

## Document Citation

Title	<b>[Ludwig]</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>The Listener</i>
Date	1978 Oct 19
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Ludwig, Visconti, Luchino, 1972

Visconti made *Ludwig* (Screen on the Hill) in 1972 and this is a much shortened version of it. In some respects, this can only be a relief, for despite much championing by those who have seen all nearly four hours of it, no amount of extensive elucidation seems to be likely to rescue the individual episodes from an indulgent and tedious slackness of pace, and an empty-hearted coldness of feeling. It is all mad décor and mad eyes; the sumptuousness of the design is matched by the sumptuousness of the performance by Helmut Berger as the mad king, once 'the most handsome in Europe'. But some sort of intellectual speculation could have been inserted as a spine to the enterprise: viz., was



*Helmut Berger as Ludwig: 'a sumptuous performance'*

Ludwig's madness a legitimate and sane response to the conventional madness of warfare and territorial struggle? Was his eccentric artistic frenzy not mere kitsch, but a kind of cry for attention in a world that was increasingly given to conformity because it cost less in time, money and effort? What was his significance as the last benignly despotic monarch? Well, make up your own high- or lowbrow, and write on one side of the paper only. The film barely lifts an eyebrow in any direction except, implicitly, the loins, from which it keeps its gaze, at the same time, tastefully averted.

It has not the drive, sensuality, shape nor visual excitement of *L'Innocente*, almost Visconti's last film, and we can only be glad that this was a mediocre lapse and not evidence of a terminal decline. Romy Schneider alone emerges unscathed among the performers, not excluding a shaggy and shambling Trevor Howard who had come as Richard Wagner.