli (both awarded with the Silver Ribbon for their interpretations), which complement and merge in the characterization of a woman from irresistible sweetness, a symbol of the desire to never give up and to react, even in the most difficult or tragic moments.

Also stands out a splendid soundtrack, which focuses strongly on songs from the 60s and 70s such as the name of the film (dusted off by a cover of Malika Ayane), *L'eternità e L'immensità / Eternity and Immensity*, giving a nostalgic and melancholic tone to a poignant and unforgettable story.

La prima cosa bella is the work that approved the definitive explosion of Paolo Virzì, who later confirmed himself to be one of the most brilliant storytellers of contemporary Italian cinema with two other exceptional films such as *Il capitale umano e La pazza gioia / Human capital and Crazy joy*. A necessary film, which tells with irony and bitter disenchantment all the contradictions of the Italian province, however inviting us to preserve the hope and joy of living even in the darkest and most complicated moments. A complete and touching work, with which to smile, be moved and reflect on the miseries of our society and on those few rays of light that, despite everything, continue to shyly go out.

Reviews:

<https://www.spietati.it/la-prima-cosa-bella/>

<https://www.cinematographe.it/recensioni/la-prima-cosa-bella-recensione/>

[http://www.storiadefilm.it/commedia/commedia_italiana/paolo_virzi-la_prima_cosa_bella\(motorino_amaranto_medusa_film-2010\).html](http://www.storiadefilm.it/commedia/commedia_italiana/paolo_virzi-la_prima_cosa_bella(motorino_amaranto_medusa_film-2010).html)

http://www.ondacinema.it/film/recensione/prima_cosa_bella.html