

# YOUTH (La Giovinezza)

Italy, France, UK, Switzerland (2015) 124 minutes

**Director:** Paolo Sorrentino

**Cast:** Michael Caine (Fred Ballinger), Harvey Keitel (Mick Boyle), Rachel Weisz (Lena Ballinger)



**Screening 9 January 2019 at Swindon Arts Centre**

## Synopsis

Two longtime friends vacationing in the Swiss Alps: Oscar-winning actor Michael Caine plays Fred, an acclaimed composer and conductor, who brings along his daughter (Rachel Weisz) and best friend Mick (Harvey Keitel), a renowned filmmaker. While Mick scrambles to finish the screenplay for what he imagines will be his last important film, Fred has no intention of resuming his musical career. The two men reflect on their past, each finding that some of the most important experiences can come later in life.

## Reviews



Sorrentino's most tender film to date, an emotionally rich contemplation of life's wisdom gained, lost, and remembered.

...For more than 20 years, Fred Ballinger (Caine) has been coming to this resort. With him at the spa is his old friend Mick Boyle (Keitel), trying to finish a script with a group of young collaborators. ... Besides being buddies from way back, the two men are also in-laws, since Fred's daughter, Lena (Rachel Weisz), is married to Mick's son, Julian (Ed Stoppard).

... There's a great deal of humour in *Youth* as well as quiet melancholy, and the spa is populated with its fair share of quirky characters, from an obese man sporting a Jesus pendant and a giant Karl Marx tattoo on his back to a masseuse, dancing with her Wii to a hilariously unexpected Adolf Hitler.

...As always Sorrentino's amusing use of indie tunes, such as a cover of Florence & the Machine's "You've Got the Love" is ever apt, and always a wonderful surprise.

*Jay Weissberg, Variety*

The second English-language film from Paolo Sorrentino, *Youth* details the happenings at a luxurious hotel located at the foot of the Alps - with the storyline mostly following a retired conductor (Michael Caine's Fred) as he goes about his business over the course of a few days. Writer/director Sorrentino, as the filmmaker has infused *Youth* with a lush and often jaw-droppingly cinematic visual sensibility that proves impossible to resist.

... Sorrentino emphasizes the exploits of several periphery characters also staying at the hotel (including Rachel Weisz's Lena and Paul Dano's Jimmy). Such interludes fare better than expected, to be sure, and yet it remains clear that *Youth* is at its best when focused on Caine's endlessly captivating figure (and also his continuing conversations with Harvey Keitel's Mick).

It doesn't hurt, of course, that Sorrentino has peppered the narrative with several compelling and downright hypnotic sequences

... *Youth* is, for the most part, a striking piece of work that lingers in one's mind long after the end credits have rolled.

*David Nusair, Reel Film Reviews*

## Film Facts

- *Youth* was awarded the 28<sup>th</sup> European Film Awards in 2015 for Best Film, Best Director (Sorrentino), and Best Actor (Caine).
- This is Sorrentino's second English-language film and the follow-up to his Academy Award-winning film *The Great Beauty* which was shown at SFS in a previous season.
- The soundtrack includes the opening track of the movie *You Got The Love* performed by The Retrossettes Sister Band and also 'Simple Song #3' composed by David Lang.