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Affettuose Lontananze **(Affectionate Distances)** **(ITALIAN)**

Locarno A Maestranza & Tecnici Cinema production. Produced by Beppe Scavuzzo. Directed by Sergio Rossi. Screenplay, Rossi, Age, with Caterina de Martiis, Maria Giovanna Pintus, based on story by Rossi; camera (color), Franco Lecca; editor, Massimo Palumbo Cardella; songs, Maurizio Areni, Anna Karin Klockar; sound, Roberto Petrozzi, Bruno Pupparo; art direction, Maria Silvia Farci. Reviewed at Locarno Film Festival (competing), Aug. 12, 1989. Running time: 100 MIN.

With: Lina Sastri, Angela Finocchiaro, Fiorenza Marchegiani, Gianpiero Bianchi.

■ Once upon a time, this would have been considered a woman's picture. In the perspective of the late '80s, however, this condescending portrait of three modern single women, supposedly independent and liberated, but obsessed by the men in their lives, is annoying rather than gratifying for female audiences.

Mostly, this is the story of Luisa, a mature art teacher who has just broken up a longstanding affair and is pining for another. Her friends, one an obstetrician, the other a librarian, are about the same age and face the same kind of problems. Both are professionally successful but unfulfilled in their personal lives. The first changes partners all the time, while the second is faithful to one man, until he tells her he wants to divorce his wife and marry her instead, which makes her unhappy because she is too fond of her freedom.

Nothing much happens in the first half of the picture, until Luisa meets a cartoonist who seems to be a promising prospect. Unfortunately, his diffidence prevents his committing himself further than a night in the sack or a day on the town. This is frustrating for a woman who needs affection, and she finds it difficult to function without it.

Excessively talky, explaining the obvious at length and in detail, the script doesn't skip any of the clichés. Luisa is a sort of Mr. Chips, always siding with her students, who adore her. There is simply no flaw in her character. All she wants is a man who can appreciate her qualities, but as the film ends, she still is looking for him.—*Edna*.