

# Chester Film Society presents

## Martin Eden

Italy/France | 2019 | 2hr 9m | Cert 15

Director: Pietro Marcello

Starring: Luca Marinelli, Jessica Cressy

### Synopsis

An aspiring writer, navigates societal complexities, love, and self-discovery in early 20th-century Italy, revealing the struggles and sacrifices of artistic ambition when he falls for a wealthy woman, to the disappointment of her family.

### Critical acclaim

"it's a dazzling showcase for Luca Marinelli, whose magnetic performance in the title role earned him the best actor prize at last year's Venice International Film Festival... here he offers a picture of a man out of step with his moment." *LA Times*

"A century of dreams ebb and flow through Italian filmmaker Pietro Marcello's arthouse breakthrough *Martin Eden*, an expansive, gently fabulist reworking of Jack London's 1909 novel about an uneducated sailor who embarks on a transformative quest to become a famed writer – and fatally succeeds." *ABC News*

"Pietro Marcello transposes Jack London's novel from California to Italy in a sweeping, ravishing adaptation which creates a grand metaphor for 20th century Italian society."

*Sight & Sound*

"Where he succeeds brilliantly is in certain compositions, especially those mimicking a 1970s aesthetic with blue and red period tonalities that match so perfectly with some of the found footage that at times it's difficult to tell them apart. He also incorporates silent-era clips as well as colorized footage of workers in Naples, making an amalgam

of eras in what appears designed to insist on the humanity of all." *Variety*

"*Martin Eden* is a sad story of a sad man who lacks the capacity for happiness and who is astonished to find that artistic success is as compromised as any other kind. But there is a thrill in tracing his progress from rags to riches to annihilation." *The Guardian*

"Marcello's film is more explicit... on the subject of education as the most pernicious tool for keeping the poor in check, but this spry yet increasingly bitter romantic drama is so vague and un-targeted that its social critiques feel less defined than ever. The anger is palpable, but its targets are hard to pinpoint." *Indiewire*

### Conclusion

A film about the terrible loneliness of success that has parallels with the loneliness of failure; it's also about the secret and shameful feeling that failure is the one truthful state of human existence.

### Our next film:

**The Beasts (As Bestas)**

**Showing on November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)**

**At The Garret, Storyhouse**

**[www.chesterfilmsociety.co.uk](http://www.chesterfilmsociety.co.uk)**

Please rate tonight's film using the scale below. We welcome your comments! Detach and hand in as you leave.

| ---- I loathed it ---- | ---- I disliked it ----- | ----- It was OK ----- | ----- I liked it ----- | -----I loved it ----- |

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10