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# "La Strada" (The Road)

*Business Rating* \$\$\$

**Superb Italian drama utilizes American male leads. Excellent art house prospects. Can be sold in general market.**

Poignant comedy and intense emotional drama of vagabond circus people are combined in a Ponti-De Laurentiis production to make this the most stirring and poetic import (with English titles) of recent years. It won the Venice Festival Grand Prize of 1954, and is great for art houses. Enterprising showmen should be able to sell it for good returns in the general American market. The slice-of-life technique has been used by director-writer Federico Fellini, who also took script credits for "Open City" and "Paisan". He vividly records the sorrowful love story of a strange peasant girl, Giulietta Masina, for a brutish circus strong-man, played by Anthony Quinn. Richard Basehart, as an irreverent circus clown, completes the triangle. The beauty of the plot is in its utter simplicity; its impact comes from the mood invoked. The tragedy centers on people caught up in their own faults and follies. Quinn's portrayal superbly reveals his loneliness beneath a wanton, lustful exterior. Miss Masina is a comic-faced, elf-like creature, a completely captivating new face. Basehart's performance is also a gem. Quinn is an itinerant performer who breaks chains with his expanding chest. He buys Miss Masina from an impoverished mother to serve as his clown, cook and mate. After they join a small circus, Basehart tries to get her to leave her cruel boss, but she is dedicated to him. The strong-man meets the clown on the road and unwittingly kills him. The incident affects the girl's mind, and Quinn, unable to stand her constant whimpering, leaves her stranded. When he later learns of her death he realizes how much he needed her.

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Ponti-De Laurentiis (Trans-Lux release). 107 minutes. Anthony Quinn, Giulietta Masina, Richard Basehart. Produced by Dino De Laurentiis and Carlo Ponti. Directed by Federico Fellini.