



**SIGHT AND SOUND GREATEST FILMS OF ALL TIME 2022: 90=**

# The Leopard (Il gattopardo)

Against a 19th-century backdrop of radical Italian Nationalism, Visconti's masterful epic recreates a tumultuous period when the aristocracy lost its grip and the middle classes rose up to form a unified, democratic Italy.

Spearheaded by towering performances from Lancaster, Delon and Cardinale, the film, awarded the Palme d'Or at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival, is a truly cinematic translation of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's landmark novel.

**Jason Wood, [bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)**

In an interview with the Communist critic Antonello Trombadori, Visconti admits to sharing Tomasi di Lampedusa's (and, by extension, Don Fabrizio Salina's) pessimism about the socio-political consequences of the Risorgimento and the 'dream' of a unified Italy. But while the Prince of Salina's pessimism is full of regret and longing for the past (and for the memory of the 'corporate' past of his class), Visconti claims that his (that is our) pessimism is 'charged with the will to envisage an alternative to the rule of the Bourbons over a certain period of time.' It's an unexpectedly thin line for a devoted radical like Visconti, one that almost disappears when he concludes: 'In the end I have to agree with the definition of the Risorgimento as a failed, or rather "betrayed", revolution. This is clearly expressed in the novel by Don Ciccio and the Prince as they discuss the outcome of the plebiscite.'

One of the most interesting aspects of the making of *Il gattopardo* is the extent to which Visconti and his collaborators were able to reconstruct the most lavishly convincing ambience around a class and an ideology on its way to extinction. The measures taken to rebuild interiors and exteriors reveal an unstinting attention to detail, and a loving sensitivity towards a world brashly elbowed aside by the political concretisation of populist idealism. Visconti's distinctive mixture of elegant nostalgia and Marxist determinism is perfectly served through Lampedusa's original. Although, judging by the success of the film's re-release, what still 'sells' is a strong desire for the former (and who could argue with the fact that they don't make films like that any more?) and mere passing tolerance for the latter, paradoxically so much 'toned down' (as Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has pointed out, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1983) in the fuller version made available by 20th Century Fox.

It is worth taking stock of the enormous production effort involved in this complex operation. In spite of the eight months of pre-production work and the initially comfortable level of the budget, the production of *Il gattopardo* reads like a chronicle of 'miracles' of ingenuity and of obsessive dedication within a relatively restricted period of time. In May 1962, according to Tommaso Cima, the producer Goffredo Lombardo had on his payroll 200 members of the crew *plus* 20 electricians, 150 bricklayers and carpenters, 120 make-up, hairdressing and costume personnel, not to mention 15 florists and 25 cooks for the ball sequences, and the 250 extras employed for both ball and battle. The dilapidated state of the original villas and quarters where

the action is set in the novel forced the designers to adapt completely different locations (the villa di San Lorenzo, still referred to as such in the film, is in fact the villa di Boscogrande), and to reconstruct brick by brick an entire Palermitan square and *then* add the appropriate debris and damage that could be identified from a variety of photographic sources.

The film was shot in Sicily except for the interiors of the palace of Donnafugata (reconstructed inside palazzo Chigi in Ariccia near Rome), and the search for adequate props involved, among many other things, the commissioning of a full-scale copy of a painting held in the Louvre ('Death of the Good Man' by Greuze, which Don Fabrizio contemplates during the ball) and the restoration of many other art objects (including furniture, frescoes and carriages), as well as flying one hundred red roses daily from Rome. But the real problems (and the willingness to court them for the sake of the central 'vision') arose during the 36 days it took to film the ball sequence (which in this version lasts for just over a third of the whole film). Not satisfied with getting the costumes and the interiors 'right', Visconti and his collaborators went to great lengths to secure the services of the descendants of the Sicilian noble families to play their rough counterparts at the ball, and to commission the waiters' union to provide the most experienced army of retainers to look after them.

Tommaso Cima's account of the rivalries and bickerings between the various representatives of the Sicilian aristocracy, the innumerable fainting spells due to the costumes and the heat (even if shooting was at night), the breakages and general chaos adds up to one of the most revealing tales of production 'nightmares' of all time (capped by his description of how the 14 rooms in which the ball took place were all prepared and lit simultaneously to allow for maximum flexibility in the schedule). The outcome of all this, beyond the supreme achievement of a truly memorable *coup de cinéma*, is that Visconti for 36 days had to all intents and purposes fully restored the world which the film ostensibly consigns to historical oblivion.

Sets, characters and conversations were planned to come together in the most natural way possible, with the camera free to wander and pick out the most invisible of threads. Set-pieces such as the dance relied on spontaneity and maximum freedom of action, in spite of the cost and complications involved. From this point of view, Salina's vision of the brave new world that is Cavour's Italy in the making acquires an apocalyptic force, and he (with us) feels totally justified in wanting no part of it. The resurrection of the collective memory of the noble families becomes much more than the other side of the new Italian coin, and the relevant passages in both novel and film, far from being a funeral oration, are passionate celebrations of that world. Ultimately, the maxim 'everything must change so that all can remain the same' – a cynicism that is so much part of a typically Italian perception across all walks of life – is a form of nostalgic relief rather than a condemnation or a hope that it will not be like that.

**Don Ranvaud, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, December 1983**

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## THE LEOPARD (IL GATTOPARDO)

*Director:* Luchino Visconti

*Production Companies:* Titanus, Société Nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma (Paris), Société Générale Cinématographique

*Executive Producer:* Pietro Notarianni

*Producer:* Goffredo Lombardo

*Production Supervisors:* Roberto Cocco, Riccardo Caneva, Gilberto Scarpellini, Gaetano Amata, Bruno Sassaroli

*Production Managers:* Enzo Provenzale, Giorgio Adriani

*Production Secretaries:* Umberto Sambuco, Lamberto Pippia

*Assistant Directors:* Rinaldo Ricci, Albino Cocco, Francesco Massaro, Brad Fuller

*Script Supervisor:* Stephan Iscovescu

*Screenplay and Adaptation by:* Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Pasquale Festa Campanile, Enrico Medioli, Massimo Franciosa, Luchino Visconti

*Based on the novel by:* Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

*Director of Photography:* Giuseppe Rotunno

*Camera Operators:* Nino Cristiani, Enrico Cignitti, Giuseppe Maccari

*Stills Photography:* G.B. Poletto

*Editor:* Mario Serandrei

*Art Director:* Mario Garbuglia

*Assistant Art Director:* Ferdinando Giovannoni

*Set Decorators:* Giorgio Pes, Laudomia Hercolani

*Assistant Set Decorator:* Emilio D'Andria

*Costumes:* Piero Tosi

*Costume Assistants:* Vera Marzot, Bice Brichetto

*Make-up:* Alberto De Rossi

*Make-up for Mr Lancaster:* Robert J. Schiffer \*

*Hairstyles:* Maria Angelini, Amalia Paoletti

*Music:* Nino Rota

*Unpublished Waltz Extract:* Giuseppe Verdi

*Music performed by:*

Orchestra Sinfonica di Santa Cecilia

*Music Director:* Franco Ferrara

*Sound Engineer:* Mario Messina

*Uniforms Consultant:* Alessandro Gasparinetti

*Dialogue Director:* Archibald Colquhoun

Rina Morelli (*Princess Maria Stella*)

Romolo Valli (*Father Pirrone*)

Mario Girotti (*Count Cavriaghi*)

Pierre Clémenti (*Francesco Paolo*)

Lucilla Morlacchi (*Concetta*)

Giuliano Gemma (*the Garibaldino general*)

Ida Galli (*Carolina*)

Ottavia Piccolo (*Caterina*)

Carlo Valenzano (*Paolo*)

Brook Fuller (*little prince*)

Anna Maria Bottini (*Mademoiselle Dombreuil*)

Lola Braccini (*Donna Margherita*)

Tina Lattanzi

Marino Masè (*tutor*)

Marcella Rovena

Howard N. Rubien (*Don Diego*)

Rina de Liguoro (*Princess of Presicce*)

Valerio Ruggeri

Olimpia Cavalli (*Mariannina*)

Giovanni Mesendi (*Father Onofrio Rotolo*)

Anna Maria Surdo

Carlo Lolli

Alina Zalewska

Franco Gulà

Winni Riva

Vittorio Duse

Stelvio Rosi

Vanni Materassi

Carlo Palmucci

Giuseppe Stagnitti

Dante Posani

Carmelo Artale

Rosolino Bua

Ivo Garrani (*Colonel Pallavicino*)

Leslie French (*Chevalley*)

Serge Reggiani (*Don Ciccio Tumeo*)

Sandra Chistolini (*youngest daughter*) \*

Lou Castel \*

Italy/France 1963

188 mins

\* Uncredited

## Cast

Burt Lancaster (*Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina*)

Claudia Cardinale (*Angelica Sedara*)

Alain Delon (*Tancredi*)

Paolo Stoppa (*Don Calogero Sedara, the mayor*)

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## SIGHT AND SOUND GREATEST FILMS OF ALL TIME 2022

**The General** Sun 1 Jan 12:10; Sun 29 Jan 15:10

**The Leopard (Il gattopardo)** Sun 1 Jan 14:10; Thu 5 Jan 18:40; Fri 20 Jan 14:00

**Sunset Boulevard** Sun 1 Jan 15:50; Fri 27 Jan 14:30; Mon 30 Jan 17:50

**Metropolis** Sun 1 Jan 17:55 (+ intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI Curator); Sun 15 Jan 14:40; Mon 30 Jan 16:30 BFI IMAX

**L'avventura (The Adventure)** Sun 1 Jan 18:05; Sun 22 Jan 15:20; Mon 30 Jan 20:15

**Touki-Bouki** Mon 2 Jan 13:40; Tue 31 Jan 17:40

**The Red Shoes** Mon 2 Jan 13:50; Tue 24 Jan 18:05

**Once Upon a Time in the West (C'era una volta il West)**

Mon 2 Jan 15:20; Sat 7 Jan 17:15; Sun 15 Jan 16:15 BFI IMAX

**Get Out** Mon 2 Jan 18:40; Fri 6 Jan 17:50

**Pierrot le Fou** Tue 3 Jan 18:10; Wed 4 Jan 20:30; Thu 19 Jan 20:30

**My Neighbour Totoro (Tonari no Totoro)**

Tue 3 Jan 18:20; Sun 22 Jan 10:00 BFI IMAX; Sat 28 Jan 13:40

**A Man Escaped (Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé)**

Tue 3 Jan 18:30; Sat 28 Jan 20:30

**Black Girl (La Noire de...)** Tue 3 Jan 20:30; Thu 12 Jan 18:15 (+ intro)

**Ugetsu Monogatari** Tue 3 Jan 20:50; Tue 17 Jan 20:30

**Madame de...** Wed 4 Jan 14:30; Fri 20 Jan 18:10 (+ intro by Ruby McGuigan, Cultural Programme Manager)

**Yi Yi (A One and a Two...)** Wed 4 Jan 18:40; Sun 22 Jan 14:00 (+ intro by Hyun Jin Cho, Film Programmer, BFI Festivals)

**The Shining** Fri 6 Jan 20:10; Tue 10 Jan 20:10; Sat 21 Jan 20:30 BFI IMAX

**Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi)**

Sat 7 Jan 12:10; Sun 22 Jan 12:30 BFI IMAX

**Tropical Malady (Sud pralad)** Sat 7 Jan 13:50; Mon 9 Jan 20:40

**Histoire(s) du cinema** Sat 7 Jan 16:30

**Blue Velvet** Sat 7 Jan 20:30; Fri 20 Jan 20:35; Tue 24 Jan 21:00 BFI IMAX

**Sátántangó** Sun 8 Jan 11:15; Sat 21 Jan 13:30

**Celine and Julie Go Boating (Céline et Julie vont en bateau)**

Sun 8 Jan 14:45; Sat 21 Jan 17:00

**Journey to Italy (Viaggio in Italia)** Sun 8 Jan 18:20; Mon 23 Jan 14:30; Fri 27 Jan 20:50

**Parasite (Gisaengchung)** sMon 9 Jan 17:50; Wed 18 Jan 17:30 BFI IMAX

**The Gleaners and I (Les glaneurs et la glaneuse) + La Jetée**

Wed 11 Jan 20:30; Mon 23 Jan 18:10

**A Matter of Life and Death** Thu 12 Jan 20:40; Sun 22 Jan 11:30

**Chungking Express (Chung Him sam lam)**

Thu 12 Jan 20:45; Tue 17 Jan 20:50; Sat 21 Jan 14:15

**Modern Times** Fri 13 Jan 17:45; Sun 22 Jan 13:10

**A Brighter Summer Day (Guling jie shaonian sha ren shijian)**

Mon 16 Jan 18:30; Sat 28 Jan 16:00

**Imitation of Life** Wed 18 Jan 20:30; Wed 25 Jan 14:30; Sun 29 Jan 12:30

**The Spirit of the Beehive (El espíritu de la colmena)**

Thu 19 Jan 18:00; Sat 28 Jan 13:50

**Sansho the Bailiff (Sansho Dayu)** Fri 20 Jan 17:45; Thu 26 Jan 17:50

**Andrei Rublev** Thu 26 Jan 18:40; Sun 29 Jan 17:20

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