

FEDERICO FELLINI

Born on 20 January 1920 in Rimini, Italy, Federico Fellini has left a great mark on contemporary cinema. His films are imbued with his razor-sharp wit, wild imagination, candid realism, and passion for the joys of life.

Fellini enrolled as a law student at the University of Rome in 1939, primarily to please his parents. Nevertheless, Fellini never attended a class at the university. Instead, Fellini primarily spent his time drawing and writing, teaming up with the painter Rinaldo Geleng, who would become a lifelong friend, to produce sketches of restaurant and café patrons. During this period, Fellini and Geleng were desperately poor, though Fellini managed to secure regal employment writing for the *Marc'Aurelio*, an influential bi-weekly surrealist humour magazine. Just four months after Fellini published his first article for the magazine, he joined its editorial board. Achieving notable success writing a column entitled 'But Are You Listening?', the magazine was Fellini's main occupation during the years 1939–42, and is often perceived as a seminal point in his life. The circles in which Fellini was able to move while at the *Marc'Aurelio* not only opened his eyes to the entertainment industry but also presented him with the opportunity to foster personal relationships which he would build upon throughout his career.

When Mussolini declared war in 1940, Fellini was just 20 but was developing an ever-growing interest in the greats of literature and drama, including Kafka, Steinbeck, and French cinematographers Marcel Carné, René Clair, and Julien Duvivier. In 1941, he published a self-penned booklet of ten chapters depicting the surreal adventures of Pasqualino, Fellini's alter ego. In 1942, Fellini started a new chapter in his writing career when he travelled to Libya, occupied by Fascist Italy, to work on the screenplay of *Knights of the Desert*. Fellini was forced to make an escape on a German military plane when Tripoli fell to the British, but his experiences there were the first that marked him as a reporter in the field, as well as a craftsman behind a desk.

Fellini's success continued to grow with his age, and he received his first Oscar nomination for the screenplay of *Rome, Open City* in 1947, and an Academy Award for the 1957 *Nights of Cabiria*. It was the 1960 *La dolce vita*, however, which he is best known for. The film's orgy scene was inspired by the increasingly prolific instances of paparazzi photographers capturing celebrities' behaviour while they were working on Italian film sets, and the film itself was heavily influenced by the improvised striptease Aiché Nana, a Turkish dancer and actor, in an Italian restaurant. The event, attended by countless Italian and foreign

