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SENSO**1954****125 min. Color****Rental: E**

Directed by Luchino Visconti; screenplay by Visconti and Suso Cecchi D'Amico, based on a novella by Camillo Boito; photography by G. R. Aldo and Robert Krasker; music from Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. With Alida Valli, Farley Granger, Massimo Girotti, Christian Marquand. Italian dialog with English subtitles.

In its meticulous attention to historical detail and incisive portrayal of human passions, **SENSO** demonstrates the outstanding qualities which distinguish the work of Luchino Visconti (**ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS**, **THE DAMNED**, **DEATH IN VENICE**). Considered extremely controversial at the time of its release, the film was condemned by Italian censors, recut by the producers, and violently attacked by press and public following its premiere at the Venice Film Festival. Until now, the film has been seen in the U.S. only in a condensed, English-dubbed version entitled **THE WANTON COUNTESS**. The version distributed by Audio/Brandon has been subtitled from the complete Italian version as shown at Venice.

The film is set in Venice in 1866, during the Austrian occupation and the Italian War of Independence. The Countess Serpieri (Alida Valli) represents the decayed state of Venetian aristocracy at the time. She falls in love with Lieutenant Mahler (Farley Granger), a cynical young Austrian who has been corrupted by the easy living of the occupation garrison. When the Countess is betrayed by her lover, she goes insane; and Mahler is eventually executed as a deserter. The Marquis Ussoni (Massimo Girotti) provides the most optimistic note of the film; he is an upper-class patriot, willing to assume the leadership of the ascending lower classes.

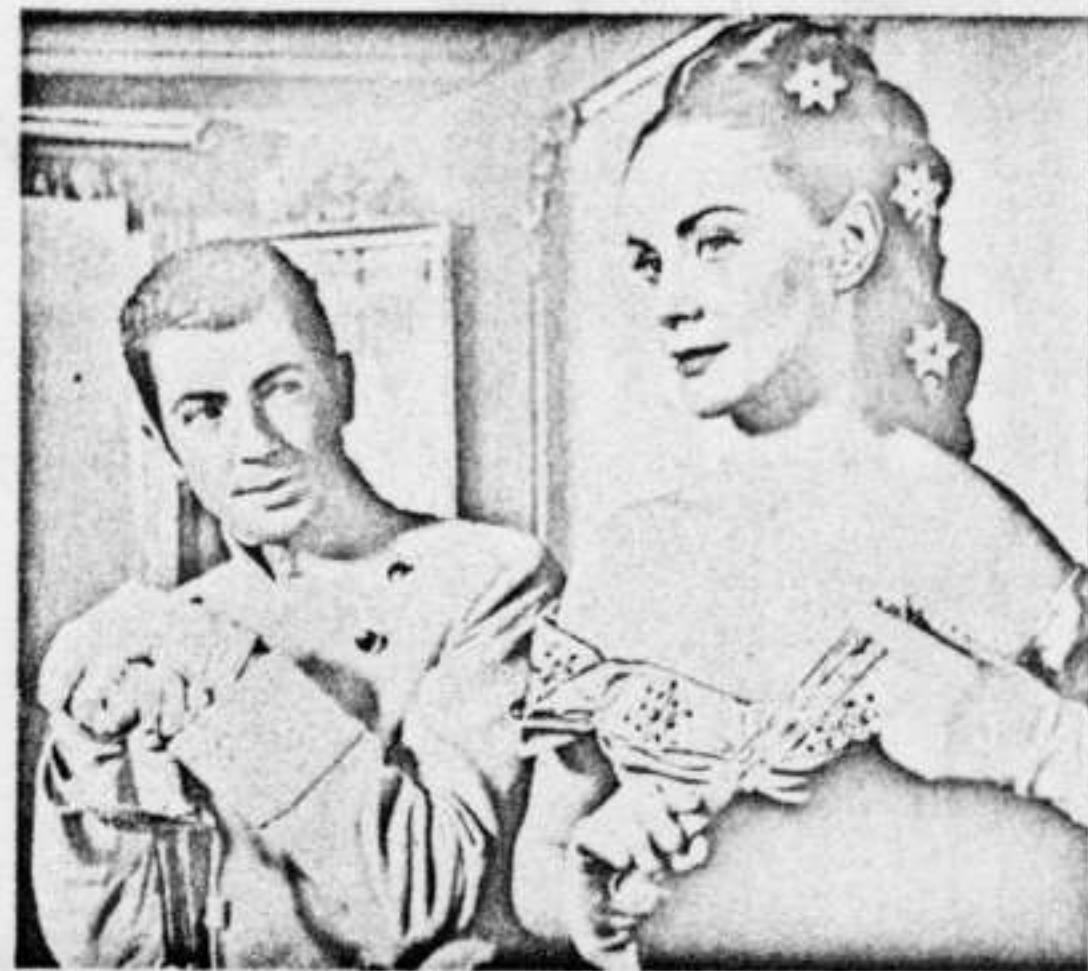
SENSO was the first Italian film to center around a major Italian military defeat (the Battle of Custoza), a fact which resulted in the film's bitter controversy. The unusual color photography has also been widely discussed.

"Visconti's masterpiece . . . probably the finest color film in the history of the cinema. . . . Visconti brings to the film a sense of innate drama that resounds in the accompanying strains of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony . . . all the majestic rhythm and the meticulous design of Grand Opera. . . ."

—Peter Cowie, *Seventy Years of Cinema*

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