

A Film by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU

JAVIER BARDEM

“BIUTIFUL”

This film is not yet rated

Running Time: 148 minutes

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A MENAGE ATROZ, MOD PRODUCCIONES PRODUCTION in coproduction with IKIRU FILMS.

A Film by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU

JAVIER BARDEM

“BIUTIFUL”

Casting by EVA LEIRA YOLANDA SERRANO

Executive Producer DAVID LINDE

Associate Producers ALFONSO CUARÓN GUILLERMO DEL TORO

Co-Producers SANDRA HERMIDA ANN RUARK

Music by GUSTAVO SANTAOLALLA

Edited by STEPHEN MIRRIONE, A.C.E.

Production Designer BRIGITTE BROCH

Director of Photography RODRIGO PRIETO, ASC, AMC

Produced by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU JON KILIK and FERNANDO BOVAIRA

Based on a Story by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU

Written by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU

ARMANDO BO NICOLÁS GIACOBONE

Directed by ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU

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FILMS S.L.

BIUTIFUL

SYNOPSIS

This is a story of a man in free fall.

Connected with the afterlife, Uxbal is a tragic hero and father of two who's sensing the danger of death

Struggles with a tainted reality and a fate that works against him in order to forgive, for love, and forever.

On the road to redemption, darkness lights his way. A classic tragedy in modern times.

On Beautiful

By Alejandro González Iñárritu

After having globe-trotted with *Babel*, I thought I had explored enough multiple lines, fractured structures and crossing narratives. Each of the films I have made has been shot in a different language, in a different country. At the end of *Babel*, I was so exhausted I made it a point that my next film would be about just one character, with one point of view, in one single city, with a straight narrative line and in my own native language. Using a musical analogy, if *Babel* was an opera, *Beautiful* is a requiem. . . and here I am. *Beautiful* is all that I haven't done: a linear story whose characters shape the narrative in an unexplored genre for me: the tragedy.

Beautiful for me is a reflection akin to our brief and humble permanence in this life. Our existence, short-lived as the flicker of a star, only reveals to us its ineffable brevity once we are close to death. Recently, I thought of my own death. Where do we go and what do we transform into when we die? Into the memory of others. This is the anguishing and dizzying race against time that Uxbal faces. What does a man do in his final days of life? Does he dedicate himself to living or to dying? Perhaps Kurosawa was right when he said our dreams of transcendence are just that: an illusion. Regardless, since the film's inception, I was never interested in making a movie about death, but a reflection in and about life when our inevitable loss of it occurs.

Modern society suffers, among many things, from a profound thanatophobia. For this reason, I realize the formal and thematical contradiction of creating a sordid poem about an enlightened man while he is falling into the darkness of death and the unknown is a challenge. I say contradictory because while the internal spiral of Uxbal goes towards his interior and the spiritual, the urgency of this new social and political reality of Europe stretches his external spiral towards the opposite direction. The news reports statistics of hundreds of millions of people dying and exploited inside these human beehives that form in the suburbs of every European city. The vertiginous and vacuousness of this news is difficult to metabolize. The hard reality of the poor, the immigrants, the ones who are always invisible. Upon visiting Barcelona in 2007, the character of Uxbal told me he belonged to this world. For me, individualizing only one of these realities was worth the trip. For many people, what appears to be an extreme reality, for the is only a natural part of their existences and the ordinary of their day to day. Many of the characters were played

by non-actors and had lives parallel to the world of the film. But how did all this arise?

A film for me always begins with something very vague -- a bit of a conversation, a glimpse of a scene through a car window, a shaft of light or some music notes. *Biutiful* started on a cold autumn morning in 2006 while my kids and I were preparing breakfast and I randomly played a CD of the Ravel Piano Concerto in G Major. Some months before, I had played the same Ravel piano concerto during a family car trip from Los Angeles to the Telluride Film Festival. The scenery of the Four Corners area was breathtaking but after the Ravel piece finished, both of my kids started to cry at the same time. The melancholic quality, the sense of sadness and beauty that this piece of music contains was overwhelming for them. My kids couldn't take it or explain it. They just felt it. When they heard that Ravel piano again that morning, they both asked me to stop the CD. They remembered very clearly the emotional impact and how that music moved them. That same morning, a character knocked on my head's door and said: "Hola, my name is Uxbal." During the next three years, I would spend my life with him. I didn't know what he wanted, who he was or where he was going. He was dismissive and full of contradictions. But to be honest, I knew how I wanted to present him and how I wanted to finish with him. Yes, I just had the beginning and the end.

It wasn't until one year later, while I was walking in the El Raval section of Barcelona, that everything made sense. Barcelona is the queen of Europe. She is indeed beautiful, but like every queen, she also has a much more interesting side than the obvious and sometimes boring, bourgeois beauty that every tourist and postcard photographer has admired. Since I was 17 years old and traveled around the world working in a cargo ship as a floor cleaner, I have been attracted to, curious about and fascinated by the neighborhoods that are hidden and that nobody sees. That's what I respond to. And I am talking about the diverse, complex, marginal and multiethnic new world that has been recently created in Barcelona and most of the big cities of Europe. It would have been impossible to imagine this when I first came to Barcelona at 17. But now, immediately, I knew that Uxbal belonged to this place, I knew he belonged to this eclectic and vibrant community that is reshaping the world.

During the 1960's, Franco promoted and brought to Catalonia hundred of thousands of people from different parts of Spain, trying to disrupt the Catalan culture, and prohibited them from speaking the Catalan language. In the midst of a huge economic recession, the Castilian-speaking people -- mostly from Extremadura, Andalucia and Murcia - - became immigrants in their own country. They were assigned to a suburb of Barcelona called Santa Coloma and they became known as "Charnegos," a derogatory word that refers

to poor immigrants and their children. With the returning strength of the economy during the 80's and the 90's, the "Charnegos" started leaving Santa Coloma and immigrants from all over the world started filling it. Even though El Raval, known as the Barrio Chino, is famous for being Barcelona's most diverse neighborhood, it was Santa Coloma and nearby Badalona, that I fell in love with. Here, Senegalese, Chinese, Pakistanis, Gypsies, Romanians and Indonesians all live together in peace without a problem and each one speaks their own language without a need or worry of integrating into Spain.

And to be frank, it seems the society is not very interested in integrating them either.

This is a neighborhood that has not been pasteurized. It is human, it smells and has texture and contradictions. It is a real example of "*convivencia*" – of community -- and has the DNA of a perfect UN. The migrations and racial mixes that in the past took 300 years have been experienced here in just 25 years. Of course it's not devoid of pain and tragedy. Every year, hundreds of African people die from drowning trying to get to the coast of Spain. The images are hard to watch. Also, almost every day you see in the newspapers articles about Chinese immigrants being abused or exploited all around Europe.

Just in the UK, there are one million Chinese people, as Hsiao-Hung Pai writes in [Chinese Whispers: The True Story Behind Britain's Hidden Army of Labor](#). Unlike in the US, the people don't come to European cities to blend into a culture. The research I did tells me that most people come here in order to survive and to help the ones they left behind.

But more than this interesting sociological phenomenon happening in Barcelona and most European cities, it was the emotional impact it had on me that I found as a great context for the story of *Biutiful*. Although I am a privileged one, I am an immigrant and I have been for ten years. The immigrant conscience or geographical orphanage is a state of mind. In *Biutiful*, there are no grand occurrences. Only the individualization of the difficult every day life of one of the hundreds of millions of modern day slaves that live in this shadow and this light. At the end of the day, when a film is not a document, it is a dream. And as a dreamer, you are always alone, as a painter is alone with a white canvas. And to be alone is to ask questions (as Goddard once said) . . . and to make films is to answer them.

I wrote a meticulous biography of each one of the characters. I did it for the Chinese and the African characters, too. Each one should have a past and a reason and not only be utilitarian characters. I did this in order to know them well and also to help the actors understand where they had come from. Uxbal was born as a "Charnego" and he is one of the 10% Castilian-speaking people who stayed in Santa Coloma. The immigrants are not alien to him. He grew up with them. He works with them. Walking in that neighborhood

on a Sunday is a physical, spiritual and emotional experience. You can see Gypsies singing in groups in the streets, while Muslims pray at the park or chant through the speaker of a little mosque, and a Catholic church is full of Chinese people. I wanted this story to be that same kind of physical, spiritual and emotional journey.

Since my visit to Barcelona, my subconscious started compulsively dictating the story. My daughter Maria Eladia told me that when an owl dies, it spits a hairball from her beak. I dreamt that night about that image. And then, everything started differently. I saw Uxbal full of contradictions: a guy whose life is so busy and complicated that he can't even die in peace, a guy who protects immigrants from the law while he himself exploits their labor. A street man who has a spiritual gift and can speak with the dead and guide them to the light... but he charges money for it; a family man with a broken heart and two kids who he loves yet can't help but lose his temper with them; a man who everybody depends on but who also depends on everyone; a primitive, simple, humble man with a deep supernatural insight.

A Sun surrounded by satellite planets. I saw him as a physical system in which the body is the street, the heart is the family and the soul is the search for an absent father. Before I started the script, I drew a map. I draw two spiral circles and a line that defined graphically Uxbal's journey and his state of mind. One spiral moved from the inside to the outside. This was his everyday life out of control. The other spiral moved from the outside to the inside. This was Uxbal's heart, going deep, into profound territory. And then I drew one line crossing the two spirals: the spirit.

My father used to say that low-income workers or taxi drivers can't get depressed. "This is a luxury for the rich," he said. Life will not allow them to die. And that's Uxbal: a desperate, lonely man, looking for a father he never knew.

After I had finished a first draft of the script, I decided to invite the writers Armando Bo and Nicolás Jacobone to the process. Writing is not an unknown process for me, but my experience has taught me that in writing a script, which is a very early and technical stage of filmmaking, collaboration can bring great results. Armando Bo is a powerful and well-known commercial director who I've known for many years. Jacobone is his cousin, a sensitive and talented writer who has written several short stories and is about to publish his first novel. They are both young, talented and Argentine football freaks. They brought to the script a special innocence and freshness. This is their first time doing this but it will definitely not be the last.

Since I first started writing *Beautiful*, I always thought of Javier Bardem for Uxbal. Nobody else could have brought to the character what he has brought. I could not have

made this film without him because for me, he alone was Uxbal. For many years, Javier and I had been trying to work together. I thought, this character will be the bridge that will get us together on set. My style and process of working with actors is not light or easy. I give of myself fully on each project and I demand the same from the actors. I am obsessed with perfection, or what I consider perfection. Physically and emotionally it is a tough ride. Well, bringing Javier into the equation, it was as if the Hungry and the Starving got together... and we were both yearning to be satisfied. Javier is not just an outstanding actor; he is one of a kind. Everybody knows that. He prepares exhaustively and writes extensive notes about his character. He is committed, intense and obsessed with excellence as well. But what Javier has that makes him so special and unique is a weight, a gravity, an ominous presence on the screen that is based on his deep, strong reflectiveness and his profound interior life. That's something that can't be learned. It's something (angel or devil) that you either have or you don't.

Unlike my other films where I shot different stories with different actors over several weeks, this one was a *looong* and intense shoot with Javier in almost every scene, always carrying the film, literally, on his back. The precision and emotional intensity required in every scene was not easy to sustain, especially while trying to balance this act with non-actors and kids. During the Autumn and Winter of 2008/09, Javier Bardem, the man I knew, just disappeared in order to give life to Uxbal.

We knew it would be like climbing Mt. Everest, every day tougher than the one before. We planned and discussed the route. I designed the visual grammatical language and every single aspect of the film -- the chronological shooting order, wardrobe, production design, camera movements and even the use of different formats in different phases of the film -- in order to help him navigate and arrive where we both wanted to go: from a tough, tight, controlling guy to a man who is liberated, who understands surrender and has gained the wisdom to see and feel the light through his pain. We both gave a lot of ourselves and the story demanded of us to go into dangerous territory from which it is sometimes hard to come back. A film like this drains you, but that extraordinary effort and sacrifice was proportionate to the immense artistic satisfaction that we both shared.

One of the most difficult roles to write and to cast was that of Marambra. Bipolarity, a complex emotional disorder sometimes called manic depression, can be too easily caricatured. I was looking for a very specific vibe and spirit. I held casting sessions all around Spain, and though I saw a lot of very talented actresses there, I couldn't find what I was looking for. Three weeks before principal photography began, I still hadn't found her

and was close to postponing the shoot. I did an open casting session in Argentina, where we saw Maricel Alvarez. Even in a video test, I knew it was her. Maricel flew to Spain and after 24 hours without sleeping and a text she had just received 24 hours prior to that, she did the most extraordinary rehearsal test I have seen. I did a camera test with her, too, before she returned to Argentina 12 hours after she had arrived in Spain. I put her in front of a film camera for the first time in her life and I asked her, without doing anything, to imagine certain images or circumstances I was suggesting to her. All the set and crew was quiet. One minute later I had goose bumps on my skin and my eyes were watering. It was just pure alchemy and magic. Maricel brought the danger and the tenderness Marambra needed.

She has been an extraordinary theater actress for years with a range and craftsmanship very hard to find on this planet.

For the role of Igé, we looked at more than 1200 women in Spain and Mexico. Diaryatou Daff was found in a downtown Barcelona salon where she worked cutting hair. She is Senegalese and, like hundreds of thousands of other African women, she risked her life and left her country to look for a job to help maintain her family members. Her life hasn't been easy. She was married when she was 15 to a 50 year-old man, according to a Senegalese tradition where a maternal uncle can choose who a girl will marry. She escaped from this violent man and later married a nice young man and had a child with him. Living in a small town in a desperate economic situation, she decided to look for a job in Spain, and when I cast her, she hadn't seen her son for more than 3 years. Working day and night, she supports not only her husband and child but 30 other people who depend on the little money she is able to send back to Senegal. Diaryatou was always afraid she might lose her job in the hair salon.

While we were rehearsing I could sense the clear understanding she had for the character I wanted her to play. She did it with such honesty and profundity -- just carrying a pillow as if it were her child, I would hear her voice breaking up. The story of Igé was her story. I have never experienced a person in a film whose life was this close to her character. Reality was dancing with fiction in front of my eyes. She struggled while making the film but her commitment to speaking in the name of millions of women like her was bigger. I always liked the idea that Igé starts out looking like a secondary role, but without seeing her coming, she ends up a cornerstone of the story. She is Mama Africa -- a rational, intelligent, loving mother. That it is Diaryatou in real life. Subtle, talented, sensitive, beautiful and more than anything, real.

Kids are always difficult to find. The scenes with the kids were very challenging due to the subject matter of the events and, in this case, the physical characteristics of

Bardem and Maricel didn't make it easier. We found Guillermo to play Mateo early in the process but trying to find Uxal's daughter put all of us on edge. It was only 2 weeks before the start of production, when we had resigned ourselves to continue without her, hoping we would find her, that I was doing a technical scout in a local school where we would be shooting. Suddenly, Ana, who happens to study in that school, tapped my back and ask me what I was doing. I turned and saw her. I said, "I am making a movie." And she said, "I would love to be in it." And that was that. She was an angel knocking on the door of a desperate man looking all over Spain without knowing that the answer was at the end of his nose.

I could spend hours telling you about Eduard Fernández, Ruben Ochandiano, Cheng Tai Shen, Luo Jin, Martina Garcia and all the great cast of actors who were with us, but I prefer you see their work, which will be better than anything I can say about it.

As always, I had the privilege of working on this film with my old-time partners in crime, the same rock 'n roll band whose bass-line, drums and instruments make the music richer and more joyful, as we moved away from the cold and technical paper score which every film must depart from to the land of memories, desires, logic, dreams, suggestion and subjective reality of light and images.

As always, I dedicated this film to a family member -- not because they are part of my family but because they are the reason, the source, or who I want to speak to directly through the film.

This one is for my Father, and he knows well why.

Javier Bardem and Maricel Alvarez
On Uxbal and Marambra

Javier Bardem always wanted to work with Alejandro González Iñárritu and vice versa – and the two finally come together with *Biutiful*. González Iñárritu had Bardem in mind for Uxbal even as the character first emerged in his imagination. When he showed Bardem the script, the actor's reaction was instantaneous.

"It had a deep impact on me, for sure," says Bardem. "I had a very instinctive, emotional response to it. When you have this kind of material, you know you are going to jump into an ocean of doubts and fears, and also expectations and joys. In the end, with this story, it is the journey that counts, but you want to do it right, to do justice to it. You don't want to rush to get to a particular place but give yourself completely over to it. It is a journey towards love, towards the light, towards the positive things inside something that has become black, dark and difficult."

Uxbal embodies a man of roiling contradictions – a devoted father, broken lover, hardened street criminal, spiritual sensitive – in a moment of sudden, intensifying personal danger and vulnerability, as well as transformation. "These contradictions were already there on the page," he notes. "All of these aspects of Uxbal were beautifully rendered and described in the screenplay. What I had to do was find the meeting point of all of these things without betraying any of them. In the end, Uxbal is a normal person who has to face a very tough experience, who has to face reality, and who has to overcome all this to leave a legacy for his family, a legacy which he could not have left in the beginning. He wants to leave something positive for his kids, something that gives them hope and something they can carry in their future lives."

He talked at length with González Iñárritu about the character. "We both thought of him as going through three different journeys," Bardem recalls. "One is an internal journey entirely within himself; one is an external journey in the streets as he tries to find a way for his family to survive; and the third is a journey to that thing above us – spirituality, mortality, the things you cannot see or explain but that Uxbal has a consciousness and knowledge of. What is interesting is that each of these journeys interferes in a way with the other. His body, spirit and mind need something from him, but his life on the streets and the urgent needs of his family and children require exactly the opposite. This is his constant conflict."

The inner, outer and transcendent aspects of Uxbal's journey all wrap themselves around his relationship with his ex-wife, the volatile and troubled Marambra, played by Argentine actress Maricel Alvarez, a newcomer to the screen. Bardem read with a number of actresses before he read with Alvarez. "Any one of them could have done the job, but when Maricel came at the last moment, she had something in her that truly belongs to the character," he comments. "She had that mixture of gravity with the lightness of someone whose feet don't really touch the ground, the

perfect combination of those two ways of being. When she came into the room, there was no doubt that she had to be the one.”

He continues: “Working with her was a wonderful experience as together we explored these two unstructured minds of Uxbal and Marambra. We did it with compassion, love and hard work.”

Uxbal also has a conflicted relationship with his brother Tito, portrayed by Eduard Fernández, who has worked with Bardem before. “It is impossible for Eduard to say anything that is not true,” comments Bardem. “He is brutally honest. He does a lot of preparation and I think his work in the film speaks for itself.”

Bardem also was moved by his experience with non-professional actress Diaryatou Daff, who plays Igé, the Senegalese immigrant who becomes Uxbal’s last-ditch savior. “It was a very brave role for her because she shares so many common circumstances in her life,” he says. “It was quite emotional to watch her. She was nervous in the beginning but then, at a certain point, she really let go, which was beautiful to witness.”

Having previously starred in Woody Allen’s Barcelona-set comedic romance, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, Bardem had a chance in *Biutiful* to enter a completely different side of the city, far from the stylish architecture and cafes that seduced two Americans in that film. “Like all cities, Barcelona has its light and its shadow, and one is sustained by the other and vice versa,” he says. “I had heard about it, but I was not really familiar with all of these illegal factories in the immigrant areas until we began the film. Then, it seemed they were always in the news, with police raids every week. In the places we shot, real life is more complex than fiction.”

As *Biutiful* progresses, every aspect of Uxbal goes through a metamorphosis – his body, the things on his mind, the things in his heart, the hopes he holds onto – and that was the crux for Bardem. The physical dissolution was the easy part, he says. “We shot chronologically, so, physically, you start with a plan – you know when to stop eating, when to start exercising twice as much. We were working really long days and you are tired so that comes easily into your body. That is not the difficult thing. The difficult thing is all the emotions you are left with at the end of day. Any character is a leap of faith, but there are many different kinds. In the case of this film, the emotional demands of that leap were very high, but it was very rewarding artistically.”

In the end, collaborating with González Iñárritu was all that Bardem had anticipated. “It was an honor and a privilege to work with Alejandro because I am someone who has devoured his films,” he says. “We worked really closely and it was an adventure – Alejandro said it was like climbing a mountain, where you keep moving towards the peak. It was very difficult, but also enriching, because it was very personal for him and for me.”

Maricel Alvarez came to the project in a whirlwind when González Iñárritu sought her out for an audition. Though she is one of Argentina’s most celebrated performing artists, she had

never before taken on a film role. “For, me it was a wonderful surprise to be invited to audition for Alejandro González Iñárritu and then suddenly, within a week I was flying to Spain, where, wow, I found myself auditioning with Javier Bardem,” she recalls. “It was the greatest honor to be chosen to work with such a remarkable director and actor – to me it was like a gift from life to get to know them. And that began a journey that was very special to me in both artistic and personal terms. It was an opportunity to grow not only as an actress but as a person.”

Only after the auditions did she finally get to read the script. “I found it powerful, painful and also absolutely delicious because Marambra is a huge challenge for an actress,” Alvarez says. “It’s a dream role because it requires going into the most extreme emotional states – from the highs of total euphoria to the depths of darkness. I was not afraid of it; I was looking forward to being able to explode and explore. We are used to living our lives inside this frame of normality and everything outside it frightens us. But leaving that frame behind can also feel very freeing, as well as dangerous.”

Still, there was little time to prepare. “When you don’t have much time to prepare, you have to trust your director, you have to be like clay in his hands,” she says, “and so I decided to trust Alejandro completely. I made the decision to be as open as possible, as present as possible, to keep my eyes and my ears open, and to trust my most basic instincts. The atmosphere of solidarity that I found with Alejandro and Javier made me feel comfortable to go deeper.”

She became fascinated by the heartbreak of the love affair between Uxbal and Marambra. “Uxbal and Marambra’s link is one of broken love,” she says. “They don’t want to hurt each other yet they can’t seem to help it. It’s beyond their control. Their relationship is tragic in its nature. It’s like a glass, that once broken, can’t be put back together. Now, it is just water and sand and it slips away.”

Through it all, she developed a close rapport with Bardem. “He’s very open, very easy and relaxed and that allowed us to explore our intimacy in subtle ways. Uxbal is like a tragic hero in the Greek tradition. He has to go through a lot of pain and suffering to understand who he is and his true destiny – and I think Javier went through a similar journey while making the film,” she observes. “I admired his strength because this was not easy and I greatly appreciated his generosity.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge for Alvarez was working with her two young co-stars, Hanaa Bouchaib and Guillermo Estrella, who play Marambra’s children, caught as they are in their parents’ drama. “Children are changing their moods all the time – sometimes they’re playful, sometimes they’re bored and they are always very sensitive and very fragile, so the concern was how to take care of them in this difficult story while at the same time to do our jobs without distraction,” she explains.

Finally, for Alvarez, *Beautiful* was a chance to get to know another side of Barcelona, a city she has visited before but never quite in this way. “I’m in love with Barcelona but the interesting thing is that Alejandro decided to portray a completely different city than the one most tourists have seen,” she says. “The characters in this story belong to a Barcelona that is not in the public eye and where people lead harsh lives. It is a place of many contrasts – where reality is sometimes like a punch in the face, brutal and raw, and also sometimes very beautiful.”

About the Cast

Audiences worldwide have enjoyed actor **JAVIER BARDEM'S** diverse performances over the years. His critically acclaimed work have garnered him many accolades including an Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actor for No Country for Old Men. This unforgettable portrayal of a chilling sociopath killer, Anton Chigurh, also won a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award and BAFTA for Best Supporting Actor, as well as countless film critic awards.

Javier Bardem was also nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Actor, an honor he received for his portrayal of the Cuban poet and dissident Reinaldo Arenas in Julian Schnabel's Before Night Falls. He was also named Best Actor at the Venice Film Festival for this role, and received Best Actor honors from the National Society of Film Critics, the Independent Spirit Awards and the National Board of Review, as well as a Golden Globe nomination. Javier has received a total of seven nominations and four wins for the Goya Award, which is the Spanish equivalent of an Oscar.

Bardem also went on to win another Best Actor Award from the Venice Film Festival (only one other actor has won the Best Actor Award twice in Venice) for his performance in Alejandro Amenabar's film The Sea Inside. For this role, he also won a Goya Award and received a Golden Globe nomination.

For his portrayal of Uxbal in Alejandro González Iñárritu's Biutiful, Bardem recently won the Best Actor Award at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival; Bardem shared the Best Actor prize with Elio Germano at the prestigious European competition for his role as a terminally-ill criminal.

Bardem's most recent film credits include Woody Allen's Vicky Cristina Barcelona (Golden Globe and Independent Spirit Award nominated), John Malkovich's directorial debut The Dancer Upstairs, Fernando Leon de Aranoa's Mondays In The Sun, which was named best film at the San Sebastian film festival, Michael Mann's Collateral and Goya's Ghosts opposite Natalie Portman, and Love In The Time of Cholera.

Bardem's other film credits include Luna's Golden Balls, The Tit and the Moon, Between Your Legs, Dias Contados (Best Actor, San Sebastian Film Festival), Mouth to

Mouth, Ecstasy, Almodovar's Live Flesh, Dance With the Devil, Washington Wolves, and Second Skin.

Javier Bardem was born March 1, 1969 in Las Palmas Gran Canarias (Canary Islands, Spain). His mother is Pilar Bardem, a respected actress who has worked continuously from the mid-60s to the present day, and his uncle was Juan Antonio Bardem, one of Spain's most celebrated directors, jailed by the Franco regime when his *Death of a Cyclist* won the critics prize in Cannes. Many other members of the Bardem family are also well-known actors, including his grandfather Rafael Bardem and grandmother Matilde Muñoz Sampedro. Javier was four when his mother secured him a minor role in the Spanish mini-series *El Picasso*. As a youth, Bardem studied painting in the Escuela de Arte Y Oficios Art School while playing small roles on TV. It was in the early 1990s when the Spanish director Bigas Luna offered him a role in *The Ages of Lulu* that his acting career got seriously underway.

After a small role in Pedro Almodovar's *High Heels*, Bardem made his name in 1992 with a lead role opposite Penelope Cruz in the film *Jamon Jamon*. Bardem was nominated for the Best Actor Award at the San Sebastian film festival and won several other awards for his performance.

MARICEL ALVAREZ (Marambra), a renowned Argentine performer, choreographer and teacher, marks her major film debut with *Biutiful*. She began her career studying acting and contemporary dance. A decade ago, she began collaborating with Emilio García Wehbi, in the contemporary opera *Sin Voces*, followed by such works as *Cuerpos Viles: Museo de la Morgue Judicial [Vile Bodies]*, *Los Murmullos [The Murmurs]*, *Hamlet; Büchner's Woyzeck*, Elfriede Jelinek's *Bambiland*, Sophie Calle's *Dolor Exquisito [Exquisite Pain]* Thomas Bernhard's *Heldenplatz* and the serial performances project *El Matadero [The Slaughterhouse]*. She was a guest performer in two productions by El Periférico de Objetos: *La Última Noche de la Humanidad [The Last Night of Mankind]* and *Manifiesto de Niños [Children's Manifesto]*. Other renowned work in the acting field includes Euripides' *Ifigenia en Áulide [Iphigeneia at Aulis]* directed by Rubén Szuchmacher, *Prometeo Olvidado [Prometheus]* directed by Laura Yusem, Ramón del Valle-Inclán's *Luces de bohemia [Bohemian Lights]* directed by Villanueva Cosse and Hejduk's Project: *The Mask of the Medusa* directed by Laura Yusem. Her credits as a choreographer and/or co-director include *Red lights for Dr. Faustus*, *Moby Dick oder der Weisse Wal*, *Chacales y Árabes [Jackals and Arabs]*, *El Matadero.5: Aullido [Howl]* and *El Matadero.6: Ciudad Juárez*. In

addition, Alvarez has worked with the innovative theatre group the Philoctetes Project in Vienna, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Kyoto and Krakow. She has been a visiting artist at the Goethe Institute in Berlin in 2002 and guest artist at the 2007 Theaterreffen-Internationales Forum in Berlin. She also teaches in Argentina and abroad (Ludwig Maximilian Universität, Centro Helénico México D.F., Kyoto University of Arts and Design, Freie Universität Berlin and Universidad Nacional de Colombia). She is a Teatro del Mundo Award (Buenos Aires University) nominee for her work in *Bambiland*, *Woyzeck* and *Manifiesto de Niños*; and a Trinidad Guevara Award nominee for her performances in *Dolor Exquisito* and *Heldenplatz*.

Alvarez has shown her work in several international Festivals, including: Festival de México en el Centro Histórico; Riocenacontemporanea; Krakowskie Reminiscencje Teatralne; VI Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires; Encuentro Internacional, Centro Cultural Helénico, México D.F; Kunsten Festival des Arts; SpielArt München; Festival Internacional de Teatro de Quito y Guayaquil; Kyoto University of Arts and Design; Festival de Otoño de Madrid; Spielzeiteuropa I - Berliner Festspiele; Edinburgh International Festival; SESC Sao Paulo; Festival Internacional Sao Jose do Rio Preto; Wiener Festwochen; Porto Alegre em Cena; and Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires.

EDUARD FERNÁNDEZ (Tito) has combined work in theatre, cinema and television, acquiring an increasing recognition and popularity playing the roles of antiheroes and introverts – most notably with his portrayal of Sebastián Copons in Agustín Díaz Yanes' 17th Century action-epic *Alatriste* opposite Viggo Mortenson. On stage, he has collaborated with the theatre group "Els Joglars" for a number of years. One of his previous favourite performances is in Mariono Barroso's 1999 thriller, *Los lobos de Washington*, with Javier Bardem.

Fernández won the Goya Award for Best Actor in *Fausto 5.0*, and the award for Best Supporting Actor in Cese Gay's *En la ciudad*.. His films also include Francisco Javier Gutiérrez' *3 Dias*; Gay's *Ficcion*; Montxo Armendáriz's *Obaba*; Marcelo Piñeiro's *El método*, Barroso's *Hormigas en la boca*; Manolo Gómez Pereira's *Cosas que hacen que la vida valga la pena*; Fernando Trueba's *El Embruio de Shanghai*; *Smoking Room* directed by Roger Gual and Julio D. Wallovits and Bigas Luna's *Son de Mar*.

DIARYATOU DAFF (Igé) was born on August 20, 1978 in the small village of Barkjedi in Louga (Senegal), a countryside region 200km northeast of Dakar. Her father Elhadji Seydou, a farmer, and mother Fatou Coundoul have given her six brothers and six sisters. Diaryatou finished her studies at the Richard Toll School and moved from the countryside to

Dakar to live with her grandmother. In the city, she met her first husband and from this union was born her oldest son Ousseynou, who lives and studies in Senegal. In 2007 she married a young man, Omar, with whom she has a son called Cheikh Ibrahima. She made her first acting appearance in *Biutiful* by Alejandro González Iñárritu, after winning the role of IGE on top of 3.000 African candidates. She now lives in Madrid with her youngest son.

CHENG TAI SHEN (Hai) was born in Shanxi province, where his father was a worker and his mother a housewife. As a child, he had a vigorous interest in literature. When he was 18 years old, he went to Taiyuan to take on the life of a factory worker, toiling in tough, searing conditions that required him to heave a shovel 500 times a day.

Later, he got the chance to take a key role at the local Repertory Theater in a drama based on Qiong Yao's novel *Dream of the Clothes*. Tai Shen was surprised to be selected for the starring role in the show since he had no performing experience, but the first role of his life would eventually lead him to the big screen.

Despite being technically too old to study at University, in 1990, Cheng Tai Shen entered into the culture and arts college of the Shanxi province, and began his formal arts education. In July 1993, he began mixing performances at the Central Academy of Drama with his undergraduate classes. After graduation in 1997, he was assigned to the Xi'an Film Studio, where he worked on leading Chinese director Huang Jianxin's *Can't Sleep*, serving simultaneously as assistant director, log keeper and supporting actor.

In 2001, he starred in the film *Seafood*, directed by Zhu Wen, which won the 58th Venice Film Festival Special Jury Prize and numerous other festival awards. In 2004 he worked with director Jia Zhangke on the acclaimed *World*, a film set among workers at the World theme park in contemporary Beijing. *World* has played at various international film festivals and garnered a total of 11 international awards.

The Village Voice's 2005 annual world ranking list of the 100 greatest actors included Cheng Tai Shen, the only actor on the list from Mainland China, ranking him No. 67.

LUO JIN (Liwei) was born to a doctor's family in Jiangxi China. In the midst of a mischievous childhood, he started practicing Kungfu at the age of 12. By the age of 16, he had been pre-selected to enter a traditional Chinese opera school to begin rigorous study in the arts of drama. Just as he was about to become a professional Chinese opera actor, he suddenly decided to change his direction again. After intensive training in the art of Chinese

traditional opera acting, Luo Jin instead became a student at the Beijing Film Academy in 2002 and the first chapter of his new life began.

In 2006, Luo Jin was featured in the Chinese movie *Fujian Blues*, which won the Dragon & Tiger Award at the Vancouver Film Festival. The success of *Fujian Blues* catapulted Luo Jin to new heights, and he suddenly became a highly sought-after actor in China. Recently, he participated in the blockbuster TV epic series *The Romance of 3 Kingdoms*.

About The Filmmakers

Born in Mexico City in 1963, **ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU** (Director/Co-Writer/Story/Producer), directed and produced his debut feature film in 2000, *Amores Perros*, which was nominated for an Academy Award® as Best Foreign Language Film and received over 60 prizes, becoming the most awarded film around the world in that year. Iñárritu's follow-up film, *21 Grams* (2003), which he conceived, directed and produced, starred Sean Penn, Benicio del Toro, and Naomi Watts. Both Del Toro and Watts received Oscar® nominations for their roles in the film and Penn won the Jury Prize for Best Actor at the Venice Film Festival. In May 2006 Iñárritu completed his third feature film, *Babel*, starring Cate Blanchet and Brad Pitt, which concluded his trilogy and earned him the Best Director Award at the 59th Cannes Film Festival and seven Oscar® nominations including Best Film and Best Director. Iñárritu also wrote, directed and produced three short films, including *Powder Keg* (2001), a short film in the BMW series that was the most awarded campaign and was inducted into the Museum of Modern Art in New York. *Darkness* (2002) was part of the collective feature film 11'09"01, and *Anna* (2007), which was part of the 60th Cannes Film Festival selects for "To Each His Own Cinema." He wrote and directed his last feature, *Biutiful*, starring Javier Bardem, which will premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010.

He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife María Eladia Hagerman and their two children María Eladia and Eliseo.

ARMANDO BO (Co-Writer), who co-wrote *Biutiful* with Alejandro González Iñárritu, was born in Buenos Aires in 1978 and has been working in the feature film and advertising industries since he was 16 years-old. He is the third generation of a family of filmmakers.

Bo has studied filmmaking in several renowned institutions in New York, and Art History at the Fine Arts Museum in Buenos Aires. Currently Bo is one of the most in-demand advertising directors in the world being awarded the 9th Best Director of 2010 by the Gunn Report ranking. He has won 40 international awards as an Advertising Director and he owns his own production Company, "REBOLUCION," based in Buenos Aires. At the moment he is pre-producing *The Last Elvis*, his first feature film as a director, which he also co-wrote with Nicolás Giacobone.

NICOLÁS GIACOBONE (Co-Writer) was born in Buenos Aires in 1975. He studied Literature at El Salvador University in Buenos Aires for three years and then focused his career on writing. Nicolás is the author of a book of short stories entitled *Algún Cristo*,

published by Editorial Argenta, and two novels: Detective Pargo and Todos saben que Dios no está aquí.

He wrote the short film *Océano*, which won the Grand Prize Kodak Award at the Rhode Island International Film Festival. After writing *Biutiful* with Alejandro González Iñárritu and Armando Bo, he collaborated with Bo on the script for *El último Elvis*, the first movie directed by Bo, currently in preproduction.

FERNANDO BOVAIRA (Producer) obtained his degree in Law at the University of Valencia, then moved to the U.S. to graduate in Broadcasting Management from Boston University and Harvard University. In 1989 he joined Canal+ in Spain as Head of the Feature Film Department. In 1994, he returned to the U.S. to join the leading production company New Regency as Head of International Distribution and Development.

In 1996, Bovaira was appointed CEO of Sogecine (Canal+ Spain), which led to collaboration with many of Spain's most influential directors, including Alejandro Amenábar, Julio Medem, Vicente Aranda, José Luis Cuerda, Fernando León de Aranoa, Iciar Bollain, Javier Fesser and Alex de la Iglesia, among others. In 2007, he started his own independent production company, MOD Producciones, and produced, in addition to *Biutiful*, the films *Agora* by Alejandro Amenabar and *For the Good of Others* by Oskar Santos.

His films also include Amenabar's *The Sea Inside*, Academy Award® winner for Best Foreign Language Film, *The Others* and *Open Your Eyes*, as well as its remake *Vanilla Sky* directed by Cameron Crowe; and Julio Medem's *Lovers of the Arctic Circle* and *Sex and Lucia*.

JON KILIK (Producer) has become one of New York's most notable film producers, collaborating with a wide range of auteur directors to create a body of work with an emphasis on human values and social issues.

In 1988, Kilik began his partnership with Spike Lee and has gone on to produce twelve of Lee's films. They include *Inside Man*, *Clockers*, *Malcolm X*, and the groundbreaking *Do The Right Thing*, which was recently selected by The Smithsonian Institute for The National Film Archives. Kilik also produced Robert De Niro's highly acclaimed directorial debut, *A Bronx Tale*, based on the play by Chazz Palminteri.

In 1995, Kilik produced Tim Robbins' Academy Award® winner, *Dead Man Walking*, based on Sister Helen Prejean's account of her work with Louisiana death row inmates, starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn. The same year he produced Julian Schnabel's directorial debut, *Basquiat*, starring Jeffrey Wright as Jean-Michel Basquiat and David Bowie as Andy Warhol. Next, Kilik teamed with Gary Ross and Steven Soderbergh to produce Ross'

directorial debut, *Pleasantville*, a comic look at the alternate worlds of the American family in the 1950's and 1990's featuring Tobey Maguire and Reese Witherspoon.

In 2000, Kilik produced Julian Schnabel's *Before Night Falls*, based on the autobiography of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas, starring Javier Bardem. *Before Night Falls* premiered at the Venice Film Festival where it won the Grand Jury Prize and Best Actor awards. The same year, Kilik also produced Ed Harris' directorial debut, *Pollock*, starring Harris as American painter Jackson Pollock. Ed Harris and Javier Bardem were each nominated for the Best Actor Oscar at the 2001 Academy Awards®.

Next, Kilik traveled to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where he produced *Skins*, directed by Chris Eyre. The film features Graham Greene as a Native American who returns home from service in Viet Nam but cannot survive in his Pine Ridge, South Dakota home. In 2004, Jon produced Oliver Stone's *Alexander*. The epic journey followed the Macedonian King, Alexander The Great, from Greece to Persia to India and back as he conquered the known world in the 4th century B.C. Kilik returned to New York in 2005 to produce the very personal *Broken Flowers*, by writer/director Jim Jarmusch, starring Bill Murray and winner of the Cannes Film Festival Grand Jury Prize in 2005.

Kilik began another international production when he partnered with Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu to produce *Babel*. The shoot took place in Morocco, Mexico and Japan. The four uniquely interwoven stories are in Arabic, Spanish, English and Japanese. *Babel* premiered at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival where it won the prize for Best Director, and went on to win the Golden Globe award for Best Feature Film Drama and was nominated for seven Academy Awards®, including Best Picture.

In 2007 Kilik produced Julian Schnabel's *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly*, based on the inspiring autobiography by Jean-Dominique Bauby. Kilik won his second Golden Globe for *The Diving Bell* and the film was nominated for four Academy Awards®.

In 2008 Kilik produced the rock and roll documentary, *Lou Reed's BERLIN*, directed by Julian Schnabel as well as executive producing Jim Jarmusch's *Limits Of Control*, Spike Lee's *Miracle At St. Anna* and Oliver Stone's *W*. In addition to *Beautiful*, most recently Kilik has produced Julian Schnabel's *Miral* in Israel and Palestine.

Jon was born in Newark, New Jersey and grew up in Millburn. He graduated from the University of Vermont and moved to New York in 1979 to pursue a career in filmmaking. He returned to his Vermont alma mater to receive an honorary doctorate and deliver the commencement address to the Class of 2003.

RODRIGO PRIETO (Director of Photography) was born in Mexico City in 1965, the son of a Mexican father and an American mother from Montana. He studied at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) in Mexico City, where he focused in Cinematography. He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Monica, and his daughters Maria Fernanda, and Ximena. Prieto started his career shooting television commercials at the age of 22, moving into features with *Un Instante Para Morir* in 1992. He built a reputation for meticulous attention to visual and dramatic detail with such films as *Sobrenatural*, which garnered him Mexico's Ariel Award in 1996 (Mexico's Academy Award), and Carlos Carrera's *Un Embrujo (Under A Spell)* which took the Concha de Plata for best cinematography at the San Sebastian Film Festival, in addition to another Ariel Award.

Amores perros (2000) brought him to the attention of the world film community. His work on the feature, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, garnered Mr. Prieto several honors, including a third Ariel Award and the Golden Frog Award at the Camerimage International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography in Poland. His subsequent films as cinematographer have included Julie Taymor's *Frida*, for which he was an ASC Award nominee; Curtis Hanson's *8 Mile*; Spike Lee's *25th Hour*; and, again for Alejandro González Iñárritu, the award-winning *21 Grams*. In 2003, he went to Cuba with director Oliver Stone to shoot *Comandante*, a documentary on Fidel Castro. The two then went to the Middle East to film a documentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Persona Non Grata*. Their next project together was the epic *Alexander*, for which Mr. Prieto was honored with the Silver Frog Award at the Camerimage International Film Festival.

For his work on Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*, Prieto was nominated for an Academy Award®, a BAFTA Award, and an American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Award. His cinematography on the film was cited as the year's best by the Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association, the Florida Film Critics Circle, and the Chicago Film Critics Association.

In 2006, Rodrigo and Iñárritu reunited for *Babel*, which earned him his second consecutive BAFTA Award nomination. After this, he traveled to Hong Kong and Shanghai with Ang Lee to shoot *Lust, Caution*, which earned a Golden Osella award for Best Cinematography at the Venice Film Festival, and was also nominated for an Independent Spirit Award in 2008. He then shot *State of Play* for director Kevin Macdonald, after which he joined director Pedro Almodóvar in Madrid to work on *Broken Embraces*, starring Penélope Cruz. From there, he went to Barcelona to join forces once again with Iñárritu for *Biutiful*, marking their fourth collaboration.

Most recently, Rodrigo worked once again with Oliver Stone for *Wall Street, Money Never Sleeps*.

STEPHEN MIRRIONE (Editor) won an Academy Award® for his work on the ensemble drama *Traffic*, which marked his first collaboration with Steven Soderbergh. Mirrione also received nominations for a BAFTA Award and an Eddie Award, from the American Cinema Editors, for his work on the film. He has since teamed with Soderbergh on *The Informant!* as well as the ensemble action comedies *Ocean's Eleven*, *Ocean's Twelve* and *Ocean's Thirteen*.

In 2007, Mirrione earned his second Academy Award® nomination for his work on Alejandro González Iñárritu's drama *Babel*, for which he won an Eddie Award and earned another BAFTA Award nomination. The film premiered at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, where Mirrione won the Vulcain Artist-Technical Grand Prize. He had earlier received a BAFTA Award nomination for his editing work on González Iñárritu's *21 Grams*.

Another notable collaboration in 2005 with Actor/Writer/Director George Clooney on the Academy Award® nominated drama *Good Night, and Good Luck* garnered Mirrione both BAFTA and Eddie Award nominations. Mirrione also edited Clooney's other two directorial efforts, *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* and *Leatherheads*.

Mirrione's other editing credits include the films of director Jill Sprecher, *Clockwatchers*, *Thirteen Conversations About One Thing* and *The Convincer*; and Doug Liman's *Swingers* and *Go*.

END CREDITS

Dirigida por
Alejandro González Iñárritu

Escrito por
Alejandro González Iñárritu
Armando Bo

Nicolás Giacobone

Basada en una historia de
Alejandro González Iñárritu

Producida por
Alejandro González Iñárritu

Jon Kilik

Fernando Bovaira

Director de fotografía
Rodrigo Prieto ASC, AMC

Directora de arte
Brigitte Broch

Montaje Stephen
Mirrione ACE

Musica de
Gustavo Santaolalla

Directoras de Casting
Eva Leira
Yolanda Serrano

Javier Bardem

Maricel Alvarez

Eduard Fernández

Diaryatou Daff

Cheick Ndiaye

Taisheng Cheng

Luo Jin

Hanaa Bouchaib

Guillermo Estrella

Co-Productoras
Sandra Hermida

Ann Ruark

Productores Asociados
Alfonso Cuarón

Guillermo Del Toro

Con la Colaboracion de
ICAA

Ministerio de Cultura

La participacion de
Televisió de Catalunya

En coproduccion con
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Uxbal JAVIER BARDEM
Marambra MARICEL ÁLVAREZ
Ana HANAA BOUCHAIB

Mateo GUILLERMO ESTRELLA
Tito EDUARD FERNÁNDEZ
Ekweme CHEIKH NDIAYE
Ige DIARYATOU DAFF
Hai TAISHENG CHENG
Liwei JIN LUO 2
Samuel GEORGE CHIBUIKWEM CHUKWUMA
Li LANG SOFIA LIN
Chino Obeso YODIAN YANG
Barman Bar Hai TUO LIN
Chino Bodega XUEHENG CHEN
Jung XIAOYAN ZHANG
Padre Hai YE AILIE
Madre Hai XIANLIN BAO
Bea ANA WAGENER
Zanc RUBÉN OCHANDIANO
Mendoza KARRA ELEJALDE
Muchacho NASSER SALEH
Hombre de Luto TOMÁS DEL ESTAL
Niño Muerto ÁNGEL LUIS ARJONA
Señora Funeral DOLORES ECHEPARES
Mujer Grande ADELFA CALVO
Médico MANUEL SOLO
Enfermera VIOLETA PÉREZ
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Cirujano 3 NACHO MOLINÉ
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DUNIA MONTENEGRO
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Doble de Luces “Araña” Uxbal JOSÉ CARLOS NUÑEZ
Doble de Luces Marambra VICKY OCAÑA
Doble de Luces Ana MELISSA GILER
Doble de Luces Mateo MARC GARCÍA
IMANOL BRETÓ
Doble de Luces Tito JUANMA GARRIDO 3
Doble de Luces Ekweme JONATAS NSUE
Doble de Luces Ige HILDA OGOLLO
Doble de Luces Hai YONG YONG CHENG
WEIJUIN LIN
Doble de Luces Liwei ZHONG CHEN GUO
Doble Samuel SIMEÓN IMUDIA
Doble Li XINRU ZHOU
Doble de Luces Burócrata ALBERTO TORRINI
Doble de Luces Hombre de Luto AURELIO NOVO
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ÓSCAR GUTIÉRREZ
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Silvia Raga

“COMO TE EXTRAÑO MI AMOR”

Interpretada por Café Tacuba

Autor Tevez Leopoldo Dante

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Interpretada por Underworld

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Giorgio Moroder, Peter Bellotte,

Richard Smith and Karl Hyde

Chrysalis Songs on behalf of Smith Hyde Productions

Contiene un sample de "I Feel Love "
Autor Donna Summer
Publishing D/B/A Sweet Summer Night Music

"LET THE MUSIC PLAY"
Interpretada por Barry White
Autor Barry White
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