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Sir LEW GRADE and MARTIN STARGER present

Autumn Sonata

a film by

INGMAR BERGMAN

with

INGRID BERGMAN - LIV ULLMANN

LENA NYMAN

HALVAR BJÖRK

Director of Photography

SVEN NYKVIST, A.S.C.

From

SUEDE-FILM, PARIS

FILMEDIS, PARIS

Production Company

PERSONAFILM GMBH, MUNICH

(I)
FROM (T) ENTERTAINMENT
(C)

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Opens Los Angeles: October 18th at the

MANN FINE ARTS THEATRE

THE AUTUMN SONATA

A FILM BY

INGMAR BERGMAN

INGRID BERGMAN

LIV ULLMAN

LENA NYMAN

HALVAR BJÖRK

GEORG LØKKEBERG

GUNNAR BJÖRNSTRAND

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CAROLINE VON ROSEN

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FILM-TEKNIK
 LOUIS LINDBERG

FILMED WITH

ARRIFLEX 35 BL
 EASTMANCOLOR

FILMED AT

NORSK FILM A/S STUDIO, OSLO

TRANSLATOR

ALAN BLAIR

MUSIC PLAYED BY

KÄBI LARETEI
 Chopin: Prelude Nr 2 a

CLAUDE GENETAY
 Bach: Suite Nr 4 E_b

FRANS BRÜGGEN
 GUSTAV LEONHARDT
 ANNER BYLSMA
 Handel: Sonata in F, Op. 1

PRODUCED BY

PERSONA FILM GmbH, MUNICH

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THE AUTUMN SONATA

SYNOPSIS

Charlotte Andergast (Ingrid Bergman), a successful concert pianist who travels internationally to give recitals, has just lost Leonardo (Georg Lokkeberg), the man with whom she had been living for many years. His death shakes her, leaving her lonely and bewildered. Her daughter, Eva (Liv Ullmann), married to a clergyman and living in Norway, invites her mother for a visit.

During the days that follow, the two women are confronted with each other. By turns they seek and repulse each other, but the encounter is crucial for the future of them both.

Director Ingmar Bergman describes the above as the "external plot" of 'The Autumn Sonata'. He explains: "On an internal plane what it all boils down to, of course, is love. The presence and absence of love, the longing for love. Love's lies, love that is deformed and love as our sole chance of survival."

Ingrid Bergman, who plays the mother, Charlotte Andergast, describes the story as follows. "It is about a mother and daughter and their misunderstandings. The mother visits the daughter. Carrying enormous hatred, they put their cards on the table, accusing one another of everything that's happened."

THE AUTUMN SONATA

INGMAR BERGMAN: FASCINATION IS THE KEY

Ingmar Bergman never embarks on a new production without due gestation of the subject. 'The Autumn Sonata' for instance, has been in his mind for several years.

"I have been thinking about it for years. I have never been a daughter myself, obviously, but I have known quite a few, and I have always realised that the mother-and-daughter relationship is not at all similar to that of a father-and-son or father-and-daughter. Perhaps because of their education - and this is my personal opinion - women are more afraid than men to show their aggressive feelings, they suppress them, but they go deep all the same. And in the relationship the mother may identify herself with the daughter, the daughter with the mother. Generally a father and son are much more outspoken to each other, their relationship is not so complicated. In a way it is strange that the subject is so little dealt with, both in literature and on film."

"Charlotte in 'The Autumn Sonata' (Ingrid Bergman) is a career woman, a concert pianist, and when she visits her daughter Eva (Liv Ullmann), Eva accuses her of having deserted her, having sacrificed the child for the career. Charlotte is not at all prepared for this discussion, she tries to defend herself against the aggressions, but she succeeds very badly."

THE AUTUMN SONATABIOGRAPHY/INGMAR BERGMANINGMAR BERGMAN is the director

Ingmar Bergman, who wrote and directed 'The Autumn Sonata' is revered by his peers, adored by his actors and enjoys a reputation second to none. He once said that he is married to the theatre, but that filming is his mistress. To use his own analogy, he is frequently unfaithful to his wife, to the delight of an army of worshippers.

Bergman was born in Uppsala, Sweden on July 14, 1918 into a world where four years of war had altered the old values for all time. Sweden had largely escaped those changes, though dissent was present, notably in the work of August Strindberg, whose visions would influence the future shape of Swedish society. Bergman himself later read all 55 volumes of Strindberg's collected works and their influence would extend to Bergman's own work.

Bergman's father was a Lutheran priest who later became an official preacher at the royal court of Stockholm. The church not only dominated Bergman's Sundays, but shaped his everyday life causing first rejection and then acceptance in later life.

With his older brother, Ingmar showed an early interest in the arts, building stages for puppet shows, writing plays for puppets and the like. He acted in amateur theatre productions, making his debut as a mushroom. His introduction to the cinema came when he was six, and at roughly the same time he saw his first professional stage performance. It left him in a state of shock for days, causing the same emotional impact that his own work would later have on others.

"The desire to write came in the late '30s," Bergman recalls. "During one autumn, all of a sudden, I wrote six plays and one opera at a stretch, within months. It was like being in a state of constant intoxication."

In 1941 he wrote and produced a play of his own in Stockholm, 'The Death of Punch'. Bergman rapidly established a glowing reputation as a director in the theatre and also wrote and directed plays for radio. In 1944 his first screenplay, 'Frenzy' was filmed by Alf Sjöberg with Bergman as assistant director.

The following year Bergman directed for the first time - 'Crisis'. From then on he directed films almost continuously, but still found time for the theatre and was a resident director at the National Theatre for a number of years.

His international reputation was established by screen landmarks like 'Smiles of a Summer Night' (1955), 'The Seventh Seal' (1956), 'Wild Strawberries' (1957), 'The Silence' (1963), 'Persona' (1966), 'Hour of the Wolf' (1968), 'The Shame' (1968), 'Cries and Whispers' (1972), 'Scenes from a Marriage' (1973), 'Face to Face' (1976) and 'The Serpent's Egg' (1977).

Bergman has, increasingly, attracted a regular repertory company of performers and technicians who recur from film to film. Cinematographer Sven Nykvist has made twenty films with Bergman; Liv Ullmann has starred in nine of his pictures and other familiar names crop up again and again.

After a complicated drama over Income Tax, now resolved, Bergman left his native Sweden and moved to Munich. His lure is such that it would not matter if he set up residence in Timbuktu - his actors and technicians would go there for him. "I will go to the end of the world for him," Liv Ullman once said. "If he wants me to go and work for him. Anywhere."

Most actors feel the same way.

THE AUTUMN SONATAFEATURE"My last film," says Ingrid Bergman

Ingrid Bergman was running a good ten minutes behind schedule but when she arrived at the shabby stage door (why are they always shabby?) it was a little like the Nordic sun coming out: brilliant but with a hint of asperity. In the flurry of introductions, apologies, firm handshakes and bustle, we moved from the bleak paint-peeling entrance into the star dressing-room, a cosy, comfortable place packed with greetings telegrams, extravagant flower arrangements and capacious plants.

"I'm not very good with plants," Miss Bergman worried. "It's fortunate someone else looks after them."

Most screen stars are a disappointment when you meet them in real life: smaller than their celluloid image, less magnetic, more ordinary. Rooted to earth and water rather than fire and air. Not Ingrid Bergman. She is everything you dared to visualise and just possibly the least artificial woman ever to become a major star. She has survived the years - and an American scandal at the height of her fame the ferocity of which in today's more honest atmosphere is impossible to imagine - enhanced by life. No Dresden doll this, to be crushed by controversy, but an energetic, straightforward and completely mesmerising life-force.

Where once it was the movies that dominated, it is the theatre now which claims her attention. A six month stint in London's West End mecca in 'Waters of the Moon' represents a punishing schedule of eight performances a week (a strain for a much younger woman) requiring daily doses of strong throat lozenges to ward off laryngitis. "I try to rest during the day, but it's difficult," she shrugged. "There are interviews, television, people to see."

It would be nice to think that film directors were still beating a path to her door as they did twenty, thirty, forty years ago. Astonishingly it was forty years ago that the young Ingrid Bergman made that first, fateful journey from her native Sweden to America where she was hailed by the New York Times as "A woman so beautiful that she is herself a work of art." Head-turning stuff, but Ingrid Bergman's Nordic common-sense prevailed. Now, in the autumn of her film career, she refuses to settle for lesser roles and is philosophical. When you have had the cream, it is difficult to settle for less without bitterness.

Recently she made what she confidently announced as "my last film" - 'The Autumn Sonata' for the legendary Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. It was an experience Ingrid Bergman savoured. After all, it took thirteen years to happen.

"We met thirteen years ago," she recalled. "We liked each other and felt we could work together. First of all he was going to adapt a book for me; then he decided to look for an original story. Then Ingmar was suddenly appointed director of the National Theatre. I wrote him a letter saying I was probably the only person who was sorry. He replied saying obviously we couldn't make that particular movie but not to worry, one day it would be made."

"He spent about four years with the National Theatre and then went back to movies, but I never heard from him. Then three years ago he was at the Cannes Film Festival with 'Cries and Whispers'. His letter was ten years old - almost to the day - so I made a copy of it and put it in his pocket, not with any bitterness or nastiness, but just to show him that time marches on. I didn't hear from him for two years, then one day he called me and said, 'Now I have the idea.' It took a while to write and then we had to wait for Liv Ullmann to be available, but now we've done it." The sense of triumph is as much for the fact of doing it as the work itself.

The experience of working with Bergman was keenly anticipated and lost nothing in the actuality. "Every actor wants to work with Bergman," she said. "He has an amazing effect on people's work - they are much better in his movies than they are with other directors. I always thought, 'Well, he must have something which he gives his actors, because they are better with him.' Of course his reputation is formidable: I heard he was a beast, very temperamental, always yelling and screaming, but he never raised his voice once. He was a lamb. I asked him how come, and he told me, 'I've matured.'"

'The Autumn Sonata' has been described by its creator as a film about love: the presence and absence of love, the longing for love, love's lies, love that is deformed and love as our sole chance of survival. Ingrid Bergman plays a concert pianist, Charlotte Andergast, who has recently lost Leonardo, the man with whom she had lived for many years. His death shakes her, leaving her in a state of loneliness and bewilderment. Her daughter, Eva (Liv Ullmann), who has been married for some years to a clergyman and lives in a small town in Norway, asks her mother to visit her. For a couple of days the two women confront each other, seeking and repulsing each other by turns. The encounter is crucial for the future of them both.

This then is the film which Ingrid Bergman has waited over a decade to make, the film which has dominated her waking hours for several months and so moved her that, sooner than do inferior work, she would prefer to bow out with it as her final performance.

"I was delighted to work with Liv because she's a wonderful actress and meeting her and working with her was a marvellous experience. We rehearsed for two weeks in Stockholm before we started and during that time we cut a lot, which is the way Ingmar works. His first script was four and a half hours but the finished film is about 95 minutes. He says 'I put everything in it and then I take it out and take it out.' Which he did.

"Working with him is so interesting; he's such a kind and understanding man, full of ideas and invention. You feel you're in good hands. And he listens to his actors; he's big enough to listen to your ideas and if he likes them then he'll use them. He's very flexible and open, allowing his actors to feel they are creating too, and are not just marionettes in his hands."

Did she find him the most stimulating director in her career? She smiled, patient with a world that demands superlatives. "One of the most," she emphasized. "My career has been so long - over forty years - and it's not fair to Jean Renoir, Alfred Hitchcock, George Cukor, Victor Fleming ..." her heavily accented English renews the magic of the names. "But certainly he was one of the most stimulating."

A bonus of 'The Autumn Sonata' was working in her native Swedish. "It was much easier. It felt like heaven." But she is a natural linguist, speaking Italian to her children, and English professionally, though she travels everywhere with a voice coach.

Both Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann decided to dub 'The Autumn Sonata' themselves, rather than hand over the baby to someone else. "We don't normally dub our own films, but we're so fond of it we can't bear to let go of it."

For Ingrid Bergman, 'The Autumn Sonata' was a completely satisfying experience, rare enough for her to appreciate the contrast. The modern cinema she finds out of kilter with her range. "The films today don't suit me one bit," she said rationally, without rancour. Yes, she agreed, there are some very good new directors, but there are also a whole new breed of actresses who want to work. Of course, the occasional cameo is irresistible, like 'Murder on the Orient Express'. "I can play mothers and grandmothers and old witches, and those parts are not always very interesting to do. But a cameo like 'Murder on the Orient Express' was lovely, and my one scene, thanks to Sidney Lumet's cutting,

which kept the camera always on my face, was shameless scene stealing. Poor Albert Finney didn't get a look in because Lumet never cut away from my face."

But might there not be more films with Ingmar Bergman? "Oh, we talked about it, oh yes, but it took him twelve years to find this story, so if it's going to take twelve years to find another, I don't know. I can't wait that long."

In a sense she sees 'The Autumn Sonata' as the logical conclusion to her film career - a career encompassing such landmarks as 'Casablanca', 'Gaslight', 'Spellbound', 'Anastasia', 'Indiscreet', 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness'.

"My first film in America was 'Intermezzo' and I played a concert pianist. Now I'm playing a concert pianist in 'The Autumn Sonata'. My career has come full circle."