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Anastasi
(The Face)
(SWEDISH)

Stockholm, Dec. 30.

Svensk Filmindustri release. With Max von Sydow, Ingrid Thulin, Gunnar Bjornstrand, Naima Wifstrand, Bengt Ekerot, Bibi Andersson, Gertrud Fridh, Lars Ekborg, Toivo Pawlo, Erland Josephson, Ake Fridell, Sif Ruud, Oscar Ljung, Ulla Sjoblom, Axel Duberg, Birgitta Pettersson. Directed by Ingmar Bergman. Screenplay, Bergman; camera, Gunnar Fischer; music, Erik Nordgren. At Roda Kvarn, Stockholm. Running time 102 MINS.

Vogler	Max von Sydow
Manda Aman	Ingrid Thulin
Vergerus	Gunnar Bjornstrand
Grandmother	Naima Wifstrand
Spiegel	Bengt Ekerot
Sara	Bibi Andersson
Ottilia	Gertrud Fridh
Simson	Lars Ekborg
Starbeck	Toivo Pawlo
Everman	Erland Josephson
Tubal	Ake Fridell
Sofia	Sif Ruud
Antonsson	Oscar Ljung
Henrietta	Ulla Sjoblom
Rustan	Axel Duberg
Sanna	Birgitta Pettersson

In a world filled with mysticism, Ingmar Bergman manifests his artistic screen skill to excite, frighten, fascinate, entertain and seduce his audience. He strives for an impression of the whole and has a most watchful eye for details. Ponderings on love and death, the meaninglessness of life, and the insolvable problems of man form the basis of "The Face."

This feature dwells on the question of whether there are supernatural powers or not. Bergman comes to no conclusion, but shows that man is susceptible to the tricks of a magician. Fascinated by happenings for which there is no immediate explanation, man is seduced and made to believe.

The story is set in Stockholm during the 1840s and surrounds an unsuccessful magician, strikingly portrayed by Max von Sydow. He and his troupe are brought to the home of the police commissioner, who along with a doctor and a civil servant want to test his mystical powers. The magician's supernatural gifts are doubtful, but his presence results in numerous strange and unexpected happenings.

By setting his film more than 100 years in the past, Bergman avoids the problems of modern day realism. With death and fright always lurking in the background, he has created a mystical thriller that belongs among the better recent

European films. When he has built up an overpowering tension he lets his audience relax in moments burlesque. However, time and time again he gets away from the main theme and thereby slows up the motion.

Without question "The Face" rates along with Bergman's outstanding recent releases, but it doesn't quite reach the heights and concentration he attained in "Wild Strawberries," "Close to Life," "Summer Interlude" or his astounding prologue to "The Naked Night."

The large cast is made up of a good many of Sweden's leading actors. A lasting impression is made by the magician's grandmother played by experienced actress Naima Wifstrand. Throughout, however, it can be said that Bergman displays his ability to get the most out of his actors as many of them give inspired performances. The photography by Gunnar Fischer, who has filmed a number of his movies, rates with the best anywhere.

Like many of Bergman's other pics, "The Face" is aimed at a rather exclusive film-minded audience.

1958 was a big year for Bergman as several of his pics were awarded prizes at festivals in Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Stratford, Canada, and Buenos Aires. They also received special attention at the Edinburgh festival. "The Seventh Seal" was rated the best foreign film of the year by Helsinki critics and "Wild Strawberries" was praised in London. *Sher.*