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Paolo Sorrentino pulls out all the stops with â??The Young Popeâ??

Description

Writer/director Paolo Sorrentino has unleashed the first two episodes of a new ten-part series titled, â??The Young Pope,â?• at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival today, September 3rd.

On set of â??The young Popeâ?• by Paolo Sorrentino. In the picture Jude Law. Photo by Gianni Fior

Jude Law plays the central character, Lenny Belardo, aka Pius XIII, the first American Pope in history. Young and charming, his election seems to be the result of a simple yet effective media strategy on the part of the College of Cardinals. But appearances can be deceptive. Above all, in the place and among the people who have chosen the great mystery of God as the compass guiding their existence. That place is the Vatican and those people are the leaders of the Church. And Pius XIII proves to be the most mysterious and contradictory of them all. Shrewd and naÃ¯ve, ironical and pedantic, primeval and cutting-edge, doubting and resolute, melancholy and ruthless, Pius XIII tries to cross the endless river of human solitude to find a God he can give to mankind. And to himself.

Sorrentino is bound to shock the sensibilities of some of his Catholic viewers with the imagery in the opening sequence. He opens with a baby in a dimly lit St. Peterâ??s Square crawling over a sea of other babies until we see a man emerge from beneath the pile. A cut is made to Lenny awakening from a sleep and donning the attire of a Catholic Pope. As Lenny leaves his dressing area Sorrentino makes effective use of slow motion as he shows Lenny gracing the Vatican personnel with his presence. He glides across screen from left to right with non-diagetic music to the admiration and respect of the on-lookers until sitting upon his papal chair. He embodies a pious pose while envisioning a lovely topless blonde sitting in a green pasture as he presumably, as a young boy, looks on. He comes to and makes his way to the Papal Balcony where a deafening roar is heard from a rain-soaked crowd waiting to hear his Holiness. The rain stops, the clouds clear and the sun shines forth and again the crowd roars. Lenny as Pius XIII begins a most dynamic and appropriate speech on how he serves God and how he serves the audience before switching it up telling the audience to indulge in forbidden pleasures and desires including masturbation, gay marriage and a free and liberated lifestyle. At this point, his Secretary of State tells Pius he is not the Pope, that the Secretary of State is Pope and that Pius XIII is excommunicated. A cut is made to Lenny awakening from a sleep. From here Sorrentino takes the viewer on a wild ride as he delves into the psychological state of the young pope through moments of Belardoâ??s introspection and through his interactions with his subordinates.

Cinematographer Luca Bigazzi creates a plethora of luscious visuals throughout the first two episodes seamlessly shown. Laura Rosenthal and Annamaria Sambucco have complied a stellar cast. The cast does look the parts thanks to the work of Carlo Poggioli and Luca Canfora. The musical score by Lele Marchitelli keeps pace with the action. The production design is exquisite and is handled by Ludovica

Travaglioli is credited with editing.

Popeâ?• by Paolo
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ndo.Photo by Gianni

set of â??The young Popeâ?• by Paolo Sorrentino.10/22/2015 sc. 264 ep. 2In the picture Dyane Keaton.Photo by Gianni Fiorito

set of â??The young Popeâ?• by Paolo Sorrentino. 10/22/2015 sc. 264 ep. 2 In the picture CÃ©cile De France. Photo by Gianni Fiorito

All in all, the Young Pope proved to be highly entertaining. Law brings style and swagger to the role of Lenny. Silvio Orlando brings to life the machinations and cajoling of Secretary of State, Cardinal Voiello and Cecele De France adds nicely to the filmâ??s rich cinematography in close ups as the Vatican Marketer Sofia Dubois. Last and certainly not least, Diane Keaton solidly depicts Sister Mary adding a much needed grounding presence as Sorrentino is not pulling any punches with his attempts for humor. Nevertheless, it is a delightful production with interesting dialogue and a dark, ominous and foreboding first Papal Speech.

My recommendation is donâ??t miss a chance to see â??The Young Pope.â?? Go for it! God willingâ?¦

The Young Pope is a joint Sky, HBO, CANAL+ production and will be broadcast on Sky Atlantic in 5 countries: in Italy from October 21st, in UK, Germany, Ireland and Austria from late October, and in France on CANAL+ from late October.

Directorâ??s Note

â??The clear signs of Godâ??s existence. The clear signs of Godâ??s absence. How faith can be searched for and lost. The greatness of holiness, so great as to be unbearable when you are fighting temptations and when all you can do is to yield to them. The inner struggle between the huge responsibility of the Head of the Catholic Church and the miseries of the simple man that fate (or the Holy Spirit) chose as Pontiff. Finally, how to handle and manipulate power in a State whose dogma and moral imperative is the renunciation of power and selfless love towards oneâ??s neighbour. That is what The Young Pope is aboutâ?•.

Paolo Sorrentino Biography

Paolo Sorrentino, director and screenwriter, was born in Naples in 1970. In 2001, he made his first feature-length film, One Man Up (Lâ??uomo in piÃ¹), starring Toni Servillo and Andrea Renzi. The movie, selected for the Orizzonti section at the Venice Film Festival, was nominated for three David di Donatello Awards, won a Silver Ribbon for best new director, and two Golden Goblet Awards. In 2004, he directed his second movie, The Consequences of Love (Le conseguenze dellâ??amore). An in-competition selection at the Cannes Film Festival, the movie received many awards, including five David di Donatello Awards, four Silver Ribbons and five Golden Ciak Awards. In 2006, he made his third feature, The Family Friend (Lâ??amico di famiglia), which was presented in competition at the Cannes Film Festival and later participated at numerous international festivals.
In 2008, Paolo Sorrentino returned for the third time to the Cannes Film Festival in competition with his

movie Il Divo, starring Toni Servillo, and was awarded the Prix du Jury. The movie later received seven David di Donatello Awards, five Golden Ciak Awards, five Silver Ribbons, and an OscarÂ® nomination for Best Achievement in Makeup. In 2010, Feltrinelli published Sorrentinoâ??s first novel, Hanno tutti ragione. The book was a popular and critical success and was a finalist for the Strega Prize. In 2011, This Must be the Place marked Sorrentinoâ??s directing debut in English. Starring Sean Penn and Frances McDormand, the movie was presented in competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival and received numerous awards, including six David di Donatello Awards, three Silver Ribbons and four Golden Ciak Awards. In 2012, Feltrinelli published Sorrentinoâ??s second book, Tony Pagoda e i suoi amici.

In 2013, The Great Beauty (La grande bellezza), starring Toni Servillo, Carlo Verdone and Sabrina Ferilli, brought Paolo Sorrentino for the fifth time to the Cannes Film Festival in competition. The movie won many awards, including an OscarÂ® and a Golden GlobeÂ® for Best Foreign Language film, a BAFTA for Best Film Not in the English Language, and five important EFA awards, including Best European Film, Best European Director and Best European Actor. The movie was sold to over fifty countries and was in the Top Ten of the best movies of the year, according to the prestigious English magazine â??Sight & Sound.â?• In 2015, Youth (Youth-La giovinezza), Paolo Sorrentinoâ??s second movie in English, starring Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel, Rachel Weisz, Paul Dano and Jane Fonda, was presented in competition at the Cannes Film Festival. It earned three European Film Awards: Best European Film, Best European Director and Best European Actor. The movie also received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song and two Golden Globe nominations for Best Supporting Actress and best Original Song, as well as two David di Donatello
Awards and three Silver Ribbons.

(Excerpts from The Young Pope Pressbook)

*Featured image â?? The Young Pope director Paolo Sorrentino (Courtesy of ASAC/ Gianni Fiorito)

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