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## La Citta' Delle Donne (City of Women) (ITALIAN-FRENCH-COLOR)

Rome, March 27.

A Gaumont release produced by Renzo Rossellini for Opera Film-Gaumont S.A. Stars Marcello Mastroianni, Anna Prucnal, Bernice Stegers, Donatella Damiani Iole Silvani, Ettore Manni. Directed by Federico Fellini. Screenplay, Federico Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, with collaboration of Brunello Rondi; camera (Eastman) Giuseppe Rotunno; art director, Dante Ferretti; editor, Ruggero Mastroianni; music, Luis Bacalov; costumes Gabriella Pescucci. Reviewed at Foni Roma, Roma, March 27, 1980. Running time: 140 MINS.

Snaporaz ..... Marcello Mastroianni  
Wife ..... Anna Prucnal  
Lady On Train ..... Bernice Steger  
Ingenua ..... Donatella Damiani  
Motorcyclist ..... Iole Silvani  
Dr. Katzone ..... Ettore Manni

Federico Fellini's psychadelic trip into the bowels of womanhood is another visual tour-de-force in an elaborate dream framework — narrative-thin, overlength and finally, overweight. "City Of Women" will rally Fellini fans and Marcello Mastroianni fans at home and abroad though a problematic entry for general U.S. marketing beyond the foreign pic circuits — depending on size of Gaumont investment in promotion and launch.

With Mastroianni as his bait and Ettore Manni as Mastroianni's alter ego, Fellini tries to cover all terrain on the subject of woman today — from fringe feminists to generic husband-wife ruptures. Filtering through Fellini's surreal probe is the filmmaker's vision of man as a legendary hunter of the opposite sex. By instinct, human nature or whatever, man is sexually aggressive and woman his prey.

Today, however, the legendary hunt has become mobile warfare between the sexes as outraged womanhood bands together in countless sects and cults, all pyramiding into a power movement for liberation or outright assault.

In the big early episode showing Mastroianni trapped at a feminist convention, the filmmaker not only illustrates the countless attitudes within the pyramid movement — too many and too long — but accents the threatened male faced with ominous challenge to his historic sport as a conquistador and his irrepressible dream to become the perfect macho.

Equally overlong is a subsequent segment dealing with pot-happy, rock-happy female adolescents — a subculture threat to Mastroianni as emblem of the male species. Katzone (Ettore Manni) offers refuge in a villa, constructed inch by inch for sexual pleasure. Fellini takes us slowly down the mausoleum corridor — filled with midnight sounds of ecstatic orgasms once seconded by Mastroianni's host. Lengthy sequence, highlighted by a revel to celebrate Katzone's 10,000th conquest, ends with an eruption by female militia to tear the big deed and big dream apart.

After a brief reunion with his estranged wife (Anna Prucnal), to recap past disenchantment, Fellini sends Mastroianni down the steepest bend on a spectacular loop-the-loop in easy stages as both go back in time to childhood and juve recollections of the road to puberty and beyond.

At the end of the ride is a trap door to Mastroianni's trial before a feminist tribunal — giving him one more futile chance at the ingenue turning up at odd moments in the film. Futile, as he is shot down by a sweet young terrorist. Final fall is the bad dream's end but abrupt return to finale normalcy. Fellini predicts, will only be a realistic repeat of the dream cycle.

Perhaps the weakness of Fel-

lini's latest film is his failure to integrate theme and spectacle. "City of Women" is highly spectacular though some of the fantasy is stamped with motifs original in his previous pix. The theme of women's lib has been chewed and rechewed at such length in the past decade that all of Fellini's noncommittal situations and discussion related to it do not seem to engender a bond between screen and spectator.

Tempered editorially to around two hours, (from 140 mins.) "City of Women" could eliminate weighty lags and favor both spectacle and the assortment of down to earth erotica to strengthen appeal for the average as well as the discriminate filmgoer.

Editing would also heighten the impact of the technically creative contribution by lenser Giuseppe Rotunno, production designer Dante Ferretti and costume designer Gabriella Pescucci. Luis Bacalov, who replaced the late Nino Rota at the start of production, composed the score only partially in his own vein and generally followed the Rota pattern Fellini wanted — though the dream structure of "City" offered far greater opportunities for Bacalov's talent.

Mastroianni plays himself from beginning to end and the impersonation is almost flawless — perhaps too much of a good thing in sequences running past the appointed splice. The late Ettore Manni (he died midway through production) proved he was good casting as champ fornicator of all times. Fellini's choice of Bernice Stegers as a feminist with bitter memories and an unflinching program, is a happy one. So is his nod to Anna Prucnal, the spirited Polish actress playing Mastroianni's ex-wife who wanted only communion and a fulfilling relationship.

"City of Women" is Fellini at his best, but also Fellini satisfying all his whims — some excessive or pointless. A long, static medium closeup of a big nude backside looked like a Fellini travesty of Lina Wertmuller imitating Fellini. Overall, his creative input is admirable. Refashioning it with appropriate discards and tightened sequences could make a big difference in foreign markets. —Werb.