

## Document Citation

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# AMBROGIO

(ITALIAN)

An Istituto Luce-Italnoleggio Cinematografico release of a Cinelife production. Produced by Giuseppe Giovannini. Directed by Wilma Labate. Screenplay, Sandro Petraglia. Camera (color), Mauro Marchetti, Beppe Maccari; editor, Nino Baragli; music, Roberto Ciotti; art direction, Maurizio Leonardi; costumes, Sergio Ballo; sound, Raffaele De Luca. Reviewed at 28th Sorrento Intl. Film Festival (competition), Oct. 3, 1992. Running time: 90 MIN.

Anna-Ambrogio . Francesca Antonelli  
Leo . . . . . Roberto Citran  
Stefano . . . . . Marco Galli  
Zani . . . . . Fabio Poggiali  
Nino . . . . . Antonello Scarano  
Cicogna . . . . . Enrico Brignani  
Oreste . . . . . Luciano Federico  
Clarice . . . . . Anita Ekberg  
Anna's father . . . . . Paolo Graziosi  
Mute . . . . . Carlos Gomez

**“Ambrogio”** is a well-acted, delicately told yarn about a teenage girl obstinately set on entering the all-male world of professional seamanship. Marking a plucky feature bow for Wilma Labate, pic should make a winning festival item, and proper handling could slip it into an art-house niche in selected markets.

With a love of the sea inherited from her father, Anna-Ambrogio (Francesca Antonelli) takes the advice of a genial seafarer (Roberto Citran) and enrolls in a school for aspiring sailors. After winning the battle against a “boys only” admission policy, she takes on a motley bunch of classmates and professors who dismiss her as an oddball, a manhunter or bad luck.

Labate and ace scripter Sandro Petraglia (“The Factotum,” “The Stolen Children”) allow her to win out without obvious tactics like coquettish charm or tomboyish force, but with cool, unwavering determination. Even with a dollop of good-natured hamming from some of the school’s eccentric teachers, this midsection remains shrewdly judged and intelligently played, giving the film real momentum.

After a letdown in the love department, Ambrogio graduates and tale shifts to Lisbon, where she looks for a post aboard a ship. Turned down repeatedly, she prepares to throw in the towel, but Citran arrives to help out.

Set on the threshold of the 1960s, story quietly utilizes the birth of a decade of change as a backdrop for the realization of its spunky protagonist’s dreams. The latter half becomes mildly overburdened with underexplored ideas, and plot complications eventually get tied up rather too neatly, but the script is full of disarming situations and snappy dialogue.

Performances are easy and unforced, with both Antonelli and Citran displaying charm to burn. Tech aspects are surefooted, opting for seamless simplicity over flashiness. Italo bluesman Roberto Ciotti’s tunes are well-used, though some of the acoustic guitar compositions sound a little out-of-period. — *David Rooney*