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Private Lesson, The

Written by: [Michael Den Boer](#) on December 17th, 2009



Theatrical Release Date: Italy, 1975

Director: Vittorio De Sisti

Writers: Paolo Brigenti, Vittorio De Sisti

Cast: Carroll Baker, Rosalino Cellamare, Leonora Fani, Carlo Giuffrè, Leopoldo Trieste, Renzo Montagnani, Femi Benussi, Constantina Petkova, Rossano Jarenti, Luisa Maneri, Riccardo Mangano, Emilio Locurcio

DVD released: October 20th, 2009

Approximate running time: 87 minutes

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1 Anamorphic Widescreen

Rating: NR

Sound: Dolby Digital Mono English, Dolby Digital Mono Italian

Subtitles: N/A

DVD Release: Sinful Mermaid

Region Coding: Region 0 NTSC

Retail Price: \$24.95



Synopsis: A young pianist becomes infatuated with the new music teacher.

The star and main attraction of *The Private Lesson* is Carroll Baker who is cast in the role of Laura Formenti a sexual repressed school teacher. After a highly successful run in Hollywood appearing in films like *Giant*, *Baby Doll*, *How the West Was Won* and *Harlow*, Carroll Baker would go onto to be one of the more in demand American Actresses working in Italian cinema in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Some of her most notable films from this era include *The Sweet Body of Deborah*, *Baba Yaga* and a handful of films with director Umberto Lenzi, *Paranoia*, *So Sweet... So Perverse*, *A Quiet Place to Kill* and *Knife of Ice*. *The Private Lesson* like many of the Italian films which she appeared in

centered on her sex appeal. Her presence in *The Private Lesson* is this film's greatest asset as she dominates very moment she is in. In comparison the rest of the cast are adequate at best with the only other performance of note being Femi Benussi (*Strip Nude for Your Killer*), who is cast in the role of a sexy voluptuous maid.

The Private Lesson was co-written by Vittorio De Sisti (*Sex Advice*). The screenplay for *The Private Lesson* was co-written by Paolo Brigenti (*Shock*). Italian cinema often finds inspiration from what is currently popular in other parts of the world. While watching *The*

Private Lesson I noticed a handful of moments that bear a striking similarity to Choderlos de Laclos's novel "*Les liaisons dangereuses*". Wither or not *The Private Lesson* was inspired by "*Les liaisons dangereuses*" is debatable since the film does not acknowledge any such influence in its credits.

One area where this film does excel is its score which was composed by Franco Micalizzi, whose other notable scores include [Beyond the Door](#), [Syndicate Sadists](#), [Laure](#), [Assault with a Deadly Weapon](#), [Violent Naples](#) and [The Cynic, the Rat & the Fist](#). Plot wise the film starts off as your standard coming of age story then things start to get interesting once one of Laura Formenti's students blackmails her. Even with the blackmail angle giving the plot a much needed shot in the arm, it is still not enough as the plot raps itself up predictably.

The DVD:

The Private Lesson is presented in an anamorphic widescreen that preserves the film's original aspect ratio. This transfer has not been flagged for progressive playback. There is some mild ghosting / blurring. Colors, flesh tones, and black levels fare well throughout. The image looks generally crisp and the source used for this transfer is in very good shape.

This release comes with two audio options, a Dolby Digital mono mix in English and a Dolby Digital mono mix in Italian. Even though an Italian audio mix has been included, no English subtitles have been provided for this audio mix. The stronger of the two audio mixes is the Italian language track which sounds clearer, less distorted and fuller than the English language track which also has background which varies in degree throughout.



Extras for this release are limited to an image gallery which has music from the film playing in the background. Overall *The Private Lesson* gets a serviceable release that would have benefited from a progressive flagged transfer and the inclusion of English subtitles with the Italian language track.

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