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Acto Da Primavera
(Rite of Spring)
(PORTUGUESE-COLOR)

Locarno, July 24.

Manuel De Oliveira release and production. Written, directed, photographed, in Eastmancolor, and edited by De Oliveira and played by a small town in its annual Passion Play recital. At Locarno Film Fest. Running Time, 85 MINS.

Portugal, from time to time, reveals an interesting filmmaker at an international film fest. It is to the credit of the 1965 Locarno Fest to have had a retrospective of a Portuguese veteran director, Manuel De Oliveira, for his work exhibits definite personal talent and filmic prowess. This one, made in 1962, has a primitive force in freely filming and re-enacting a small town Passion Play for the camera.

There is a violent flair, not overdone, which communicates via this handed-down myth and religioso symbol a good classic and innocent aspect. First the townspeople are shown at their almost Biblical agricultural work and then the tourists arrive and one girl dons her

costume and the play is played out till it ends in a sudden rush of montage effects of the modern world. It somehow works.

The rugged faces, the singsong delivery and huing to old Biblical and mythological moods give this a pageantry that is not hampered by the flimsy costuming and makeshift sets. The harsh, dry countryside of Portugal helps as well as the stolid countenances.

The usual Passion is done to the end. If there is a note of blaming the Jews for deicide of Jesus it does not harp on it in a defamatory way but is treated as something of the times that fell on all men and not one race, clan or religion. The montage of war and A-bomb explosions also makes a point that man is crucifying himself and his fellow man in various ways which may also be an interpretation of the Passion and not only as a religious spectacle.

However its subject, pared down treatment and ambivalent outlooks slant this primarily for institutional or school showings aboard with theatrical usage chancy. But it does unveil a definite filmic talent from this small country which makes a handful of pix a year.

Mosk.