

**M**ai più come prima (Never more as before) directed by Giacomo Campiotti introduces a class of eighteen-year-old Italian boys to the problems of manhood. Its responsibilities, freedoms, sexuality, courage. Boys becoming men. We meet them immersed in school examinations. We see relationships developing between the boys. They leave together for an end of term vacation in the glorious Dolomite mountains. After which, they return to the city — and follow different roads.

Duccio Cimatti is the Director of Photography. He was already a respected Camera Operator before his breakthrough as Director of Photography on **Difense d'aimer** in 2003. On this project, Duccio does both; cinematography and operating.

explained "Most of the action takes place in the Dolomites. That means lightweight cameras and lighting equipment, and much luck with such variable weather!"

"Director Campiotti is an energetic and passionate professional, who likes to consider new choices during the shooting. You need to be proactive and quick to work with Giacomo. He won't give you much time for thought."

"Nature plays a major role in the story. The grand beauty of the Dolomites is the backdrop to what happens among the boys. Their discovery of nature, its beauty and awesome power, is the medium in which the boys lose their childhood. It's here the boys first learn to manage themselves. To take decisions, to assess risks, to confront responsibilities."

"We shot night scenes in the late afternoon and digitally enhanced them in post-production. Cinecittà Studios processed the negative and Proxima did the post. I chose only two stocks for the entire film. Kodak VISION2 200T and 500T. They intermix so effortlessly. The 500T responds brilliantly to complex lighting and exposure



## No lights on the bare mountains

Whilst shooting in the Dolomites, DP Duccio Cimatti aimed to use available light as much as possible.

He says "I love operating. And anyway, on our budget I couldn't afford to hire a better camera operator than me!"

Duccio's double role imposed extra work on his crew. "Two of my crew start preparing the next shot while I'm shooting the previous one. They have to focus on two different scenes at any one time. It's tough on them at times, but it helped us work much quicker, get better onscreen results and allow the director more time to concentrate on the actors' performances."

Duccio joined the project late, just before shooting started because, like many recent Italian films, **Mai più come prima** faced several production problems even before filming began. It also offered tough technical and physical challenges. Duccio

"Our dangerous location made us travel as light as possible. So we filmed on Super 16mm, for scanning digitally in 2K format and printing to 35mm for theatrical release. In the Dolomites my challenge was to deliver natural, unobtrusive photography. So I did use very limited artificial lights on the mountains; I aimed to shoot everything with available natural light, even in extreme conditions, using digital post to adjust specific shots that required changes. Then adopting a colder, higher contrast look for the city shots to create a different kind of 'icy' atmosphere. The documentary-style mountain shots involved several hand-held camera takes shot while we climbed roped together."

decisions. Both stocks gave me the serenity I needed when faced with one-off shots I dared not miss! For example, unreasonably early one icy morning we arrived on a mountain ridge just before daybreak. We had to film actors watching the dawn arriving. We had just one chance. I used the 200T, praying that everything I could see would be there on the neg. And, of course, it was."

"Happily my whole crew were dedicated to their work, but Mimmo Caiuli, Pino Petriggiani and Valerio Azzali all made special contributions to the project's successful outcome." ■

