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Nastazja

Andrzej Wajda

POLAND/JAPAN, 1994

100 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
Production Company: **H.I.T/Say-To Workshop Inc./Television Tokyo Channel 12 Ltd.**

Producer: **Hisashi Ito, Masato Sakakibara, Teruhiko Abe**
Screenplay: **Andrzej Wajda, Maciej Karpinski**, based on **Fyodor Dostoevsky's** novel "The Idiot"

Cinematography: **Pawet Edelman**

Editor: **Ewa Smal**

Production Design: **Krystyna**

Zachwatowicz

Sound: **Malgorzata Lewandowska, Fumio Hashimoto**

Music: **Malgorzata Przedpelska-Bieniek**

Principal Cast: **Tamasaburo Bando, Toshiyuki Nagashima**

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This film is indeed mysterious. Poland's most renowned filmmaker, the incomparable Andrzej Wajda, long fascinated by Japanese Kabuki theatre and, in particular, the renowned actor Tamasaburo Bando, decided that he would adapt the last chapter of Dostoevsky's novel "The Idiot" for his latest film.

Furthermore, Wajda decided that he would shoot this most Russian of novels in Japanese, and that Tamasaburo (Kabuki actors are known by their first stage name) would play a double role: that of Prince Myshkin, the so-called idiot of the book, and Nastazja, the enigmatic temptress who tortures both him and his rival, Rogozhin. Shot in Warsaw over a 13-day period, employing the interior of the famous Pac Palace for his sets, Wajda has turned this film into a brilliant tour-de-force.

"The Idiot" is one of Dostoevsky's most complex and disturbing works, distinguished by the enigmatic Nastazja, who cannot make up her mind which man she should marry, Myshkin or Rogozhin. The film sees the two men confront each other after Nastazja has fled from the altar where she was meant to marry Myshkin. Alone in a dark, dimly lit drawing room, the two men reminisce and spar, philosophize and discuss.

The frail epileptic Myshkin, dressed in white, is the complete opposite of the virile, bearded Rogozhin. The man of thought meets the man of action, and the story of their mutual obsession for Nastazja is told during an evening of wonderfully realized

dialogue and flashbacks, with Nastazja in the next room. Tamasaburo's effortless and dreamlike switching from the role of the prince to that of Nastazja adds to the mysterious ambiguity which Wajda has made the centre of this film.

Nastazja is a remarkable film, haunting and devastatingly hypnotic in effect, full of the tortured humanity which Dostoevsky and Wajda know so well and elevate to a plane of pure spirituality.

■ **Piers Handling**

Andrzej Wajda was born in 1926 at Suwalki, in north-east Poland. After dropping out of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, he enrolled in the National Film School in Lodz. He graduated in 1954 and became assistant to director Aleksander Ford. Films include: *Kanal* (57), *Ashes and Diamonds* (58), *Lotna* (59), *Landscape After Battle* (70), *The Birch-Wood* (71), *The Wedding* (72), *Shadow Line* (76), *Rough Treatment* (80), *The Conductor* (80), *Man of Iron* (81), *Love in Germany* (83), *Crime and Punishment* (87), *Korczak* (90), *Horse Hair Ring* (93), *Nastazja* (94).