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# THE P.S.C. FILM COMMITTEE

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# PRESENTS:

- LESSON IN LOVE, DIRECTED BY INGMAR BERGMAN ..... 95 min.  
THE FATAL GLASS OF BEER, WITH W. C. FIELDS ..... 18 min.

I am rather afraid to say anything about Ingmar Bergman because he has fallen into such disfavor with critics lately. The problem is somewhat enigmatic. If so many critics find his films mediocre now, what did they see in him in the first place? When did he cease to be acceptable, or was he ever right in the first place?

Despite the criticism now being leveled at Bergman from many quarters, there are some things that cannot be overlooked. The first thing is the fact that he has made over thirty films, a very prodigious output by anyone's standards. Secondly, he revived the Swedish film industry by himself. Until Bergman's films brought about a renewal in its growth, the Swedish film industry was government-financed and continually in debt. Besides being internationally recognized as a motion picture director, he is also an outstanding stage director, a writer, a husband to several ex-wives, and a lover to a host of mistresses. He is a dynamic man in every sense of the word and drives himself relentlessly until his once-a-year breakdown.

Besides directing his films, he also writes, produces, and edits them. When writing his screenplays, he rarely relies on outside sources, but uses his personal ideas. Consequently he is probably one of the few directors who are completely in control of their art. As Bergman has said many times, each of his films is about himself, they are a part of him.

Although his detractors may argue that his films are too stagey and overdramatic, burdened with endless symbolism, and his characters lifeless and flat, they cannot deny his uniqueness among film-makers. By some standards, he has made some very fine films - WILD STRAWBERRIES would certainly qualify.

Bergman makes two kinds of films: comedies that are nearly tragedies, and tragedies that are nearly comedies. Some of his films come so close to the dividing line that it is difficult to categorize them. Tonight's film falls in the first category. It is a comedy that could at any moment quite easily shift its mood and become a tragedy. It concerns the middle-aged restlessness of a Swedish couple. The husband, a well-known doctor, has a mistress; tiring of her, he decides to woo back his wife. However, the wife has different ambitions and sets out to win back an old beau. The plot, then, is a four-way romance with both husband and wife recalling the past, individually and together. Bergman could easily have made this a tragic situation, and he does often bring a certain amount of pathos into the film, but he intentionally keeps the plot from becoming too heavy by including some genuinely funny sequences. Unfortunately, Bergman's humor is vocal rather than visual. He takes advantage of very few of the comic possibilities that film has to offer, as used by the great comics of the silent screen. Not only is his humor of the spoken word, it is also bathroom humor, filled with puns and allusions, although very little of this filters through the subtitles. I do not question the use of ribald humor, but Bergman's purpose in using it. Is it because he thinks it is genuinely funny, or because he wants to see if he can get past the censors. This has often been characteristic of Bergman: pushing the censor to the limits just for the fun of seeing how far he can go. Or is there a third alternative? Perhaps the jokes are intended to enhance characterization. It is a difficult question to answer without seeing several unexpurgated versions of his films in the original Swedish.

But whatever his purposes, his aims, his style of film-making, Bergman's comedies are frequently very funny. His latest attempt, ALL THESE WOMEN, was not successful in this country, but perhaps this was due to the fact that Bergman experimented with color in the film at the expense of the story. Perhaps John Donner in his book THE PERSONAL VISION OF INGMAR BERGMAN best describes a Bergman comedy: "an elegant drawing-room comedy."

## BERGMAN FILMOGRAPHY:

- 1944 TORMENT (directed by Alf Sjöberg, script by Bergman)
- 1945 CRISIS

1946 LOVE IN THE RAIN  
1947 BOAT TO INDIA  
1947 NIGHT IS MY FUTURE  
1948 PORT OF CALL  
1948 THE DEVIL'S WANTON  
1949 THREE STRANGE LOVES  
1950 TO JOY  
1950 SUMMER INTERLUDE  
1950 HIGH TENSION  
1952 SECRETS OF WOMEN  
1952 MONIKA  
1953 THE NAKED NIGHT  
1954 A LESSON IN LOVE

1955 DREAMS  
1955 SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT  
1956 THE SEVENTH SEAL  
1957 WILD STRAWBERRIES  
1957 THE BRINK OF LIFE  
1958 THE MAGICIAN  
1959 THE VIRGIN SPRING  
1960 THE DEVIL'S EYE  
1961 THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY  
1962 WINTER LIGHT  
1963 THE SILENCE  
1964 ALL THESE WOMEN  
1966 PERSONA