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WINTER LIGHT (NATTVARDSGÄSTERNA)

Director: Ingmar Bergman • Sweden 1962 80 minutes • Cast: Ingrid Thulin, Gunnar Björnstrand, Max von Sydow

"Of its kind, the most impressive film Bergman has created" (Jorn Donner). The spare and moving WINTER LIGHT is perhaps Bergman's most anguished exploration of the spiritual crisis which arose from his overwhelming sense of "the silence of God." (Bergman commented: "In WINTER LIGHT I swept my house clean.") In an isolated village, a pastor finds that his attempts to minister to the needs of his parishioners and to offer them comfort are becoming increasingly futile and meaningless. When a local fisherman becomes obsessed with fear of the atomic bomb and commits suicide, the pastor is driven to one final act of faith. Sven Nykvist's textured cinematography evokes an atmosphere of wintry isolation and failing light for Bergman's magnificently performed passion play. "One of the most moving films I have ever seen. The total effect is shattering" (*Commonweal*). Bergman writes in *Images: My Life in Film*: "It is satisfying to see WINTER LIGHT after a quarter of a century. I believe that nothing in it has eroded or broken down."

Friday, June 3 8:30 p.m.

Cinemathèque Ontario, June '05.