

Analysis Film, Newcomer, Emerges With Current Sock Visconti Import

Perhaps reflecting the current control shift at Cinema 5 Ltd. in New York, long considered the upper crust importer of often profitable foreign product, a tiny, 11-month old newcomer, Analysis Film Releasing Corp. has emerged as the distrib with the biggest-grossing overseas import of 1979, namely, "The Innocent."

Analysis, headed by Robert Kaplan, Paul Cohen and Paul Leeman, is the consolidation of a production outfit (Grand Slam Productions) and a tiny indie distrib (Masada Productions) masterminded by the trio. Kaplan and Cohen occupy themselves with production and distribution operations while Leeman, who headed a financial factoring outfit (Ambassador Factors) until recently, maneuvers through the financial backwaters.

The Big Break

Until they acquired Luchino Visconti's final film, "The Innocent," from Rizzoli Film, the record of Analysis in the annals of N.Y. in indie distribution was practically nonexistent. Masada is perhaps best known as the distrib of the 1976 underground entry, "Gums," a soft-core sendup of "Jaws" toplining porno actress Terri Hall.

Grand Slam Productions itself is just now making its indie production try with "Moe Berg," a bio of the former baseball player who was also, improbably enough, a lawyer and former Office Of Strategic Services agent. Vehicle is in that hazy netherworld of the film industry, "pre-production."

Analysis Film picked up the Visconti film from Rizzoli along with some less distinguished foreign-made items ("Charleston," with James Coco and Bud Spencer; "Behind the Shutters," with Jean Seberg; and "Indian Summer," with Alain Delon and Giancarlo Giannini). Deal for "The Innocent" called for an upfront payment to Rizzoli of about \$175,000 (including a flat payment for domestic distrib rights plus an advertising guarantee) and some headaches.

Gave Poor Print?

As Cohen and Kaplan tell it, Rizzoli didn't deliver a negative but a "print in poor condition" in original language (Italian) form, "teasers" (used for coming attractions come-ons) dubbed into English and — some 25 minutes absent from the original print.

What happened to the footage trimmed from the print is still not quite clear, and remains of big bone of contention between Analysis and Rizzoli. Cohen and Kaplan say no litigation is pending on the matter of the "lost" footage, however.

Giannini, who toplines "The Innocent" with Laura Antonelli, made it a personal mission to locate the missing footage, add subtitles reedit the missing material into the original print. All this cost some \$40,000, a bill Cohen and Kaplan say Analysis footed.

Work was finally completed before "The Innocent" was skedded to kick off the Visconti retrospective last month — personally hosted by Giannini — at the Library Of Performing Arts at N.Y.'s Lincoln Center.

The retro proved to be an ideal sendoff for "The Innocent," and date at United Artists Theatre Circuit's Gemini II and followed Jan. 12. No one could have predicted the response.

Daily and weekly house records at the 450-seater were immediately shattered (first-week tally was a record \$60,110). Grosses climbed weekly and reached \$192,666 by the end of the third stanza. Lines were common even for noon showings.

While the pic was doing boff business, Analysis found itself in a locked situation at the Gemini II. Columbia had a deal to move in Marjoe Gortner's "When You Comin' Back Red Ryder," and that arrangement stood.

After some frantic moments, Analysis lined up Rugoff's Plaza Theatre, which is currently playing Atlantic Releasing's "Max Havelaar" from Dutch director-writer Fons Rademakers. The theatre switch was momentarily put under a cloud by the Cinema 5 turmoil (Analysis deal with Rugoff for the Plaza was made verbally).

The new booking for "The Innocent" remained however, and the pic commences its date there Fri. (9).