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— Italy —

LA TERRA, TREMA

1948

162 min.

Rental: D

Directed and written by Luchino Visconti; produced by Salvo d'Angelo; photography by G. R. Aldo; music by Willy Ferrero. Sicilian dialog with English subtitles.

LA TERRA TREMA, award-winner at the Venice Film Festival, was Luchino Visconti's second film. It is a monumental work, filled with elements of romantic lyricism and harsh realism.

Visconti used non-professional actors — fishermen and workers from the Sicilian village of Acitrezza — to tell his story of men trying to free themselves from the poverty enforced upon them by exploitative businessmen. The fishermen receive extremely poor pay for their catch from the wholesalers who own their boats. The Valastro family, led by the impassioned young 'Ntoni, attempt to escape this oppression. In a climactic scene, 'Ntoni leads the workers in seizing the wholesalers' scales, symbols of the capitalists' injustice, and hurling them into the sea.

In his epic portrayal of the village and its daily routines, Visconti employs a grand, romantic style similar to that of *SENSO* and the many operas which Visconti has directed. In his intimate portrayal of the humbled and sorely abused villagers, however, the director has created a work that compares favorably with the finest neo-realist works (including his own *ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS*). The film was badly re-cut and dubbed by the producers (fearing that most Italians could not understand the villagers' Sicilian dialect) for its initial theatrical release. The version distributed by Audio/Brandon is Visconti's original, uncut film.

"Visconti's vision of man and society is so full and impressive and so beautifully proportioned that whether one accepts it or is convinced by it or not, it achieves a classic splendor. LA TERRA TREMA is epic neo-realism . . . a major achievement."

—Pauline Kael



La Terra Trema



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