

SCREENDAILY

Sorrentino's Sean Penn project to start shooting August 16

7 July, 2010 | By [Sheri Jennings](#)

Italian director's English-language debut *This Must Be The Place*, also starring Frances McDormand, will have a budget of \$28m.

Italian director Paolo Sorrentino's first English language project, *This Must Be The Place*, which stars Sean Penn and Frances McDormand, will kick off its 10-week shoot on August 16 in Dublin before moving to US locations of Michigan, New Mexico and New York.

The project has a robust budget of \$28m. Italy's most costly recent production was Giuseppe Tornatore's *Baaria*, which had a budget of \$30-35m via Medusa film.

The new details were announced today at Milan's Intesa Sanpaolo bank, underscoring the first time a bank enters into contractual production with the established production houses, in this case Medusa Film, Lucky Red and Indigo Film through their IMI Investimenti. The investment is possible via a clause in Italy's tax credit that allows non-cinema oriented industries to invest in film and receive tax breaks.

This Must Be The Place focuses an aging rock star that decides to hunt down the Nazi criminal who ordered his father's execution in a concentration camp. Penn and Sorrentino met while Penn served as president of the Cannes jury in 2008 that awarded Sorrentino the Prix du Jury for his film *Il Divo*.

A year later Sorrentino sent Penn a script and he agreed to take the project, which was initiated by his long time producers Francesca Cima and Nicola Giuliano of Indigo with Lucky Red's Andrea Occhipinti.

Occhipinti described the production breakdown to ScreenDaily as 70 percent Italian (20 percent each for Medusa, Indigo and Lucky Red and 10 percent for Intesa Sanpaolo Bank). Sanpaolo will pony up \$3.15 mil (E2.5 mil) for the project.

French co-producers Michele and Laurent Petin for France's ARP Selection have a further 20 percent of the production while Ed Guiney and Andrew Lowe of Ireland's Element Pictures are in for the remaining 10 percent.

The project recently received the green light for funds from Eurimages and the support of the Irish Film Board.

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Sorrentino moves to \$28 mil 'Place'

English-lingo pic stars Sean Penn, Frances McDormand

By NICK VIVARELLI

Italo production company Medusa and bank Intesa San Paolo have boarded helmer Paolo Sorrentino's "This Must Be the Place" starring Sean Penn and Frances McDormand.

In an unusual financing deal, the bank is taking an equity stake in the \$28 million pic, one of Italy's most high-profile and highly anticipated films of the year.

"Place" is mounted as a three-way Italy-France-Ireland co-production with Italy's Indigo Film and Lucky Red, Gaul's Arp Selection and Ireland's Element Pictures.

First unveiled in the run-up to the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, "Place" toplines Penn as a retired rockstar hunting the Nazi criminal who ordered his father's concentration camp execution. McDormand plays his wife.

David Byrne will compose the score.

Intesa will tap into Italy's recently introduced tax credits. Pic, which is 70% financed out of Italy, is also benefitting from the EU's Eurimages co-production fund.

Pathe, which has been selling internationally, closed a slew of presales on the pic in Cannes in May. Medusa will distribute in Italy.

Principal photography on Sorrentino's English-language debut is due to start Aug. 16 in Dublin with seven more weeks of shooting in the U.S.

Sorrentino, speaking at a Milan presser on Thursday via satellite link from New York, recounted how Penn, when he headed the Cannes jury in 2008, told him he wanted to work with him after seeing his "Il Divo," which took the fest's Prix du Jury that year.

With Penn in mind, Sorrentino wrote the screenplay for "Place" in tandem with Italo scribe Umberto Contarello, whose previous credits include Gianni Amelio's "The Missing Star."

Sorrentino told journos the film has a double theme. "On the one hand, it's about a father-and-son relationship," he said.

"On the other, it delves into the theme of the Holocaust, which is a lot riskier, but also something I've been thinking about a lot."

Contact the Variety newsroom at news@variety.com.



Sorrentino

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