

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel: 212-708-9400 Cable: MODERNART Telex: 62370 MODART ENTRANCE at 18 W. 54

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF A RESTORED VISCONTI
CLASSIC, THE LEOPARD, TO BE SCREENED AT MoMA

Luchino Visconti's 1963 masterpiece The Leopard will be seen for the first time in New York in the director's preferred version--uncut and in Italian with English subtitles--when The Museum of Modern Art presents a special premiere screening on Thursday, September 1, at 6:00 p.m. in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2.

Winner of the Golden Palm award at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival, The Leopard is based on the brilliant, best-selling novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa and stars Burt Lancaster in one of the greatest performances of his career. Originally, the film was released in the United States in a truncated, English-language version. Subsequently, as Variety noted, "Any American who has seen 'The Leopard' in infrequent revival showings in recent years has been forced to watch a faded, pink, 16mm print in which the widescreen format has been scanned for television." Now Twentieth Century Fox-Classics is releasing a new print, a full 185 minutes long and subtitled in English, that restores the sumptuous beauty and epic sweep of Visconti's original vision.

When the 185-minute version of The Leopard was shown at Filmex in Los Angeles in April 1983, the Herald Examiner commented that it "seems fresher and more contemporary than ever...one of the most widely imitated movies ever made--the '2001' of costume dramas." The Los Angeles Times preferred to compare the film to Gone With the Wind, adding that "it has battle scenes and a grand climactic ball and some of the most lavish sets and costumes this side of 'La Traviata.'"

With exquisite color photography by Giuseppe Rotunno, richly detailed sets by Mario Garbuglia and Giorgio Pes, and a superb musical score by Nino Rota, The Leopard tells the story of an aristocratic family in Sicily and its reactions to the political upheavals of 1860. As Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, Burt Lancaster portrays a fiercely proud man who understands he has no place in the new Italy. But he still

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can assure his family's future through his nephew Tancredi (Alain Delon). In supporting Tancredi's marriage to Angelica (Claudia Cardinale), the daughter of a graceless but very rich bourgeois, Fabrizio both mortifies his own sense of honor and guarantees his nephew a brilliant career. By the end, Fabrizio finds himself in much the same situation as the off-screen Garibaldi, discarded by the very people he has helped to elevate.

The Museum's screening of The Leopard is presented through the courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox Classics. The Museum's film program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For further information, the public may call (212) 708-9500.

August 1983

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For further PRESS information, please contact Stuart Klawans, Film Press Representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019 (212) 708-9752.

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