

Document Citation

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| Title | Edipo Re |
| Author(s) | Gene Moskowitz |
| Source | <i>Variety</i> |
| Date | |
| Type | review |
| Language | English |
| Pagination | |
| No. of Pages | 1 |
| Subjects | |
| Film Subjects | Edipo Re (Oedipus Rex), Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 1967 |

Edipo Re
(Oedipus Rex)
(ITALIAN-COLOR)

Venice, Sept. 12

Euro International Films release of Arco Film-Alfredo Bini-Somalis production. Stars Silvana Mangano, Alida Valli, Franco Citti. Written and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini; camera (Technicolor), Giuseppe Ruzzolini; editor, Nino Baragli. At Venice Film Fest. Running Time, 110 MINS.

Giocasta Silvana Mangano
Edipo Franco Citti
Merope Alida Valli
Tiresia Julian Beck
Creonte Carmelo Bene

Pier Paolo Pasolini made two naturalistic pix on the plight of the Roman sub-proletariat in "Accatone" and "Manna Roma," then this Communist writer made a surprisingly objective tale of Christ's Passion in "The Gospel according to Saint Matthew" and a fable about Communist and Catholic outlooks coexisting or clashing in "The Hawks & The Sparrows." Now he turns to Greek tragedy in "Oedipus Rex" with an attempt to give it a Freudian ring with a modernistic envelope. Pasolini here used the exotic Moroccan desert and sandstone castles for the ancient Greek sites.

Japanese music, at times, is used and Silvana Mangano, as the mother Oedipus unwittingly marries, is made up in chalky white, while others have natural skin tones. Franco Citti does not quite have the stature for Oedipus. There is no inexorability about this. It has more of an illustrative quality with some pretty pictures of the colorful countryside but rarely invokes the grandeur of the old Greek tragedy.

Pasolini wants to give this eternal implications by a prolog, set in the 19th century showing the birth of Oedipus to an officer and his wife and the latter's suspicion of the child. Then it segues into the ancient tragedy in which Oedipus rips out his eye; when he realizes he has killed his real father and married his own mother.

Pic has Oedipus as a child abandoned when his father is told by an oracle he will be killed by his own son. The man who is sup-

posed to kill him cannot do so and he is found and brought up as their son by a childless couple. Then he goes off to adventure when he is grown and consults an oracle who predicts he will kill his own father and marry his mother. He decides not to go home and in his wanderings refuses to budge before a chariot which leads to a fight in which he kills unknowingly, his real father, a king.

He defeats the Sphinx and is married off to his own mother. But plague hits the city due to the unsolved murder of the King. Oedipus starts the investigation, which finally discloses that he was guilty. He blinds himself after the revelation and his mother-wife commits suicide. But even if the tragedy is followed fairly closely, pic does not strike a true mythical air and has a tendency to bog down in self-indulgent scenes of lovemaking and shouting. It is a sort of tableau-like affair with fine lensing.

Pic appears mainly an arty house entry. Playoff seems chancey since it is just a bit too stilted and watered down.

Lensing is pretty enough and Miss Mangano is a lissome figure as the incestuous mother. Using Japanese music and tunes about Lenin, may mean something to director-writer Pasolini, but adds a further lack of cohesion to the pic.

Incidentally, Sophocles, who wrote the original tragedy, is given no billing. Mosk.