



## Cinema Paradiso

1988, Italy, Colour, Drama, Drama Running time: 155 mins.  
Rated U.

Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. Cast: Phillippe Noiret, Enzo Cannavale, Antonella Attili

### **Third film in our Members' Choice Season**

Tuesday 12th  
December at  
7.15 pm

Film essay by  
Dominic  
Thierry  
(InFiFa) and  
notes compiled  
by Mark  
MacLennan  
(InFiFa).

It was inevitable that sooner or later InFiFa would get around to this film, often cited as a 'Love Letter to Cinema'. This film is also frequently cited as one of the 100 Best Films of All-time.

It is set in post-war Sicily, where the local cinema would seem to be the beating heart of the village, the scenario in which the isolated villagers are introduced to the outside world by means of the flickering images shown on the screen.

These are shown to them by Alfredo (played by the famous character actor Phillippe Noiret) who becomes the 'father-figure' for Salvatore (also known as Toto) whose own father has been killed in the war. The boy and the projectionist develop a deep friendship, which only grows when an accident in the projection room renders Alfredo blind, thus no longer able to see his beloved films. Toto takes over the projectionist role, which is the porthole through which he is enabled to witness images of life that will lead to his growing awareness of the world of adults. He sees the films in their

'uncut' state, so assisting him in advancing his knowledge of 'life' in its unveiled state; this in a village where the local priest rings a bell whenever a scene of kissing takes place as a warning to the populace to look to their moral underpinnings.

You will perhaps recognise how the 'corrupting influence' (or the 'lessons of life' depending on one's view-point) of cinema are felt by others such as the young boys who appear to be masturbating to the appearance of a young Brigitte Bardot. Such are the subtleties of the film, although the Director's cut is considerably more explicit in tone than the original film version that excised 51 minutes of Tornatore's film. Ironically this act was perpetrated by one Harvey Weinstein, to make the film more innocent and thus more acceptable to foreign audiences.



At one point Toto turns the projection onto the wall of a building standing opposite, taking the magic of cinema out into the world beyond the cinema where the images have been stored away from those who are not within this enclosed, darkened space.

In the second section of the film Toto's burgeoning love for a young girl from the village.

One question I would ask you the audience to consider is this - Did Alfredo deliberately sabotage the boy's affair so that it would be romanticised, as cinema itself can do, so that his love would remain 'unspoilt'. If not what reason would you attribute it to?



Toto becomes a film director himself and in the final third section of the film he returns to the village for Alfredo's funeral, just in time to visit the cinema before it is razed to make way for that modern symbol of soullessness, the parking lot.

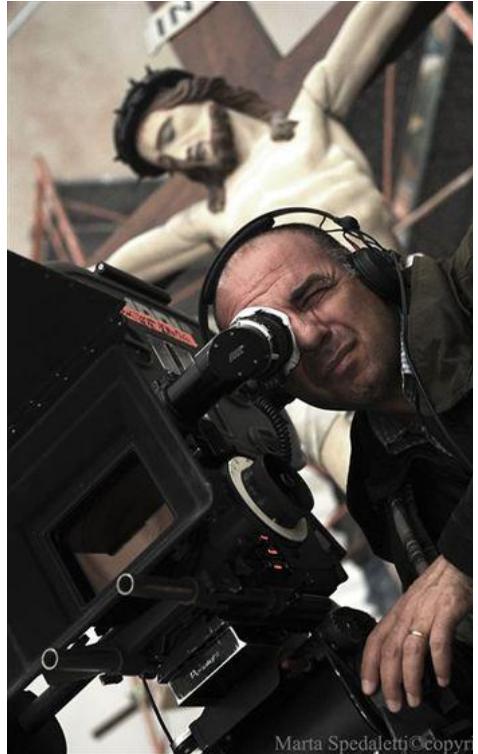
He finds that Alfredo has left him a legacy, which is too surprising to reveal here.



As Tim Robey in his 'Telegraph' (12.12.13) review of the revised version writes, '...Toto returns to the wreckage that was once his past, and Giuseppe Tornatore invites us to reject Alfredo's advice in a near pornographic trip down memory lane. Tornatore may have hit a sticky wicket with his subsequent work, but he knew what he was doing here: warning us about the irrational lure of the filmed past, which is to say cinema itself, then ushering us grandly to our seats'. So, a life in three parts, a visual poem to the power of film and importantly cinemas as the vehicle in which films are seen, and an illustration of the nature of first love, love between the old and the young, the potency of sex as an aspect of life this film can be read in a variety of ways. Does it justify its apparent place in the hearts and minds of so many of those who have seen it, even those who generally profess to dislike 'foreign films'? Some have found the film somewhat 'cloying' in its tone, and those who feel this way often cite the musical score by film legend Ennio Morricone to significantly contribute to this opinion. Others see it as an important aspect of its lyricism.



In our discussion following the film's showing this is perhaps an aspect that you might wish to consider along with those other aspects highlighted in these brief notes.



Cinema Paradiso director Giuseppe Tornatore on set.

Our next screening..... Life Is Beautiful

The last film in our..... Members Choice Season



Eden  
Court  
Cinema

08<sup>th</sup>  
December  
2017  
at 7.15 pm

In this WW II tragicomedy, Guido marries Dora and together they have a son. Five years later they are in a concentration camp. Guido does not want his son to know why they are there, so he says that it's a game in which the winner receives a tank. In one bold stride, Roberto Benigni (star and director) sets himself apart knowing that humor and heartbreak are only a howl of pain apart.



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*Inverness Film Fans (InFiFa) meet fortnightly at Eden Court Cinema for screenings and post film discussions. To join us for free and for more info go to:*

[www.invernessfilmtans.org](http://www.invernessfilmtans.org)