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Ginger e Fred
(Ginger And Fred)
(ITALIAN/FRENCH/W.
GERMAN-COLOR)

An Istituto Luce/Italnoleggio Cinematografico release, produced by Alberto Grimaldi for P.E.A. Produzioni (Rome), Revcom Films (Paris), Stella Films (Munich) in cooperation with RAI-1. Directed by Federico Fellini. Stars Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni. Screenplay, Fellini, Tonino Guerra, Tullio Pinelli; camera (color) Tonino Delli Colli, Ennio Guarnieri; editor, Nino Baragli, Ugo De Rossi, Ruggero Mastroianni; music, Nicola Piovani; art director, Dante Ferretti; costumes, Danilo Donati. Reviewed at International Recording, Rome, Jan. 9, 1986. Running time: 126 MINS.

Amelia Bonetti (Ginger) .. Giulietta Masina
 Pippo Botticella

(Fred) Marcello Mastroianni
 Show host Franco Fabrizi
 Admiral Frederick Von Ledeburg
 Asst. Director Martin Blau
 Toto Toto Mignone
 Transvestite Augusto Poderosi
 Mafioso Francesco Casale

Also with: Frederick Von Thun, Henri Lar-
 tigue, Jean Michel Antoine, Antonio Iurio,
 Nando Pucci Negri, Laurentina Guidotti, Ele-
 na Cantarone.

Rome — For those who identi-
 fied the sinking vessel of "And The
 Ship Sails On" with the cinema,
 Federico Fellini's "Ginger And
 Fred" can be read as a kind of Part
 II, showing the apotheosis of its ri-
 val, tv. This utterly Fellini enter-
 tainment, set in a tv studio before
 and during the live broadcast of a
 variety-talk show, brings together
 the director's pet themes with his
 two sterling thespis, wife Giulietta
 Masina and Marcello Mastroianni.

With the first dating back to Fel-
 lini's co-directorial debut "Variety
 Lights" ('50) and the second to "La
 Dolce Vita" ('60), and a little bit of
 almost every other picture thrown
 in, watching "Ginger And Fred" is
 like seeing a fast-forward recap of a
 long and fruitful career. Though the
 action is fast and fun, a dark hand
 of melancholy overshadows all.
 Easy viewing for nostalgia fans, pic
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 house runs as its recent predeces-
 sors. Pic is being released 10 days
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Easy viewing for nostalgia fans, pic
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 sors. Pic is being released 10 days
 earlier in France than Italy;
 MGM/UA will handle U.S. and
 Canadian distribution this spring.

Visually and structurally pic hales
 back to "City Of Women." Center
 of gravity rests with Amelia Bonetti
 (Masina) and Pippo Botticella
 (Mastroianni), a long-broken-up
 ballroom and tap dance team who
 were famous 30 years ago as "Gin-
 ger And Fred," homegrown imita-
 tions of Astaire and Rogers. The
 aging pair has been brought out of
 oblivion and called to Rome to ap-
 pear on a tv show peopled with an
 unholy mixture of lookalikes, cheap
 imitations of Clark Gable and Mar-
 cel Proust, Ronald Reagan and Ko-
 jak.

At a time when most filmgoers
 are under 30, the pic chooses to
 view the world of the '80s from an
 oldster's point of view as all trashy
 advertising and apocalyptic horror,
 a universe of omnipresent boob
 tubes broadcasting non-stop non-
 sense and vulgarity.

Ginger, a widow who now runs a
 large family and small industry in
 the north, arrives like a babe in the
 woods at the chaotic, uncivilized
 train station. By the time she has
 been herded into the Manager Pal-
 ace Hotel with all the other tv
 guests, she bitterly regrets having let
 her dignity in for a beating. The real
 reason she came was to see Fred
 again. She finds him that night,
 drunk and snoring in the next
 room. Badly aged and down-at-the-
 heels, he's spent some of the inter-
 vening years in an asylum and has
 agreed to come out of retirement
 for the meager recompense.

While pic casts shuddering
 glances at a seemingly endless uni-
 verse of grotesque characters (as
 usual, virtually all thespis are non-

WS

pros), soulless tv personnel, menac-
 ing motorcyclists, punks, trans-
 vestites, etc., it also achieves a few
 moments of real magic. These in-
 volve Fred and Ginger, who are per-
 fect counterpoint, alone.

Masina wavers between the big-
 eyed innocent of "Cabiria" and a
 more realistic bourgeoisie granny,
 who probably spends the regulation
 number of hours in front of the tv
 set herself. Mastroianni outdoes
 himself in adding another classic to
 his growing gallery of last-legs old-
 sters who still have a spark of feisty
 rebellion in them and intend to go
 down swinging. He is embarrassing
 when he starts in with his dirty
 jokes, exhilarating as the unrepen-
 tant anarchist who wants to use his
 moment of televised fame to call the
 viewers "pe-co-ro-ni!" a more con-
 temptuous word than sheep. Wear-
 ing long white hair that is thin-
 ning fast, Fellini's topcoat, hat and
 scarf, his resemblance to helmer is
 even physical.

Hard as it is to parody a tv show,
 the Fellini touch at least makes it
 lavishly visual, a treat of incredible
 costumes (Danilo Donati) and sets
 (Dante Ferretti). Franco Fabrizi
 plays the toothful host who presents
 a succession of levitating monks
 and hysterical housewives.

Gorgeously lensed by Ennio
 Guarnieri and Tonino Delli Colli,
 the tv studio is transformed into a
 circus ring, with a dwarf orchestra
 and long-legged showgirls. When
 Fred and Ginger's turn comes, there
 is a power failure; in a dreamlike
 moment of frozen time, they talk
 about running off in the dark. The
 lights come on and, despite the fact
 Fred falls down and has a hard time
 remembering the steps, they dance
 through "The Continental" and
 Irving Berlin with real style.

—Yung.