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Giuseppe Tornatore to Write and Direct 'Cinema Paradiso' TV Series

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Giuseppe Tornatore's Oscar-winning film "Cinema Paradiso," about a marvellous Sicilian cinema where a boy nicknamed Toto embarks on a lifelong love affair with the movies, is being spun off into a high-profile TV series that Tornatore will write and direct.

The six-episode "Paradiso" show is being developed by prominent Rome-based producer Marco Belardi ("Perfect Strangers") through his new shingle Bamboo Production, which he launched in February. Belardi said he's in advanced talks with an unspecified U.S. streamer to come on board. Belardi is currently in the U.S. with Tornatore, negotiating a deal.

"Cinema Paradiso" won a Special Jury Prize at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival before going on to win the Oscar for best foreign language film in 1990 and earning more than $12 million at the U.S. box via Miramax that year. The pic, which has since gained cult status globally, was re-released in the U.K. in a restored version in 2020.

The "Paradiso" series "will be the same story of the film, but in expanded form with various different narrative strands," said Belardi. He added that Tornatore is currently writing the

treatment and the pilot, with plans for the show to be shot imminently and delivered in 2023.

Elements being weaved into the "Paradiso" series include "the strength of a mother, the solidarity of a friend, sex as a taboo, forced relocations, eloping, and marked social differences," according to materials cited by Belardi.

Effectively, the backstories of main characters of the fictional Sicilian village of Giancaldo, where "Cinema Paradiso" is set, are being spun out. They will provide a cross-section of Italy's post-World War II generation and their drive to restart, intertwined with a postwar passion for the movies.

Concurrently, to help launch the series, Belardi said he would like to produce a doc about how "Cinema Paradiso" germinated, both creatively and from a production standpoint, though this project is not yet greenlit.

Belardi until recently headed the film and TV company Lotus Production, which besides producing Italian megahit "Perfect Strangers," also spawned a steady stream of other hits such as Gabriele Muccino's "There Is No Place Like Home," which in 2018 pulled in more than $10 million locally, and has been spun off recently into a successful TV series for Sky.

Leone Film Group in 2014 acquired a majority stake in Lotus, where Belardi remained in charge. But the rapport with Leone recently soured, so Belardi parted ways with them to set up Bamboo.

Belardi said Bamboo recently inked a multi-picture deal with Netflix to produce two or three unspecified Italian original films for the streamer. Separately, his Netflix deal also comprises the acquisition of streaming rights for three other movies that Bamboo will produce.

Other projects percolating in Bamboo's development pipeline include a TV series for Italian public broadcaster RAI on late Italian pop singer-songwriter, actor,and "bad boy" Franco Califano; a series on the Milanese mob in the '70s, for Sky, which is a spin-off of Sky docuseries "La Mala. Banditi a Milano," which Bamboo is developing with Mia Film, the company that made the docuseries; and a timely show titled "Generazione Z," about "present-day neo-Nazism and Fascism," said Belardi, written by Italian historian and author Antonio Scurati.

Scurati is the author of bestselling novel "M. Son of the Century," which traces the birth of Mussolini's ascent in Italy and is being made into a series for Sky, produced by Fremantle's The Apartment.

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!function(f, b, e, v, n, t, s) {
if (f.fbq) return;
n = f.fbq = function() {
n.callMethod ?
n.callMethod.apply(n, arguments) : n.queue.push(arguments);
};
if (!f._fbq) f._fbq = n;
n.push = n;
n.loaded = !0;
n.version = '2.0';
n.queue = [];
t = b.createElement(e);
t.async = !0;
t.src = v;
s = b.getElementsByTagName(e)[0];
```