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Woyzeck
(WEST GERMAN-COLOR)

Cannes, May 15.

Gaumont release of Werner Herzog-Munich-ZDF production. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Werner Herzog from the play by Georg Buchner. Camera (Eastmancolor), Jorg Schmidt-Reitwein; editor, Beate Mahka-Jellinghaus. Reviewed at Cannes Film Fest (Competing), May 14, '79. Running time: **82 MINS.**

Cast: Klaus Kinski, Eve Mattes, Wolfgang Reichman, Willy Semmerlbrogge, Josef Bierbichler, Paul Burian.

Werner Herzog seems to be getting as prolific as his fellow countryman director Rainer Werner Fassbinder. He made this one back to back with "Nosferatu." However, "Woyzeck" shows him in more sanguine form than with the bloodless vampire tale.

Based on Georg Buchner's mid-19th century play about a lowly man, the lowest of the low, an orderly in the German Army, film is given a probing, chilling force by Klaus Kinski's tense, desperate playing and Herzog's relentless direction.

Kinski is the orderly Woyzeck who is first seen being worked to exhaustion by an officer. Kinski is forever running fast, seen shaving a wouldbe benign officer too quickly. The latter insists Kinski is a good man and knows his place as Kinski, in a difficult, inarticulate way, tries to show himself as a natural

man who has had a child by a prostitute he lives with.

A sinister doctor uses him for experiments before his students as he notes the symptoms brought on by undernourishment that have reduced Kinski to a sort of group of reflexes like a cat dropped into Kinski's arms from a first floor window.

A handsome, brutish, overbearing officer takes over Kinski's woman and humiliates him in a tavern. Kinski's rage finally turns to murder. But it is the woman he murders as he stabs her many times before a stream in an explosive ritual.

Herzog seems to want to resurrect the great German Expressionist film period, but has not used the excessive acting of the earlier players who exteriorized their inner disarray by overdone facial contortions, clawed hands and twisted body postures.

The film benefits from strong but not overstressed acting and a fine use of an old city of Germanic architecture found in Czechoslovakia. The prostitute is also a victim who yearns for some meaning and tenderness but is defeated by poverty and the harsh caste system of the times. — Mosk.

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