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Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007)

This weekend tribute to the late director runs Saturday and Sunday, August 11 and 12, with screenings at the Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$7; a \$20 pass admits you to all screenings. For more information call 773-278-1500 or visit www.chopintheatre.com.

SATURDAY 11

Ingmar Bergman Complete Made for Swedish television, this three-part video documentary (2004) is widely regarded as the best treatment of the theater and film director's life and work. Culled from a considerable amount of interview and archival material, it's split between Bergman's films, his more extensive (and, many would say, more important and accomplished) theater work, and his life, in that order. Marie Nyrerod is the sole credited director, though Bergman is rumored to have had some hand in the proceedings. In Swedish with subtitles. 174 min. (JR) ▶▶ 1 PM.

Я Sawdust and Tinsel A major early feature by Bergman, also known as *The Naked Night* (though the Swedish title apparently means "The Clown's Night"). This 1953 film is perhaps the most German expressionist of Bergman's 50s works, as redolent of sexual cruelty and angst as *Variety* and *The Blue Angel*, but no less impressive for all that. The aging owner of a small traveling circus who left his wife for a young performer in his troupe tries to regain his lost family. Visually splendid, but you may find the masochistic plot pretty unpleasant. With Ake Gronberg and Harriet Andersson. In Swedish with subtitles. 92 min. (JR) 16mm. *Reader* critic Jonathan Rosenbaum will introduce the screening and lead a discussion afterward. ▶▶ 4:15 PM.

Я Fanny and Alexander Bergman's 1983 feature, condensed from a much longer TV series, is less an

autumnal summation of his career than an investigation of its earliest beginnings: through the figure of ten-year-old Alexander (Bertil Guve), Bergman traces the storytelling urge, developing from dreams and fairy tales into theater and (implicitly) movies. The film doesn't so much surmount Bergman's usual shortcomings—the crude contrasts, heavy symbolism, and preachy philosophizing—as find an effective context for them. Tied to a child's mind, the oversimplifications become the stuff of myth and legend. As in *The Night of the Hunter*, a realistic psychological drama is allowed to expand into fantasy; the result is one of Bergman's most haunting and suggestive films. With Ewa Froling and Gunn Wallgren. In Swedish with subtitles. 197 min. (DK) DVD projection. Tickets are \$5; Gabe Klinger of Columbia College will introduce the screening. ▶▶ 7 PM.

SUNDAY 12

The Seventh Seal Returning from the Crusades, a 14th-century knight finds his homeland devastated by the plague and swept by religious mania. He's no longer able to pray, but just as his faith reaches a low ebb, death comes calling in the person of a very grim reaper. The ending is a cliffhanger: the knight challenges death to a chess game, hoping to win himself enough time to settle his doubts. Bergman's 1956 film is still his most celebrated (probably because the stark imagery reproduces so well in still photographs), yet he later repudiated it. It survives today only as an unusually pure example of a typical 50s



Fanny and Alexander

art-film strategy: making the most modern and popular art form acceptable to the intelligentsia by forcing it into an arcane, antique mold (here the form of medieval allegory). The film in fact consists of a series of dull speeches spun on simple themes; Bergman barely tries to make the material function dramatically. With Max von Sydow, Bibi Andersson, and Bengt Ekerot. In Swedish with subtitles. 96 min. (DK) 16mm. Alison Cuddy of WBEZ will introduce the screening. ▶▶ 1 PM.

Я Wild Strawberries An archetypal Bergman film, and one of his best (1957). An aging professor (Victor Sjöström, who as a director was Sweden's D.W. Griffith) making a long journey by car takes the opportunity to rummage through his past, wondering for the first time what kind of man he was. There's a lot of allegor-

ical baggage on board, but the film's virtues lie in its relative simplicity. With Ingrid Thulin and Bibi Andersson. In Swedish with subtitles. 90 min. (DK) 16mm. Ben Kenigsberg of *Time Out Chicago* will introduce the screening. ▶▶ 3:15 PM.

Я Persona Bergman's best film, I suppose, though it's still fairly tedious and overloaded with avant-garde clichés (1966). Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann exchange identities to the accompaniment of much musing about art, life, and politics, all of it much more obscure than is strictly necessary. With Gunnar Björnstrand. In Swedish with subtitles. 85 min. (DK) 16mm. Robert Keser of National-Louis University will introduce the screening and lead a discussion afterward. ▶▶ 6:15 PM.

Ingmar Bergman Complete See listing for Sat 8/11. ▶▶ 8 PM.