

Italian Brothers Return to the Quad Cities for Feature Film

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The Quad City Development Group announced last week that a feature film by the Italian brothers Antonio and Pupi Avati will be partially shot in the Quad Cities this year, with an expected local impact of several hundred thousand dollars.

“This is hundreds of thousands or millions” in economic impact, said Thom Hart, president of the Quad City Development Group. That includes wages, meals, and hotel rooms, for example.

The brothers said they would employ a Quad Cities crew of 25 to 50 people, between 20 and 25 local actors, and roughly 100 local extras. Auditions will be held in late July. This English-language, 35-millimeter film will mark the Avatis' first time working with an American crew, Pupi Avati said at a press conference last week.

The Avatis will film for five weeks in the Quad Cities (starting August 21) and five weeks in Rome, they said. While in the Quad Cities, the brothers will also host a retrospective film festival of their work. Pupi directs their movies, while Antonio “counts the beans,” Pupi said.

The Avati brothers would not divulge the production budget for the movie, but said it would be “medium-high” for an Italian movie. The filmmakers have secured distribution in Europe through Italian broadcaster RAI, but have no distribution agreement yet in the United States.

The mystery thriller will star Laura Morante, an Italian actress who played the female lead in John Malkovich's directorial debut, *The Dancer Upstairs*, opposite Javier Bardem. The Avatis said they were targeting Vanessa Redgrave and Danny Aiello to appeal to English-speaking

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audiences, but they don't yet have signed contracts with those performers. The movie has an Italian title but not an English one at this point.

The *Avatis* first filmed in the Quad Cities with *Bix*, a biography of the legendary jazz man that was released in 1991. They last filmed here with *The Childhood Friend*, which was released in 1994.

"For years I thought, 'We have to come back ... for a movie," said Pupi, who served on the jury of the 1994 Cannes film festival and has directed more than 30 feature films.

The Quad City Development Group press conference can be watched in full at (<http://www.qcspan.com>).