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A young man with dark hair, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers, is sitting on wide stone steps. He is looking down at his hands, which are clasped together. The background shows a sunlit, classical architectural setting with large columns and a building facade. The overall color palette is warm and yellowish-gold.

CAST

Antonella Attili Young Maria Di Vita

Enzo Cannavale Spaccafico

Isa Danieli Anna

Leo Gullotta Usher

Marco Leonardi Teenage Salvatore Di Vita

Pupella Maggio Older Maria Di Vita

Agnese Nano Elena Mendola

Leopoldo Trieste Father Adelfio

Salvatore Cascio Young Salvatore Di Vita

Tano Cimarosa Blacksmith

Roberta Lena Lia

Jacques Perrin Adult Salvatore Di Vita

Philippe Noiret Alfredo

CREW

Written and Directed by **Giuseppe Tornatore**

Produced by **Franco Cristaldi**

Edited by **Mario Morra**

Director of Photography **Blasco Giurato**

Music by **Ennio Morricone**

Love Theme by **Andrea Morricone**

Production Designer **Andrea Crisanti**

Costume Designer **Beatrice Bordone**

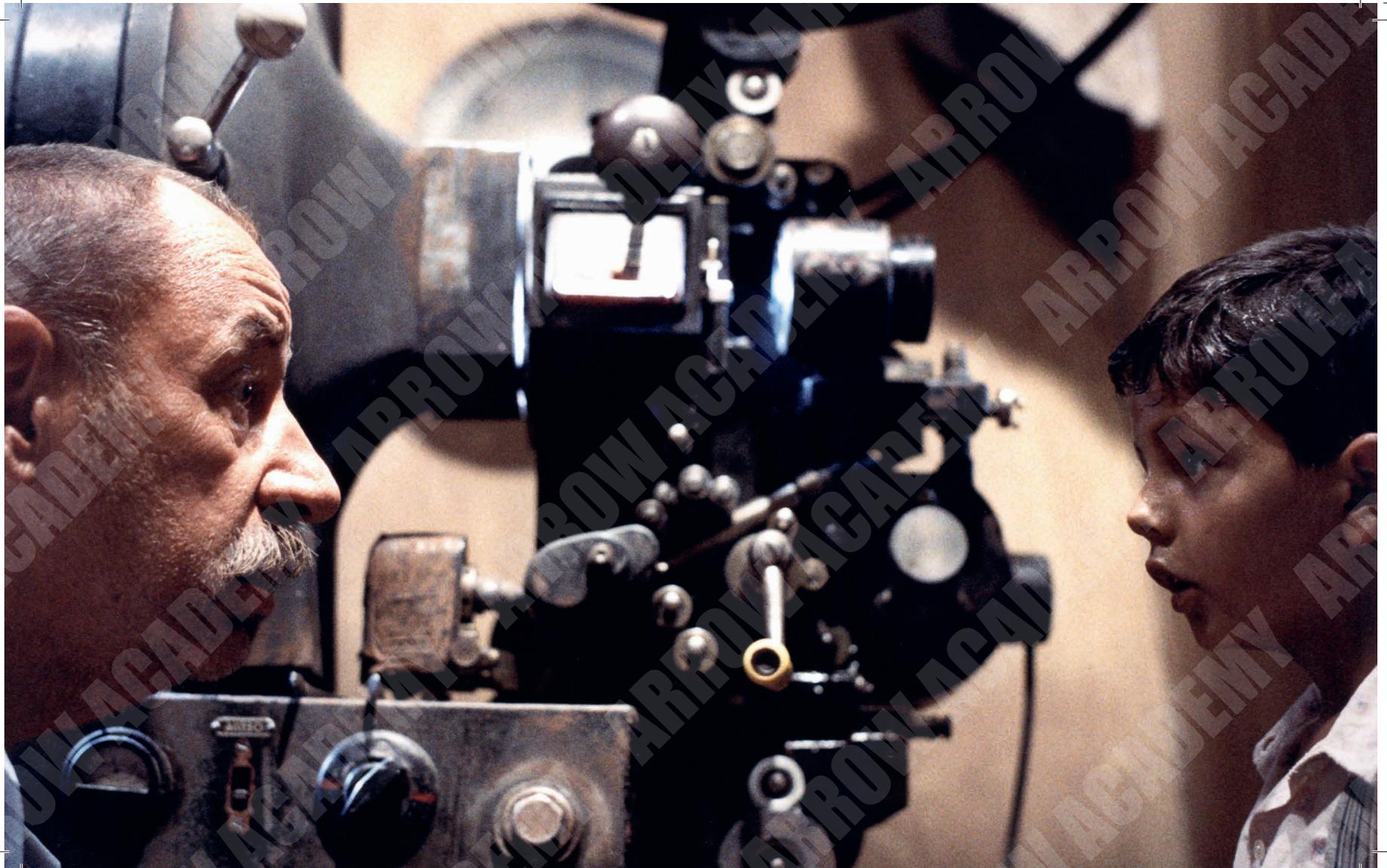
An Italian French co-production between **Cristaldifilm** (Rome)

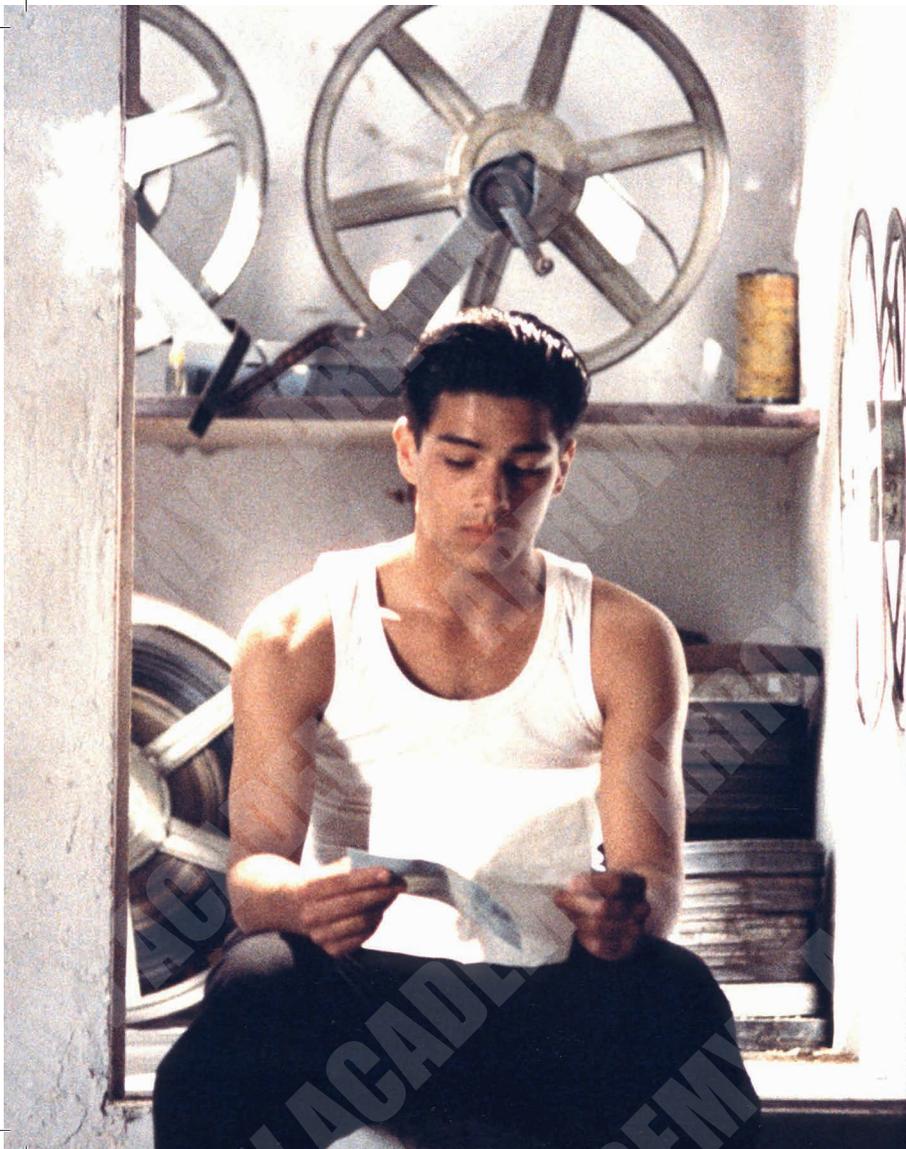
Films Ariane (Paris)

In association with **RAI TRE T.F.1 Film Production**

With the collaboration of **Forum Picture S.P.A.**

Delegate Producer **Gabriella Carusio**





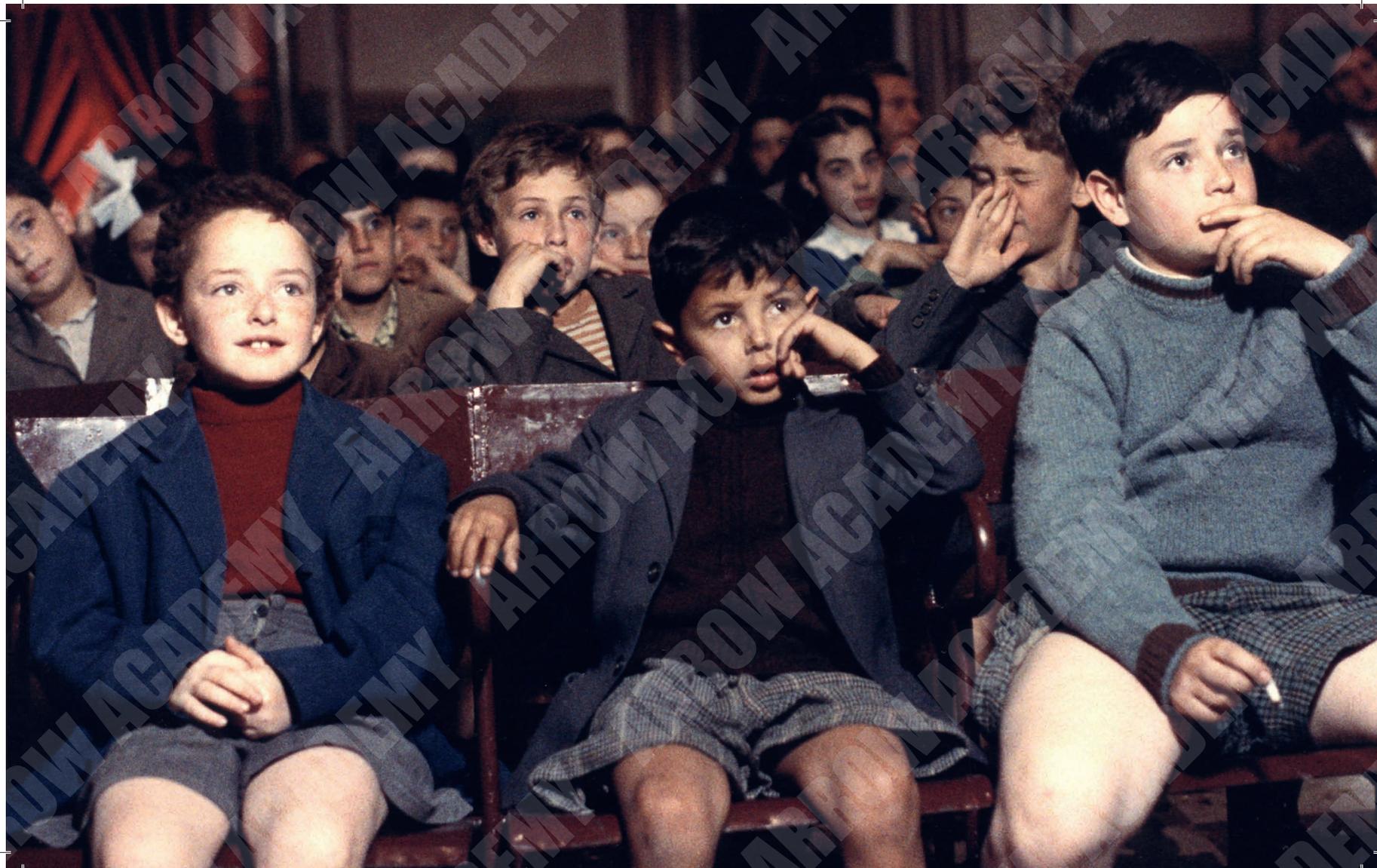
STOLEN KISSES TORNATORE'S CINEMA PARADISO (2013)

by Pasquale Iannone

A love letter to the cinema if ever there was one, *Cinema Paradiso* (1988) was the second feature from 32 year-old Sicilian writer-director Giuseppe Tornatore. The story of Totò, a film-obsessed young Sicilian boy who strikes up a friendship with a local projectionist, the film lit up *in extremis* what had been a decidedly grey and troubled decade for Italian film. In his discussion of Italian cinema of the 1980s, historian Gian Piero Brunetta notes that the decade can be divided in two: a first phase of “chaos, of transition [leading to] a breakdown of structures” and a second characterised by growth and renewal with important inroads made by the younger generation [...].¹ Along with other filmmakers such as Gabriele Salvatores, Tornatore spearheaded this second phase, after several years of



¹ - Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano* volume 4: Dal miracolo economico agli anni novanta 1960 – 1993 (Roma: Riuniti, 1998), p.521



struggling to get various projects off the ground. “The mid-80s were the darkest years for Italian cinema,” Tornatore recalls, “any attempt to make films seemed impossible. I started to feel like someone who had started doing what he had always wanted to do only to find that the world no longer had a need for it.”² Towards the late-80s, however, Italian cinema slowly began reasserting itself on the world stage, culminating in the Best Foreign Film Oscar for Tornatore’s *Cinema Paradiso* in 1990, the first Italian film to win the award since Federico Fellini’s *Amarcord* (1973) some 15 years earlier.

From his 1986 feature debut *The Professor*, Tornatore has worked in a variety of styles and registers but all his films, as William Hope has observed, are “constructed around aesthetic and narrative mechanisms that are designed to elicit substantial emotional responses from spectators, [...] an artistic approach which runs counter to contemporary cinematic trends that privilege forms of



2 - Tornatore in Franco Montini, *Giuseppe Tornatore: La scelta del cinema* in Lino Micciché (ed), Schermi Opachi: Il cinema italiano degli anni '80 (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), p.403

reception based on an ironic (self-) awareness of the process of producing and consuming films.”³ It’s an approach which sees him continue in the tradition of a filmmaker like Truffaut rather than Godard⁴. Indeed, with its unabashed cinephilia and tender exploration of childhood, we could say that *Cinema Paradiso* is the most Truffautian film of Tornatore’s career to date – its emotional charge aided in no small part by one of the most recognisable music scores of the past thirty years, from seasoned maestro Ennio Morricone. Having begun with *Cinema Paradiso*, Morricone’s collaboration with Tornatore has now more than surpassed (in years and number of films) the composer’s celebrated creative partnership with Sergio Leone. Morricone has scored all of Tornatore’s features since, right up to the director’s latest, *The Best Offer* (2013). The Tornatore-Morricone relationship started very much in the vein of the composer’s earlier work with Leone – that is to say that music was composed before filming began and was used to regulate the rhythm and editing of sequences. While it might not be as daringly= experimental as scores for *A Fistful of Dollars* (Sergio Leone, 1964) or *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* (Elio Petri, 1970), Morricone’s music for *Cinema Paradiso* is among his most lyrical and romantic, closer to *Once Upon a Time in America* (Sergio Leone, 1984) or *The Untouchables* (Brian De Palma, 1987), a film he had completed shortly before. *Cinema Paradiso*’s ‘Love Theme’ was composed by Morricone’s son Andrea and surfaces throughout the film to accompany Totò’s romance with Elena.⁵ Recognising the power of the music, Tornatore allows Morricone full reign throughout.

In terms of the film’s casting, actors such as Marcello Mastroianni and Gian Maria Volonté were approached for the role of projectionist Alfredo before Tornatore and producer Cristaldi settled on Philippe Noiret, the distinguished character actor and favourite of directors such as Marco Ferreri and Bertrand Tavernier. Having cast the parts of Totò as a child (Salvatore Cascio) and teenager (Marco Leonardi), Tornatore struggled to find an actor to play the protagonist in middle age, to the point where shooting on the film had begun and the third Totò had yet to be put in place. At the eleventh hour and despite having no resemblance to the other two Totòs, Jacques Perrin agreed to take on the role.

3 - William Hope, *Giuseppe Tornatore: Emotion, Cognition, Cinema* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), p.3

4 - While the film has several links with Truffaut, the influence of Federico Fellini is arguably just as pronounced - the love-hate relationship with life in the provinces, the love of larger-than-life characters and of course Tornatore’s use of the Calabrian actor Leopoldo Trieste who had appeared in Fellini’s *The White Sheik* (1951) and *I Vitelloni* (1953).

5 - The piece has since become a concert staple, performed by everyone from Itzhak Perlman to Yo-Yo Ma and Pat Metheny.





The film begins with a middle-aged Totò returning to his Sicilian hometown of Giancaldo after thirty years to attend the funeral of Alfredo. Tornatore then winds back to the 1940s, to Totò as a young child. One day, after finishing his duties as altar boy in the local church, he stays behind to spy on the priest Father Adelfio (Leopoldo Trieste) censoring a film that will be shown at the town's cinema, Jean Renoir's *The Lower Depths* (1936). At each kiss, the priest sounds a bell, a signal for Alfredo to remove the offending scene. To the frustration of many of the town's residents, this is a process which has been repeated for every film screened in Giancaldo ('Twenty years I've been going to the cinema and I've still not seen a kiss!' says one frustrated filmgoer at a later screening). Totò becomes fascinated with the projector, celluloid, everything to do with the materiality of cinema and pleads with the irascible Alfredo to be his assistant. The projectionist is hesitant at first, blustering Totò back to his concerned mother but soon a friendship develops and the young boy becomes Alfredo's apprentice in the booth, peeking down onto an enthusiastic audience night after night. Tornatore traces Totò's progress through a montage sequence in which we see Alfredo imparting his knowledge to the young boy. The director's camera cranes up into the gallery and down into the stalls as audiences roar in appreciation for films such as Luchino Visconti's *La Terra Trema* (1948) or Pietro Germi's mafia drama *In the Name of the Law* (1949). Alfredo (and the cinema in more general terms) becomes a kind of surrogate father for Totò whose real dad is missing in action. "He had a moustache like mine," Alfredo tells the young boy, "he reminded me of Clark Gable". Some time later, in one of the film's most affecting passages, Totò finds out about his father's death from a newsreel. The boy is then shown walking the bombed-out streets with his distraught mother when he catches sight of a poster of *Gone with the Wind* (1939) that has just about managed to resist the explosions. He smiles at the image of Gable and Vivien Leigh in a scene which says much about what the cinema has become for Totò.

A turning point in the film's narrative comes when cinemagoers are shut out of a screening of Mario Mattoli's comedy *The Firemen of Viggiù* (1949). Alfredo decides to re-direct the projection toward the window and beam the film out into the town square. Tragically, however, the projector catches fire, destroying the building and nearly killing him. Totò manages to save his life but Alfredo is left blinded by the fire. Totò, still a young child, is given the job of projectionist in

the 'Nuovo Cinema Paradiso' which has been reopened by wealthy businessman Spaccafico (Enzo Cannavale). We then follow the young man into adolescence, his interest in cinema now extending beyond the confines of the projection booth and into filmmaking itself. He starts making home movies and documentaries (including a piece on the local slaughterhouse reminiscent of Georges Franju's infamous 1949 short *Blood of the Beasts*), and romances local girl Elena (Agnese Nano) before finally deciding to leave Giancaldo for Rome.



At the end of the film, having attended Alfredo's funeral, Perrin's Totò sits down to watch a roll of film left to him by his old mentor. Amazingly, it turns out to be a compilation of all the censored kisses from years of screenings in Giancaldo. Totò is reduced to tears as a stream of filmic embraces flash before him in one of the most moving finales in film history.⁶ It's an ending that remains the same in all the various versions of *Cinema Paradiso*, from the Cannes Film Festival cut (124 minutes) to the Director's Cut (174 minutes) – both included in this edition.

6 - Tornatore wanted to include an embrace between Rita Hayworth and Orson Welles but was shocked to find that barely three seconds of screen time would end up costing \$700,000.



The accepted story behind the different versions tends to go as follows: when *Cinema Paradiso* was first released, it flopped. Producer Cristaldi then re-cut the film, re-released it to great critical and commercial success and led the march on the Oscars in 1990. The truth, however, was far more complicated.



Once filming was completed, Cristaldi was convinced that the film needed to be premiered at a film festival. Having missed the deadline for Venice, he decided to show the film (in an unpolished, provisional cut) at the Europa Cinema festival in Bari. "I've always thought that the submission to Europa Cinema was a mistake," recalls Tornatore "it was as if post-production was taking place in front of an audience. The first cut of every film is always overlong and there always follows a process of editing but for *Cinema Paradiso*, this happened out in the open. Once I returned to Rome, I was able to make the first proper cut of the film, removing a couple of scenes and tightening others. This version came out on 19th November 1988 with a 150-minute running time."⁷ However, this cut was marketed poorly

⁷ - Tornatore in Montini, p.407

by distributors Titanus and did badly at the box office. After several meetings, it became clear to Tornatore that blame for the film's failure was being attributed not to marketing but to its duration. Exasperated, he returned to the editing room and recut the film to a more box-office friendly running time of approximately two hours. It was re-released but again, failed miserably. In one final push, Tornatore and Cristaldi submitted the film to the 1989 Cannes Film Festival where it was given an enthusiastic reception, sharing the Grand Prix with Bertrand Blier's *Too Beautiful for You* (1989).⁸ In the months following Cannes, it was released around the world, gaining the public and critical acclaim Tornatore felt it deserved, culminating in March 1990 with an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film.

In the early 2000s, Tornatore released his Director's Cut of *Cinema Paradiso* only for several critics to argue that – like Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now Redux* (1979/2001) – the original, tighter cut of the film was by far the superior version. It's certainly a point that can be argued but there's no doubt that the Director's Cut gives the work greater balance, with the three stages of Totò's life given equal weight. In the 2-hour cut, Perrin's Totò is simply part of a framing device, appearing at the beginning and the end of the film. In the longer version we see him reunited with his teenage sweetheart Elena - played as an older woman by Brigitte Fossey - and more is revealed about how and why their relationship ended. The film's reflexivity and themes of childhood and loss are reinforced by the presence of Fossey, responsible for one of the most affecting child performances of all time – as war orphan Paulette in René Clément's *Forbidden Games* (1952).

Pasquale Iannone is a film lecturer, writer and broadcaster based in Edinburgh. He teaches at the University of Edinburgh and is a regular contributor to Sight & Sound, Senses of Cinema and BBC Radio amongst others.

⁸ - The jury president for that year was Wim Wenders and it's easy to see how a film like *Cinema Paradiso* would have impressed the director of *Alice in the Cities* (1974) and *Kings of the Road* (1976).



ABOUT THE RESTORATION

This 4k restoration of *Cinema Paradiso* was produced by Istituto Luce-Cinecittà, with support by DOLCE & GABBANA, Cristaldi Film and the Cineteca di Bologna.

The restoration was completed at L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna under the supervision of Director Giuseppe Tornatore and Director of Photography Blasco Giurato.

A new 4K HDR/Dolby Vision graded master was created at L'Immagine Ritrovata on behalf of Arrow Films.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Francesco Simeoni**

Executive Producer **Kevin Lambert**

Technical Producer **James White**

Disc Production Manager **Nora Mehenni**

QC **Alan Simmons**

Production Assistant **Samuel Thiery**

UHD / Blu-ray / DVD Mastering **David Mackenzie, Fidelity in Motion**

Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**

Artwork and Design **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

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