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Le Amiche

The Girlfriends

ITALY 1955, 104 min.

DIR Michelangelo Antonioni

PROD Giovanni Addessi **SCR** Suso Cecchi d'Amico, Alba de Cespedes, Antonioni, from the novella by Cesare Pavese **CAM** Gianni di Venanzo

ED Eraldo da Roma **CAST** Eleanora Rossi Drago, Valentina Cortese, Yvonne Furneaux, Madeleine Fischer, Annamaria Pancani

SUSO CECCHI D'AMICO TRIBUTE

See article on page 27.

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In long, slow sinuous shots, director Michelangelo Antonioni follows a group of five women as they cycle through empty days and ephemeral affairs. Clelia (Eleanora Rossi Drago), returning from Rome to her hometown as a newcomer to Turin's fashion scene, is befriended by four more affluent women, but her existence continues to be one of an outsider in their world. It's a plot device that puts Antonioni into his best observation mode. Unusual in allowing an ensemble to carry the emotional weight, **Le Amiche** investigates personal relationships with a heightened sense of physical and emotional isolation. In a bravura scene on the beach, the camera slips around the women as they wander through an empty, monochromatic world. With its shifting points of view and constantly moving camera, this is a distinctly modernist approach to narrative. It is, said Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, "an attempt to substitute for cinema-as-spectacle a cinema of behavior and interiority." When events in the group lead to heartbreak and suicide, Clelia returns to Rome. A circle is closed. But so convincing is the world of these women that their fragmented and desolate search for connection seems doomed to continue beyond the final credits.