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The Record

Playing the fool

By **JERRY TALLMER**

Special to The Record

Somebody has shot Rosa von Praunheim. It happened in a crowded theater, just as he was saying: "Excuse me for my fame, my beauty, my acting talent."

Hysteria! Panic! Who could have shot him? And now a blond dried-prune German TV newscaster named Gesina Ganzman-Seipel has the job of going around Berlin and environs talking to all the people who ever knew Rosa von Praunheim to try to dig out the truth — who was the real R von P, what was he really like?

MOVIE REVIEW

★★½

NEUROSIA: 50 YEARS OF PERVERSITY: Directed by Rosa von Praunheim. Screenplay by Valintin Passoni. Photographed by Lorenz Haarmen. Edited by Mike Shephard. With Desiree Nick and Von Praunheim. 87 minutes. Unrated. In German, English titles. At Cinema Village, Manhattan.

This is the gag in "Neurosia," the latest and perhaps most audacious film yet by Rosa (originally Holger) von Praunheim, the brilliant, acerbic director of such breakthrough

gay-revolutionist works as "Silence & Death" and "A Virus Knows No Morals."

Audacious? Well, having murdered himself on screen, Von Praunheim, 50, proceeds to make "Neurosia" (subtitled "50 Years of Perversity") his autobiography. He'll let Gesina (played by Desiree Nick) do the dirty work for him.

Dirty work it is, she finds out, starting with Rosa von P's gray-haired mother, who declares, as she plays chess against a computer in her son's digs: "I've survived two world wars, and this, living with him, could be the third." Everything Gesina puts her hand to in Rosa's pornography shop of an apartment shocks her more, including the hate mail the director has received. The shocks

will continue throughout the testimony of the lovers, male and female, young and old; and the haters, whom Gesina runs down for a series of ever more goony interviews.

And if there were many men Rosa was drawn to, so were there many extraordinary women, stars or onetime stars, actresses, dancers, personalities — from his own Aunt Luzi to Lotti Huber to Dolly Haas to Maria Ley Piscator and Anita Berber of the Seven Veils.

He roamed the world and is still roaming, from the hills of San Francisco to the halls of the Hotel Chelsea, leaving behind a trail of boyfriends who will say things like: "We were together two months, and the man knows nothing about sex," or compare being with Rosa to life under

Hitler. In the end, Von Praunheim invents (I hope it's an invention) a Pink Army Faction of homosexuals enraged by his unsparing candor. They take him prisoner and humiliate him much as the Nazis would once have done. It's not pretty; in fact it's quite vulgar, but it stings.

"Neurosia," which opens today at Cinema Village in Manhattan, affords quick glimpses of many familiar things and faces, from the Stonewall Inn to a gay pride parade to supercamp actor Taylor Mead to — most pleasingly — Anita Bryant getting a gay-activist pie shoved in her face and praying to Jesus for the soul of the shover.

Rosa von Praunheim is making fun of himself. I think we have to take him seriously.