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## NIWINNI, CZARODZIEJE (Innocent Sorcerers), Poland, 1960

*Cert:* A. *dist:* Contemporary. *p.c.:* Kadr Film Unit. *p:* Stanislaw Adler. *d:* Andrzej Wajda. *assistant d:* Pawel Komorowski, J. Karwowski, U. Orczykowska. *sc:* Jerzy Andrzejewski, Jerzy Skolimowski. *ph:* Krzysztof Winiewicz. *ed:* W. Olocka, Aurelia Rut. *ad.:* Leszek Wajda. *mt:* Krzysztof T. Komeda. *sd.rec.:* Leszek Wronko, L. Ksiezak. *l.p.:* Tadeusz Lomnicki (*Andrzej*), Krystyna Stypulkowska (*Magda*), Wanda Koczewska (*Mirka*), Zbigniew Cybulski (*Edmund*), Roman Polanski (*Polo*), Krzysztof T. Komeda (*Komeda*), Kalina Jedrusik-Dygatowa (*Journalist*), Teresa Szmigielówna (*Nurse*), and Andrzej Nowakowski. 7,740 ft. 86 mins. *Subtitles.*

Andrzej, a young doctor who works at a Sports Stadium in Warsaw, is neither involved wholly in his job nor in his relationship with Mirka, a girl who pesters him. The only thing that really "sends" him is jazz; he is a drummer with a group that plays in "The Barn". While avoiding Mirka he meets another girl, Magda, who appears to compete with him in her pose of sophisticated boredom. Missing her last train home, Magda spends the night in Andrzej's flat. They work out a list of rules of seduction by which they intend to abide. But, gradually, their mutual provocation ceases to amuse them. A game of strip-poker that begins as a mockery of conventional sex-play ends in the exposure of their uncertainty and loneliness. Magda finally falls asleep and Andrzej is called away by his friends in the street. When he returns she has gone. He searches for her in growing desperation, then discovers her waiting for him back at the flat. They pretend indifference, and it is Magda who is the first to face up to the fact that they care for each other.

*Innocent Sorcerers* begins with such racy *ton* that one suspects Wajda has been mugging up his Chabrol. We are manoeuvred through the *décor* of the young hero's inexpensive flat and night haunts with an expertise bordering on facility. Ah yes, we begin to mutter, another graphically detailed account of adolescent lethargy and rebellion in a threatening world, complete with tape-recorder, a pair of last night's silk stockings, peroxided Left Bank hair-do, Lambretta and jazz. There is even Zbigniew Cybulski on the side-lines in the dark glasses he wore for *Ashes and Diamonds*. We suspect that we are being steered away from mental effort and told exactly what to feel. Then, all of a sudden, the surprises begin. Genuine self-doubt, the characters' as much as ours, enters. And—with the strip-poker game ending in mutual confusion—truth stands out stark and cruel. What had struck us before as clichés is now rejuvenated by the very light-heartedness of its context to make a moment that is both acute and moving. The would-be seducer by now loves the would-be vamp, but it is too late. They have been trapped by their own *blase* defence mechanisms. We are, after all, in an adult world—however anecdotal the story or amiable the tone. The final climax should have been bitter, but an implausible up-beat ending has been palmed off on the director, Andrzej Wajda, by his bosses. Nevertheless the middle section remains intact, murmured and more heart-rending than any outburst of eloquence could have made it.

This is, *dénouement* apart, a model piece of intimate film-making, constructed with exciting economy, so scornful of sentimentality that it touches the understanding again and again. Wajda has rendered down his familiar material to the point where its impact is purest, utterly direct. He is helped in this by his two impeccable leading players—the kittenish Krystyna Stypulkowska and the unexpectedly witty Tadeusz Lomnicki (who played the lead in *A Generation*); and by an equally unexpected fund of beguiling humour. There is, for instance, that playful moment when the girl drapes a bath-towel around her in classic siren pose, only to unwrap it and reveal that she is fully dressed underneath. A word, too, for Leszek Wajda's convincing *décor* of the young doctor's flat, all confidence-building extras and nonchalant mess. But the film is ultimately ours: all we need to do is watch—delighted by Wajda's sudden switch to gaiety—with the spontaneous feelings of innocence on the one hand and questioning maturity on the other.

*Suitability:* A, B.

P.J.D.

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