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'Cinema Paradiso' TV Series in the Works, Giuseppe Tornatore Directing

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ENTERTAINMENT



The 1989 Academy Award-winning film will be reimagined by Tornatore as a six-episode streaming series.

Giuseppe Tornatore is bringing the "Cinema" to the small screen.

The Oscar-winning writer/director is set to adapt his 1989 classic film "Cinema Paradiso" into a six-episode streaming series, as Variety first reported. Tornatore will write and direct the TV show, produced by Marco Belardi ("Perfect Strangers") through his Bamboo Production banner. Belardi revealed the series is set to land at a prominent U.S. streamer.

"Cinema Paradiso" tells the story of a stunning Sicilian cinema house where a young boy named Toto falls in love with film. "Cinema Paradiso" won a Special Jury Prize at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival and later won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 1990. A restored version of the film was re-released in the U.K. in 2020. Tornatore's last feature film was the 2021 documentary "The Glance of Music," about legendary composer Ennio Morricone, who created the score for the original film.

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The "Cinema Paradiso" series will "be the same story of the film, but in expanded form with various different narrative strands," producer Belardi said in a press statement, confirming Tornatore is currently writing the treatment and the pilot, with plans for the show to premiere in 2023.

The series will spotlight "the strength of a mother, the solidarity of a friend, sex as a taboo, forced relocations, eloping, and marked social differences," as Belardi noted. The backstories of the main characters for the fictional Sicilian village of Giancaldo, where the film takes place, will also be expanded upon, contextualizing the rise of filmmaking in Italy's post-World War II era.

Belardi additionally shared that he is eying a documentary about how "Cinema Paradiso" came to be, both creatively and from a production perspective; however, this doc is not greenlit yet.

Belardi's Bamboo Production recently cemented a multi-picture deal with Netflix to produce two to three unspecified Italian original films for the streaming platform, as well as the acquisition of streaming rights for three other films Bamboo is producing. Other Bamboo projects include a bio-series on Italian singer-actor Franco Califano, a series on the Milanese mob, and "Generazione Z" about "present-day neo-Nazism and fascism," penned by Italian historian and "M. Son of the Country" author Antonio Scurati.

"Cinema Paradiso" writer/director Tornatore is among the many filmmakers now looking to adapt their own past projects into television series. "Irma Vep" auteur Olivier Assayas reimagined his 1996 meta film for an HBO series starring Alicia Vikander and cited the need for financing European-centric productions.

“We are in a moment of very deep transformation of whatever we call cinema, in terms of aesthetics, in terms of financing, in terms of viewing,” “Irma Vep” writer-director Assayas recently explained to the Los Angeles Times. “‘Irma Vep,’ the original one and same with this one, has one foot in the past and one foot in the present.”

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