



## **IO CAPITANO (15)**

Director: Matteo Garrone

Starring: Seydou Sarr, Moustapha Fall, Issaka Sawadogo

Italy/Belgium/France/Senegal, 2023, 2 hours 1 minute, English subtitles

Garrone has a significant back catalogue of nominated and award-winning work, ranging from Crime (*Tale of Tales*, 2015 and *Dogman*, 2018), Horror/Fantasy (*Gomorrah*, 2008) and more recently Fairy Tale/Fantasy (*Pinocchio*, 2019). *Io Capitano* builds on Garrone's reputation. *Io Capitano* has already been awarded the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival 2023 and nominated by Italy for an Academy Award 2024 for Best International Feature Film. However, it marks a change of style in terms of subject matter, mood, and pace. Philip Oltermann writing in **The Guardian**, 25 August 2023 comments; "it is a departure in more ways than one... it is the first film in which Garrone doesn't explore Italy from within but through the eyes of those who make it their destination in the hope of a better life". Sarr and Fall were both 17-year-old Senegalese newcomers and the dialogue is in French but also Wolof, the language of Senegal.

*Io Capitano* is based upon a very familiar story of young migrants undertaking hazardous journeys in order to seek safety and a new life in Europe, but the journey is anything but safe. Seydou and Moussa are teenage cousins living in Dakar Senegal. They decide to leave their home and family and embark upon a journey from Senegal to Italy. Their intention is to find a better life in Europe and be able to support their family. Their decision creates family tension, Seydo's mother would rather that he remain in Senegal. However, Seydou and Moussa are determined, although naïve and know little of the reality they face both on the journey and the reception they are likely to face at its end. When contemplating the trip Seydou says; "Europe is waiting for us" As they travel North by land and sea they face extreme hardship, criminality, and corruption.

The film presents a juxtaposition because it is beautifully and artistically shot with scenes of sweeping deserts and seas, and passages of magic realism but this does not hide the true horror and danger of migration, and for many the tragic vulnerability and reality of small boats. Our sympathies are with Seydou and Moussa, but it does ask questions about their choice to undertake the journey and their responsibility and complicity. It also asks questions about fairness and equality, and the global North's response to economic migration. The questions are about our responsibility for our fellow human beings and whether this is really limited by national boundaries and our good fortune. What responsibility do we have for the global South, particularly as a result of our historic role in its exploitation?

Interviewed by Oltermann Garrone explained; "I tried to change the point of view.... It's a reverse shot of what we are used to seeing. We are used to having the camera in Europe, watching people arriving over the sea, sometimes alive, sometimes dead. I wanted to show the part we should know about but don't....I was entering a culture that wasn't my own, and in order to make a movie I had to make it not just about them but with them...Every moment on the set, I had people beside me who had actually lived through the experience of being tortured in Libya, or walked through the Sahara, so they could help me tell their experience in detail."

Preview courtesy of Altitude

Notes compiled by Adrian Rhead