

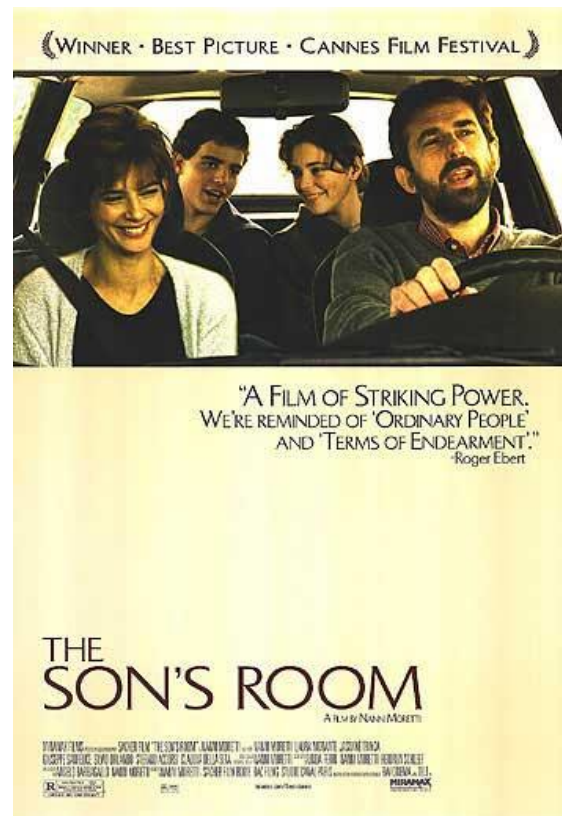
The Son's Room (La Stanza del figlio)

Italy 2001 1 hour 39 minutes Cert 15

Director: Nanni Moretti
 Script: Moretti, Linda Ferri, Heidrun Schleef
 (story: Moretti)
 Producers include Moretti
 Cinematography: Giuseppe Lanci
 Editing: Esmeralda Calabria
 Music: Nicola Piovani

The Cast

Nanni Moretti	(Giovanni Sermondi),
Laura Morante	(Paola Sermondi),
Jasmine Trinca	(Irene Sermondi),
Giuseppe Sanfelice	(Andrea Sermondi),
Sofia Vigliar	(Arianna),
Renato Scarpa	(Principal)



There are no car crashes in *The Son's Room*, no explosions or chase scenes, either. It is low key and the director lets the story play along at a steady pace. The entire cast has impeccable timing. The audience is given time to reflect on what they would do in a similar situation.

Moretti is an actor, writer, director and produces movies in which he also acts but which others direct. He also runs a small cinema in Trastevere in Rome showing independent productions (Ken Loach and the new Iranian moviemakers, for instance). Indeed he made in 1996 a short, *Opening Day of Close-Up*, which showed his attempts to motivate his staff to lure in customers for Abbas Kiarostami's Iranian film in competition with *The Lion King*.

"What I attempt to do in my films," he says, "is to portray a world and deal with it with affection, with irony and detachment - and also to take the mickey."



In financing his films, Moretti displays an equal determination and independence. "There is a state commission in Italy," he says, "which views screenplays and decides on subsidies, but I have never availed myself of this. This is partly because, unlike other Italian screenwriters and directors, I have the good fortune to have distribution

internationally. I have the good fortune never to have caused my financial backers ever to lose money.

"I was never interested in making propaganda films," Moretti continues. "I am more interested in making good films. Speaking as a filmgoer, political films often have two aspects that I was never convinced by. On the one hand, the director tends to be satisfied with having an important subject, to deal with or promote. On the other hand, these films also wish to reassure, to confirm the audiences in their views. Fundamentally this is the kind of cinema that offers answers rather than questions."



The film is notable for happening in a continuous, ordinary daylight. Moretti, cinematographer Giuseppe Lanci and designer Giancarlo Basili have contrived a series of unobtrusive, unassuming interiors: the psychotherapist's office, the school principal's study, the family kitchen and the dining room furnished with muted good taste.



The Son's Room is a remarkable work, thoroughly deserving of the Palme d'Or it won at Cannes last year. (The picture shows Moretti after Antonio Banderas and Melanie Griffiths award him his prize).

The title, *La Stanza del Figlio*, incidentally, has an additional

meaning in Italian, 'stanza' being both a room and a unit of verse, thus suggesting a poem or part of a life left standing

The Son's Room is a powerful film that covers the universal search for meaning and small blessings in the face of life's utter randomness. The movie's rejection of even a tinge of melodrama lends it a special integrity. As Laura Morante, the actress who plays the mother has said, "This is a beautiful and honest film."



Iain McGlashan