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CENTO CEDAR CINEMA

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PRESS RELEASE

Beginning Thursday, January 6th, we are having a special return engagement of one of the most popular films ever presented at the Cento Cedar; the 1965 Polish classic "THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT", directed by Wojciech Has and starring Zbigniew Cybulski. The film has not been seen in the Bay Area for over five years. Since there will be no advance press screening of the film, passes may be obtained by calling the office number above. They may be used anytime during the engagement.

CREDITS

Directed by ----- Wojciech J. Has
Screenplay by ----- Tadeusz Kwiatkowski
Source (From the Novel by) ----- Jan Potocki
Release Date ----- 1965, Poland
Running Time ----- 150 minutes, In Cinemascope

CAST

Alfons van Worden ----- Zbigniew Cybulski
Moorish Princess ----- Iga Cembrzynska
Moorish Princess ----- Joanna Jedryka
Hermit ----- Kazimierz Opalinski
Van Worden's father ----- Slawomir Linder
Van Worden's mother ----- Mirosława Lombardo
Spanish Novleman ----- Aleksander Fogiel
A man possessed by devils ----- Franciszek Pieczka
His father ----- Ludwik Benoit
Camilla, his foster mother ----- Barbara Krafft
Inezilla, her sister ----- Pola Raksa
Envoy of the Holy Inquisition ----- August Kowalczyk
Magician ----- Adam Pawlikowski
His Sister ----- Beata Tyszkiewicz
Don Pedro Velasquez, mathematician ----- Gustaw Holoubek
Don Avadoro, Chief of Gypsies ----- Leon Niemczek
Don Lopez Soares ----- Krzysztof Litwin
Frasquetta, a coquette ----- Elzbieta Czyzewska
Her Husband ----- Janusz Klosinski
Count Pena Flor ----- Jan Machulski

BACKGROUND

Based on a 19th century Polish romance, THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT is undoubtedly one of the most unusual films of all times. Its labyrinthine structure of overlapping stories within stories made it an immediate underground classic when it appeared at the San Francisco Film Festival in 1965. It stars the late Zbigniew Cybulski, himself something of a cult figure, and was produced by the prestigious "Kamera" Film Unit, whose other successes include Roman Polanski's KNIFE IN THE WATER.

SYNOPSIS

During a siege of the city of Saragossa, a manuscript is found telling the story of Captain Alfons van Worden's adventures while travelling to Madrid under orders from the King of Spain. The young captain (Zbigniew Cybulski) stops at what seems to be a deserted inn in the Sierra Morena mountains and is invited by a scantily clad lady

in waiting to dine with two Moorish princesses (Iga Cembrzynska and Joanna Jedryka). Over dinner the princesses inform van Worden that he is a member of their illustrious family. They tell him that he will soon embark on a great mission, but first he must prove his honesty and bravery. But when he awakes in the morning, he is lying at the foot of a gallows. Meeting an old hermit (Kazimierz Opalinski), he tells a story about a man whose father once awoke to find himself lying at the foot of a gallows. The next day van Worden again awakes at the foot of the gallows. This time he is greeted by a cabalist (Adam Pawlikowski) who invites him to accompany him to Madrid. On the way the pair are joined by a mathematician (Gustaw Holoubek) and the three soon arrive at the castle of a gypsy king (Leon Niemczek). The king tells several stories, all of which relate obliquely to van Worden's situation, which has evolved to the point that he finds that his soul is the prize in the competition between the cabalist and the mathematician.

After leaving the castle amid further bizarre experiences (and, of course, more stories) van Worden unexpectedly finds himself at the deserted inn. When a sheik presents himself and confesses to having disguised himself as a hermit to test him, van Worden leaves immediately. Arriving at another inn, van Worden is informed that two Moorish princesses wish his company at dinner. He breaks out into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

Director WOJCIECH J. HAS

Has brought to THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT a rich background of experience in bridging the gap between literature and film. One of the most accomplished Eastern European directors of the past decade, he previously set himself the task of bringing such complex and distinctly literary works as Stanislaw Dygat's FAREWELLS (1958) and Kazimierz Brandys' HOW TO BE LOVED (1962) to the screen. Has' love for the romantic and surreal made it nearly inevitable that he would some day come to grips with the bizarre world of Jan Potecki's SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT.

Author JAN POTECKI

Jan Potecki was born into an aristocratic Polish family in 1761. Sent to study in Switzerland, he soon developed a taste for travel that took him to Italy, North Africa, and the Near East. Returning to Poland briefly in 1788, he made a pioneering balloon ascension and then left again for Western Europe. In 1792 he returned to Poland again to serve as a Captain of Engineers in the defense against Germany and Russia. As a historian and archaeologist, he became confidential advisor to the Russian Tsar Alexander I and took part in an unsuccessful expedition to China. In 1814 he drew upon his vast knowledge of the world of the Age of Enlightenment to create THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT, apparently to amuse his bedridden wife. Potecki took his own life in 1815.

Actor ZBIGNIEW CYBULSKI

Cybulski first established his reputation in Andrzej Wajda's *ASHES AND DIAMONDS* (1958) in which he played the melancholy and alienated Maciek. He immediately won international acclaim for that role: *Time Magazine* called him "the Polish James Dean". Subsequently he appeared in Has' *HOW TO BE LOVED* and in the Swedish production *TO LOVE* with Harriet Andersson. His naive, Candide-like role in *THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT* is something of a departure from his earlier roles, and his success as Captain van Worden is a tribute to his versatility as an actor. Tragically, *THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT* was Cybulski's last film - he was killed in a train accident in 1967.

