

Document Citation

Title	Angels
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1990 Feb 14
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Angels, Berger, Jacob, 1990

(Angels (SPANISH-SWISS))

Madrid A CAB Prods. (Lausanne), Marea Films (Madrid, Cadrage (Paris), K2 (Brussels) production, in association with Cannon Group Iberoamerica, Television Suisse Romande (SSR), Television Espanola (TVE). A Gerard Ruey, Jean-Louis Porchet, Adrian Lipp presentation, in collaboration with Daniel Vaissaire and Dominique Janne. Executive producer, Adrian Lipp. Written and directed by Jacob Berge. Camera (Eastman-color), Emmanuel Machuel; editor, Joella Hache; art director, Felipe de Paco; sound, Laurent Barbey; music, Michel Portal; production manager, Teresa Enrich; associate producer, Alain Tanner. Reviewed at Cine Dore, Madrid, Feb. 7, 1990. (In Berlin Film Festival, competing.) Running time: **95 MIN.**

Rickie.	Steven Weber
Sara.	Belinda Becker
Thomas.	Justin Williams
Tonio.	Jose Esteban Jr.
Molina.	Cristina Hoyos
Natacha.	Angela Molina
Hugo.	Feodor Atkins

■Before the opening credits, there are a few moments of magic in this film, as we see a black dancer performing a hypnotic dance in a dive in post-war Barcelona. But the prom-

ise is never fulfilled in this European hybrid which gets bogged down in excessive talk, a rambling story and European auteurism.

Though set in modern Barcelona, it is a Barcelona few Catalans today would recognize, for it is one seen through the eyes of non-Spaniards. In this mishmash underworld setting, the lingos are Spanish with an Andalusian accent and American English. Spanish thespians try to pronounce English as best they can. Most of track is in English, but quite a bit also is in Spanish.

The pre-title dance sequence is seen by a young American boy when he was in Spain. As a grown man, he returns from Brooklyn to Barcelona upon learning of his mother's death. She was a poetess and viewers are treated to some of her verses.

So, being in Barcelona, Rickie (whose background is never revealed;

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all we know is that he plays a trumpet) tries to seek out the black dancer of his memory. He finds her easily enough in a brothel, and strikes up a strange sort of masochistic romance with the girl. She is more than a hooker, it would seem. She says she is an ex-African princess. Rather, she is the idol of a mob of street urchins called the Angels.

Good thesping by Belinda Becker as the black girl, and by Justin Williams as the brother who breathes some life into the film. But protagonist Steven Weber is a dud. Cristina Hoyos, Spain's top flamenco dancer, is cast as a madame and never gets to dance; Angela Molina appears only a few seconds on screen as a hooker. Feodor Atkins is at his menacing best as a pimp, but his part is irrelevant.

Financed by European tv and government film groups, item is basically a quota-filler for tv.

—Besa.