

## 'The Passion of Joshua the Jew' makes DVD debut

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

Italian Filmmaker Pasquale Scimeca's Story of a Jewish Scholar Banished From His Homeland Amidst the Spanish Inquisition to Be Released on DVD on Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Xenon Pictures announces today the March 20, 2007 DVD release of the feature film, *The Passion of Joshua the Jew*, from Italian filmmaker Pasquale Scimeca, whose debut feature, *Il Giorno di San Sebastiani*, won a Golden Globe Award(R). His latest film is a spiritually inspiring drama that also highlights the cruelty and misguided convictions that come with religious intolerance and persecution. *The Passion of Joshua the Jew* (*La Passione di Giose L'Ebreo*) will be released in DVD widescreen format, in Italian with English subtitles.

The basis for Scimeca's story comes from the historical royal edict of 1492 that unified Spain under Catholicism, ending centuries of peaceful co-existence among Spanish Christians, Jews and Moslems, and banishing all non-Christians from the country. The central character, Joshua, a young man with a brilliant mind and a strong interest in the Christian Gospels as well as Jewish theology, finds himself perceived as the Messiah by his fellow Jewish exiles in Italy, where he and his family have settled after leaving Spain. The elders of a neighboring city choose Joshua to portray Jesus Christ in their annual Passion play, but the forces of anti-Semitism bring about a tragic conclusion.

An official selection of both the Venice Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival prior to its theatrical release, *The Passion of Joshua the Jew* exemplifies Xenon Pictures' continuing efforts to present audiences with new international cinema from acclaimed filmmakers. According to Xenon Pictures' President and CEO Leigh Savidge, "the film's themes of faith, intolerance and the futility of violence justified by religious beliefs are very relevant to today's audiences. As the film's DVD release coincides with the Easter/Passover season, it offers audiences a thought-provoking drama focusing on spirituality, racial and religious tolerance at an important period in world history."

*The Passion of Joshua the Jew* was directed by Pasquale Scimeca, who also wrote the screenplay, and stars Leonardo Cesare Abude in the title role. It is a production of Arbash Film, in co-production with ICC (Spain), and with the support of Eurimages and Italy's Ministry of Culture. Xenon Pictures' release of *The Passion of Joshua the Jew* will be available at all major retail and online stores for \$19.99

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