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Duios Anastasia Trecea

(Anastasia Passed By)
(RUMANIAN-COLOR)

Karlovy Vary, July 6.

A Rumaniafilm Production, Film Group One, Bucharest; world rights, Romania-film, Bucharest. Features entire cast. Directed by Alexandru Tatos. Screenplay, D.R. Popescu, based on his short story with the same title; camera (color), Florin Mihailescu; sets, Andrei Both; music, Lucian Metianu; editing, Iolanda Mintulescu. Reviewed at Karlovy Vary Film Festival (Competition), July 6, '80. Running time: 100 MINS.

Cast: Anda Onesa (Anastasia), Amza Pellea, Laszlo Tarr, Levente Biro, Christian Ghita, Razvan Onesa, Catalin Ciornei, Gheorghe Teasca, Daniel Petrescu, Stefan Kofalvy, Imola Gaspar, Dumitru Bordeianu, Ernest Kantor.

Alexandru Tatos's "Anastasia Passed By" (original title translates a poetic "Gently Was Anastasia Passing") draws upon a short story adapted to the screen by the same writer, D.R. Popescu, with clear references to the classical Sophocles' tragedy, "Antigone." It's this frame of reference that gives the story something extra and makes it one of the best pix to emerge from Rumania in recent years.

The setting is a border town on the Danube across from Yugoslavia. It is 1944 and the German Wehrmacht comes grinding along the roads and into the village. The youths of the town are enlisted into a Folks Army to fight on the side of the Germans, but several choose instead to escape across the river and join the Yugoslav partisans.

The occupied village is told to elect the new collaborating mayor, who in turn is surrounded by a cohort of ready collaborators, and hires the village strongman, an idiot, to be his henchman. Meanwhile, the partisans raid the area one night and disappear back over the Danube — but a hiding Serbian is killed, and then dragged into the village as a warning to the populace. The body is dumped on a platform at the crossroads; anyone who buries the corpse is threatened with death.

The schoolteacher Anastasia refuses to obey the command — thus the Antigone drama proceeds to unfold. The mayor attempts to reason with her, followed by his son, her lover, who is in hiding like a coward rather than fight on either side of the ongoing conflict. The old cronies in the inn also lend their comments but refuse to act — the

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villagers hide in fear. She buries the corpse, then is strangled by the mayor's brutal bodyguard. Her body is dumped into a lime pit, the murder witnessed by a young boy who reveals the crime that was passively approved by the chorus of old cronies.

Considering how often of late Greek tragedies and Shakespearean plays have been used to comment on the present, "Anastasia Passed By" is even more remarkable because it argues for human dignity by totally revamping the usual action-packed partisan theme (the so-called "Eastern") into a compact drama that leaves the Nazis almost completely out of the picture. Further, it's the Rumanian collaborators who are the heavies, while Anastasia is a victim because she follows her human instincts.

Lensing is a plus, but thesps and direction are additional factors that pay dividends. Pic should be included in Rumanian Film Weeks abroad and deserves further exposure on the fest circuit. —Holl.