

## Document Citation

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**Luna**

(ITALIAN-COLOR)

*Variety* — 9-5-79  
 Venice, Sept. 2.

A 20th Century-Fox release, produced by Fiction Film. Stars Jill Clayburgh. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Script, Giuseppe and Bernardo Bertolucci, Clare Peploe; camera (Eastmancolor), Vittorio Storato; art director, Gianni Silvestri, Maria Paola Maino; editor, Gabriella Cristiani; music excerpts from Giuseppe Verdi. Reviewed at Venice Film Festival, Sept. 2, 1979. Running time: 145 MINS.

Caterina Silveri ..... Jill Clayburgh  
 Joe ..... Matthew Barry  
 Douglas ..... Fred Gwynne  
 Marina ..... Veronica Lazar  
 Communist ..... Renato Salvatori  
 Giuseppe ..... Tomas Milian

"Luna" (Moon) is a spectacle-sized melodrama filled with a variety of themes — plots and subplots that merge asymmetrically into a melodramatic mold. The saga of Jill Clayburgh as Yank lyric star afflicted with professional neuroses, fading pipes, a son on drugs and a close-to-incest mother-son development — falls neatly into the melodramatic world of Verdian opera and the unreal atmosphere behind the wings and off-stage. The film also contains autobiog moments of Bertolucci's life from souvenirs of infancy to latter-day psychoanalysis.

This is Bertolucci's first non-political film, except for a sequence satirizing a Communist in the red belt of North Central Italy on the Parma-Bologna axis. Disengagement of the talented and controversial filmmaker leaves the impression that Bertolucci agreed to give 20th-Fox a better than average commercial vehicle for all markets.

The coupling of Clayburgh with Verdi in an ambience infrequently recreated in narrative fashion on screen, the stunning "Three Coins In the Fountain"-type settings reflecting the changed, now unromantic ways of the Eternal City life and the high tension relationship of mother and son — all seem tied to initial understanding between both parties when project was set.

World premiere at Venice does not really clarify what the Fox pickings will be. The task of sustaining melodramas for almost two and a half hours is only partially achieved. Moments of comedy relief are mainly local. Ambiguous and extraneous scenes (like Franco Citti's homosexual clinch with the young protagonist) or the opening scene after prolog, clarified two hours later.

Sudden death of singer's spouse and decision to resume singing in Italy with son Joe accompanying, moves the scene from Brooklyn Heights to Rome where the mother-son cleft takes over from Verdi appearances. Her battle to break down his detachment and drug habit is the core of the film — with her own career at stake as the voice gives under stress — is not fully resolved until the main in the opening scene is identified as the real father and teenager sets out successfully to reunite the family unit. Emphasis is on the break-up and remending of family ties.

The father (Tomas Milian) willingly reasserts his role (with a slap in the kid's face) and the happy melodramatic finale comes through with vocie over as the singer grimaces back to form.

Clayburgh is hard pressed to sustain the melodramatics of "Luna." At moments she lapses into her own style for best results. Often she seems neutralized midway between America (by nationality) and Europe (by direction) — playing the role with dramatics some-

what alien to her natural talents. Newcomer Matthew Barry as Joe is effectively strident on the road to self-destruction. The youngster is a promising newcomer after his impressive bow in a major role opposite an actress like Clayburgh. The big emotional mother-son scene — one that will create talk and b.o. is over strong, perhaps gamey, but in the meller framework and certainly short of the incest act.

The three male supports — Fred Gwynne as the U.S. father, Renato Salvatori as a Communist up in Parma and especially Milian as the boy's true father — add masculine strength to the cast in support of a tyke in the male lead.

Vittorio Storato has again given Bertolucci a splendid lensing input. Rome, Parma and the Red belt countryside never looked better. Art director team handled the many scene changes with great taste-sometimes leading Bertolucci into detailed insert shots that extend running time.

The editing pace is leisurely in keeping with sounds and stances of opera-melodrama. The scenes and music selections from Verdi are standout.

"Luna" is a big commercial entry. It provides entertainment and happy ending catharsis for teenagers and parents. Seeing the Bertolucci film together might help economize on analysis.—*Werb.*