



The last return to 'Cinema Paradiso': Giuseppe Tornatore's film will become a series

by [Winford Harrington](#)

It is said that cinema is art, image, an author's vision. But, sometimes, they also tell more earthly details. For example, the duration. In 1988, [Giuseppe Tornatore](#) premiered an almost three-hour film that offered a declaration of love to the seventh art, recounting the magic and closure of an old room in a Sicilian town. The spell, however, did not work: his eternal footage received cold reviews and the back of the public, so much so that it quickly disappeared from the billboard. Even so, a distributor told the filmmaker: "If it lasted two hours, it would earn millions," as the newspaper recalled. *The Republic*. The director was stung. But he cut back and came back: "Well, make millions." Today, *cinema Paradiso* is much more: a cult film. So much so that now Tornatore can afford to drag it out even longer than he originally imagined: the film will become a six-episode series, written and directed by himself, scheduled for release in 2023.

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"It will be the same story as the film, but in an expanded version with several different narrative lines," producer Marco Belardi assured. [Magazine Variety](#) which [advanced the news](#). Tornatore thus returns to the fable of little Totò, who falls in love

with the cinema after his friendship with the projectionist Alfredo and, as an adult, becomes a director. "The strength of a mother, the solidarity of a friend, sex as a taboo, forced relocations, escapes and marked social differences" will be some of the themes that the series will delve into, according to Belardi, who was also behind the blockbuster *perfect strangers*, among other projects. Producer and filmmaker are currently in the US, negotiating with a platform for *streaming*. And Tornatore, who was inspired for the film by a personal experience, is already writing the script treatment and the pilot episode, according to *Variety*.

Back, then, to the fictional town of Giancaldo. Although, in reality, many spectators never left. The projection directly onto a facade of the square, Totò's waiting in the rain, the priest's cuts to all the kisses on the screen, Alfredo's advice to his young friend at the moment of saying goodbye ("whatever you do, love it like you loved the cabin of the Paradiso when you were little"), the soundtrack by Ennio Morricone or the final sequence belong forever to the memory of whoever saw and adored the film.

So much so that fans still visit Palazzo Adriano, the actual location where a good part of the feature film was shot, and to any theater that survives on the basis of love and celluloid in the face of advances in digital technology and shopping malls [It is baptized Cinema Paradiso](#). When it was finally possible to return to the seats, after the closure due to confinement, many Spanish cinemas were clear about the best way to reconnect with their audience: [they rescued Tornatore's film](#). His track record also attests to his importance: he won the Special Jury Prize at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival and the Oscar for best foreign-language feature the following year.

The two protagonists, in another frame of the film.

There was, at the same time, a front that remained critical, however long the film lasted: in his opinion, even in two hours it was still a tricky, tearful film, hunting for easy emotion. Today, skeptics will find themselves incredulous: not only does *cinema Paradiso* and in six episodes, but Belardi also plans to produce a

documentary on the origin and creative process of the original film, to reinforce its validity and contribute to the promotion of the series. The doubts, more generally, have to do with the increasingly common return in the audiovisual sector to what was successful in the past, to recover its art, of course, but also its winning formula. Alfredo himself, just before whispering to Totò the phrase that everyone remembers, gave him another recommendation: "Never come back. [...] Do not look back. [...] Don't be fooled by nostalgia."

The truth is that more than 30 years have passed and much has changed. In the absence of further details, the project itself is a good example of this: one of the most famous odes to the cinema is transformed into a series in 2022, presumably destined to be seen on the home screen. And distributed by a platform of *streaming*, that is to say, just the business model accused by some of torpedoing the future of these establishments.

The passage of time has also taken two protagonists of the film: Philippe Noiret, who played Alfredo, died in 2006 and [Jacques Perrin, who played Totò as an adult](#) He died just a few months ago. and salvatore *Toto* Cascio, who at the age of eight became the most famous child in world cinema, soon discovered that his life had little to do with the fairy tale he had starred in: instead of a promising career, an early illness awaited him that has ended up condemning to almost total blindness. He himself preferred to hide from the spotlight for decades, until recently he felt prepared [to relate to *Il Corriere della Sera* your drama](#) and his way of improvement.



The filmmaker Giuseppe Tornatore, photographed in Madrid in 2013. CHRISTOBAL MANUEL

Tornatore himself has never been able to return to the summit of *cinema Paradiso*. She returned to success and awards, at least in her country, with *The unknown woman* either *The legend of the pianist on the ocean*. He achieved new international applause with *The best offer*, or his recent documentary about Ennio Morricone, his friend and composer of the soundtrack of almost all his films. He also had to accept the disappointing results of *pure formality* either *Malene*. "I have shot each film believing that it was going to be the decisive one of my life", [assured the filmmaker to EL PAÍS in 2013](#). However, his name is forever associated with his most famous work.

Taking it back is an opportunity. Although Tornatore will also be aware of the risks. After all, he wrote the original script himself: his are Alfredo's warnings. But also Totò's decision: to return, of course, to the place that made him happy.

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