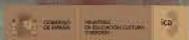




M E S S I

BY ALEX DE LA IGLESIA

Press book



**“HE PLAYS DEEP,
HE PLAYS OUT WIDE,
HE PLAYS WHEREEVER HE LIKES,
BECAUSE HE PLAYS LIKE THE GODS”
(César Luis Menotti)**

**Álex de la Iglesia presents an extraordinary film about
a one-of-a-kind sportsman: Lionel Messi**

**Produced by MEDIAPRO, “MESSI” boasts collaboration from
César Luis Menotti, Valdano, Maradona, Cruyff,
Iniesta and Alejandro Sabella, among others**

1

What is it that makes Messi the best player in the world? The answer cannot be summed up by merely listing the value of his achievements, instead, it is necessary to delve into what it is that has made Messi such a unique footballer, with one of the most sensational careers in the history of football around the world. There is no such thing as luck. Nothing occurs by chance and everything happens because something or someone incites or provokes it to happen. There has to be an explanation for Messi.

This was the goal Álex de la Iglesia and MEDIAPRO set themselves during the presentation of the project about Lionel Messi. The answer, or rather the answers are revealed in this unique feature film, “**MESSI**”, through the opinions of major footballing legends such as Menotti, Maradona, Valdano or Cruyff, from those who have accompanied him throughout his career, archive footage, interviews and previously unseen family videos, and from recreating some of the most significant moments from his life to date. Alex de la Iglesia’s ingenuity recreates the player’s childhood and teenage years for us, helping us to understand, for example, the particular way he

'celebrates' after scoring a goal for the special relationship with his grandmother or the perseverance required to transport a kid from Rosario to the elite of world football. Shot on location in Buenos Aires, Rosario and Barcelona, the film also required tremendous investigative efforts to recover the footage, interviews and recordings of the star from when he was a mere four years' old. The footage fit perfectly into the tale. In this case, fiction gives a helping hand in depicting the reality required in order for the spectator to delve into the world of this *rosarino*, who, at the age of 26, has already achieved exactly what his grandmother predicted: that he'd become the best player in the world.

Coming together around a dinner table, his school teachers, trainers, childhood friends, F.C. Barcelona team-mates, journalists and writers, as well as celebrities from the world of footballing history set about threshing out and analysing the personality of the footballer both on and off the field while reminiscing on the most significant passages and moments from his life so far: his childhood, inseparable from a football, the decision to leave Rosario for Barcelona, living far away from his family, the role played in his career by individuals like Ronaldinho, Rijkaard, Rexach and Guardiola, his first goal at Camp Nou, that night at Stamford Bridge, his connection with Argentina, with Rosario and finally the question of whether he is a better player than Maradona, a matter which Cruyff resolves with his characteristic and singular philosophy: ***"Thank God Messi exists. Imagine, if he wasn't around we'd still have to be talking about Maradona, which would be ridiculous. As such, we shouldn't be making comparisons. Instead, we should be just enjoying it"***.

2

Álex de la Iglesia, with Jorge Valdano as screenwriter, have created a story that provides us with an intimate glimpse into the story of a footballer who leaves nobody indifferent, not even his classmates from school who complained to their teacher, ***"Miss, could you please let us have another football. It's impossible to play with only one"***. Team-mates who, with Messi, became accustomed to triumph, a series of overwhelming triumphs that would be his career trademark at his first club, ***"...there came a moment when we were scoring so many goals that people would say to us, why don't you just play amongst yourselves. The Newell team from the first half against the Newell team from the second half"***. In footage recovered from long forgotten video archives, the thirteen year-old lad confesses that his greatest dream is to play for Barcelona as he appears overwhelmed after a first trip to the Camp Nou stadium as a spectator. The interview in Barcelona with a recently arrived Lionel Messi already gives us a taste of the spirit of the player who will take the entire world by storm, and who instils pride in all those who, at one point or another, have shared in his footballing career. ***"...when you see him run, you say to yourself, a drop of his perspiration is mine"*** (Kike Dominguez, Coach at Newell's Old Boys)

At one point in the film, César Luis Menotti asks himself the question “**Could Messi have come out of Korea? No, nor Germany either**”, because Lionel Messi is genius, passion and the will that have been forged from the perfect environment, Rosario, where “**football is the be-all and end-all**” (César Luis Menotti), where every match played is the most important and from where Messi was left with no other choice but to leave if he was ever to fully develop his genius. The parting stirred up mixed feelings in him, “**a great sadness but at the same time immense joy about where I’m going to play**”. The change was a crucial one as far as everybody was concerned, and especially Menotti: “**At Barça, Leo has encountered the conditions he wouldn’t have been able to find at the majority of football clubs in the world, being, unequivocally the world’s best football player**”. The film looks at his progression at Barça, the admiration felt by the few who had actually seen him play, until the world would get the chance to meet him for the first time when Barça took on Fabio Capello’s Juventus side, who that very same night made the statement, “**I don’t think I’ve ever seen such a talented player, at such a young age, with personality, speed, he’s got the lot**”. Cruyff, Valdano, Menotti, Alejandro Sabella, his Barça team-mates, Pique, Iniesta, Pinto and Mascherano, Argentinian and Spanish journalists, analyse the essence of his game, his role as a leader, the thrill playing still generates in him, and the drive to win every match he plays, his humility and austerity on the field and the passion for donning his national team’s jersey and playing for Argentina. The genius, the best player in the world, the idol, a hero for many is the central mainstay of the latest project by Álex de la Iglesia, produced by MEDIAPRO and distributed internationally by Film Factory, which draws us nearer to the personality of an individual who has already made his way into the world’s footballing history books and, as his team-mate Javier Mascherano says, “**how beautiful would it be to become Messi for five seconds, just to see what it feels like**”.

With collaboration from

Tables Argentina

CÉSAR LUIS MENOTTI - **Former Coach of the Argentine national team**

JUAN PABLO VARSKY - **Journalist, Director “No somos nadie”, METRO FM**

EZEQUIEL FERNÁNDEZ MOORES - **Journalist and writer. “La Nación” newspaper**

ALEJANDRO SABELLA - **Coach of the Argentine national team**

MARCELO SOTTILE - **Journalist, author of “Lionel Messi, el Distinto”**

DANIEL ARCUCCI - **Editor in Chief of “La Nación” newspaper**

HUGO TOCALLI - **Former Coach of Argentina U-20 national team**

CLAUDIO VIVAS - **Former Assistant Coach of Argentine national team**

PABLO VITTI - **Ex-team-mate of Messi, Argentina U-20 squad**

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ÓSCAR MARTÍNEZ - **Journalist, TyC Sports**

CINTIA ARELLANO - **Childhood friend**

DIEGO VALLEJOS - **Childhood friend**

WALTER BARRERA - **Childhood friend**

DIEGO SCHWARZSTEIN - **Endocrinologist**

MATÍAS PECCE - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

DIEGO ROVIRA - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

FRANCO CASANOVA - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

MATÍAS GIANANTONIO - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

AGUSTÍN ROANI - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

GERARDO GRIGHINI - **Generation of 1987 Newell’s Old Boys**

MÓNICA DÓMINA - **Teacher**

ANDREA SOSA - **Teacher**

SILVANA SUAREZ - **Teacher**

MARIA DEL CARMEN GODOY - **Teacher**

GUSTAVO TERES - **Teacher**
KIKE DOMÍNGUEZ - **Newell's Coach**
ERNESTO VECCHIO - **Newell's Coach**
RAFAEL BIELSA - **Politician and writer**

Tables Barcelona

JOHAN CRUYFF - *Ex-player and Coach at F.C. Barcelona*
JORGE VALDANO - *Ex-player and Coach at Real Madrid F.C.*
JOSE MANUEL PINTO - *F.C. Barcelona former goalkeeper*
ANDRES INIESTA - *Player F.C. Barcelona*
GERARD PIQUÉ - *Player F.C. Barcelona*
JAVIER MASCHERANO - *Player F.C. Barcelona*
PERE GRATACOS - *Coach Barcelona B*
ÁLEX GARCÍA - *Coach Cadet's Youth Team A*
XAVIER PEREZ FARGUELL - *Former Director General of F.C. Barcelona*
XAVIER LLORENS - *Coach Youth Team B*
SANTIAGO SEGUROLA - *Journalist, Associate Editor "MARCA" sports newspaper*
RAMON BESA - *Journalist, Editor in Chief of "El País" newspaper*
JORDI BASTE - *Journalist, director "El Món", RAC1*
JORGE LOPEZ - *Journalist, "Olé" newspaper*
GUILLEM BALAGUE - *Journalist, Author of "Messi"*

MESSI

Directed by
ÁLEX DE LA IGLESIA

Produced by
JAUME ROURES

Script
JORGE VALDANO

Executive Producer
JAVIER MÉNDEZ

Director of Production
BERNAT ELÍAS

Artistic Directors
ANTXON GÓMEZ. Spain
MARCELO PONT. Argentina

Director of Photography
KIKO DE LA RICA

Sound
CARLOS SCHMUKLER

Music
JOAN VALENT

Montage
DOMINGO GONZÁLEZ

TECHNICAL CREW ARGENTINA

Associate Producer
IRIS BENJAMIN

Production Coordinators
MARCELA REVUELTA
ANAHÍ D'AMATO

Promofilm
JOSÉ D'AMATO

CAST BARCELONA

MESSI 3
 MESSI 4
 MESSI'S TEENAGE PLAYER DOUBLE
 FATHER
 COACH
 ASSISTANT COACH
 LLORENS

ÁLEX BURGUÉS
 MARC BALAGUER
 VÍCTOR ALCARAZ
 JUAN PABLO GARAVENTA
 CÉSAR RUBIO
 MARIO FERNÁNDEZ
 FERRAN TERRAZA

CAST ARGENTINA

MESSI 1
 MESSI 2
 MESSI'S FATHER
 MESSI'S MOTHER
 GRANDMOTHER
 SISTER - MARISOL
 SISTER - MARISOL ADULT
 BROTHER - RODRIGO MESSI
 BROTHER - MATÍAS MESSI
 MESSI'S ADULT DOUBLE
 MESSI'S PLAYER DOUBLE 1
 MESSI'S PLAYER DOUBLE 2
 TOCALLI

VALENTÍN RODRÍGUEZ
 JUAN IGNACIO MARTÍNEZ
 JUAN PABLO GARAVENTA
 CECILIA MISERERE
 JULIA AZAR
 MIA AGUSTINA BRESSI
 LUCIANA SOFIA FERRERYRA
 VÍCTOR GUILLERMO DI LEO
 AGUSTÍN DALMASIO SOSA
 JUAN TOMÁS MARTÍN
 NICOLÁS PABLO MARTINEZ
 VALENTINO ANDRÉS ACUÑA
 FACUNDO MARTÍN GÓMEZ

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