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Author(s)	Hank Werba
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Appassionata

(ITALIAN-COLOR)

8-21-74 Variety

Rome, Aug. 13.

A PAC release, produced by Tonino Cervi. Stars Gabriele Ferzetti, Ornella Muti, Eleonora Giorgi, Valentina Coreese. Directed by Gian Luigi Calderone. Screenplay, Gian Luigi Calderone, Alessandro Parenzo, Domenico Rafele; camera (Technicolor), Armando Nannuzzi; art director, Luciano Spadroni; editor, Nino Baragli; music, Piero Piccioni. Reviewed at Cinema Capranichetta, Rome, Aug. 13, '74. Running time: 100 MINS.

Dr. Emilio Rutelli Gabriele Ferzetti
Eugenia Ornella Muti
Nicola Eleanora Giorgi
Elisa Rutelli Valentina Cortese

"Appassionata" is a first film by Gian Luigi Calderone, ex-assistant director to Bernardo Bertolucci. Conception on paper of a household head undermined morally and psychologically by an over-possessive, mentally-alienated wife (Valentina Cortese) a turbidly adoring daughter (Ornella Muti) and her schoolmate (Eleanora Giorgi) contain the ingredients of a tight emotional drama rooted in uncontrollable sexual attachments.

The result on screen falls considerably short of initial goal though sufficiently viable as a psychosexpathic melodrama for strong market potential in Italy and a semi-softcore exploitationer in other markets (perhaps as a dualler in U.S.).

As a hounded household male, suave and smartly dressed, Gabriele Ferzetti goes down to defeat, pathetically but gracefully, in the teenage plot between daughter and chum to destroy the mother's last shreds of equilibrium and get her interned — leaving the coast clear for the conscienceless adolescents to bring Big Daddy to carnal relations with the minor next door and a skimpily-veiled bout of incest with his daughter. Pic is another up-to-the-minute, uningratiating reflection of the seductive fibre of teenagers on mature adults.

Calderone directed his first film without pretention — rarely taking his eyes off the boxoffice. Big shortcoming is predictability of characters and action. Also the obsession with sex, generally crude though with moments of sultry tension. Valentina Cortese is embarrassingly virtuoso in a modest entry offering her talent little scope. Ferzetti, as target, is almost believable, Ornella Muti is probably the most luscious young actress and Eleanora Giorgi the most uninhibited thesp on the Italian scene.

Pic has a rich look credited to color lensing by Armando Nannuzzi and art work of Luciano Spadroni. Piero Piccioni's score is effective but scanty. —*Verb.*