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## **Bellissima (ITALIAN)**

Genoa, April 1.

Cel-Incom release of Bellissima production. Stars Anna Magnani and Walter Chiari. Directed by Luchino Visconti. Screenplay, Visconti, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Francesco Rosi; from story by Cesare Zavattini; camera, Piero Portalupi; editor, Mario Serandei; music, Franco Mannino. Previewed in Genoa. Running time, 130 MINS.

Maddalena Cecconi.....Anna Magnani  
Alberto Annovazzi.....Walter Chiari  
Maria Cecconi.....Tina Apicella  
Spartaco Cecconi.....Gastone Renzelli  
Photographer.....Arturo Bragaglia  
Alessandro Blasetti.....Himself

A good entry for the sureseater trade, with the Anna Magnani name and film's behind-the-scenes look at Italian film-making as drawing cards. Although having a slight plot, film gets top-drawer handling in production, thesping and direction. Miss Magnani has rarely been better. Word-of-mouth should help this but some pruning would help.

Story was suggested to writer Cesare Zavattini (Miracle in Milan) during the casting of recent Italian films. In telling about the attempts by a Rome worker's wife to get her little girl a film role, it launches some sharp barbs at the Roman film milieu. A screen test is final-

ly engineered via bribes, after the unknowing child has been coached, primped, and "beautified."

In one of the cruelest scenes ever filmed, mother and child secretly watch a screening of the test, in which all present double with laughter at the girl's ugliness and ineptitude. The mother interrupts the show and tells them off, leaves with her dream shattered, dragging the girl along. Though the studio later decides to hire the child for another role, the mother refuses to sign and returns to a normal life with her husband.

Magnani runs the thespian gamut in this one, in her colorful portrayal of the mother's role, with splendid support from comedian Walter Chiari. Latter here plays a straight part as a likeable studio profiteer. The scene in which he tries and fails to seduce her on an excursion is one of pic's highlights. Remainder of colorful cast of professionals and no pros is given a perfect blending under Luchino Visconti's sensitive direction.

The lighter-veined first half, more diffuse in embroidering on the simple story outline, gets film off to slowish start. Photography is superb throughout, with other credits measuring up. Production was shot in direct sound takes, an Italian rarity and resulting realism and depth are outstanding. Hawk.