

## **Document Citation**

Title L'appassionata

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Source Variety

Date 1989 Mar 22

Type review

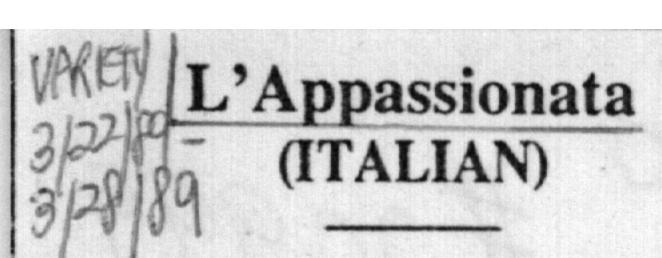
English Language

Pagination

No. of Pages 1

Subjects

L'appassionata (The impassioned woman), Mingozzi, Gianfranco, 1988 Film Subjects



Rome An Istituto Luce-Italnoleggio release of an ABCinema production, in association with RAI-TV Channel 2 and Pegaso productions. Produced by Enzo Porcelli. Directed
by Gianfranco Mingozzi. Screenplay, Lucia
Drudi Demby, Mingozzi; camera (Luciano
Vittori color), Luigi Verga; editor, Fernanda Indoni; music, Nicola Piovani; art direction, Leonardo Scarpa, Giancarlo Basili.
Reviewed at Politecnico Cinema, Rome, Feb.
3, 1989. Running time: 97 MIN.

iela Morelli (Toni's mother), Paolo Bacchi, Gaetano Naccarato, Guido Luigi Cavalleri, Massimo Madrigali, Zeno Pezzoli, Alberto Bartolani.

A homey psychodrama of three characters set in Bologna of the 1950's, "L'Appassionata" ("The Impassioned Woman," literally) isn't likely to set local theaters on fire. Intentions are serious, cast is mostly good, but this tragic May-December love affair remains more on paper than on the screen.

It is Gianfranco Mingozzi's sec-

ond feature this season (the other is "The Sparrow's Flutter," doing okay business with Ornella Muti and Philippe Noiret). Main off-shore market should be to ready to pick up sensitve, rather offbeat product.

Stage thesp Piera Degli Esposti headlines as "L'Appassionata," a

widow in her 40s with a 16-yearold son who, unknown to her, supports them by selling family knickknacks and cleaning the public swimming pool.

The arrival of a handsome young lodger, Toni (Nicola Far-

ron), momentarily brings life and joy to the house. Mama Gilberta, a warm woman of precarious mental balance, embarks on an intense, guiltless love affair with the boy, while Son Enzo (Federico Provvedi) treats him as a big brother, though with misgivings. These prove to be justified. Toni leaves Gilberta for one of her piano pupils, a pretty girl closer to his own age. Gilberta, guileless and vulnerable, takes Toni's betrayal so hard she loses her reason. In and out of mental hospitals, she has one last

suffering, which he does with an overdose of medicine.

painful meeting with Toni, then

begs her son to put an end to her

Very much an actors' story, "L'Appassionata" benefits from Degli Esposti's daft but always appealing mother-lover, a totally natural woman. Also impressive is Provvedi's screen debut as her loving, anxious offspring. Farron lacks range in the key role of Toni, settling for being just likable and

ordinary. -Yung.