

Document Citation

Title	Telegrafisten (The telegraphist)
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1993 Mar 08
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Telegrafisten, Gustavson, Erik, 1993

TELEGRAFISTEN

(THE TELEGRAPHIST)
(NORWEGIAN-COLOR-B&W)

A Nordic Screen Development production, in association with Schibsted Film, Metronome Prods., Norsk Film. (Intl. sales: Majestic Films & Television, London.) Produced by Petter Borgli, Tomas Backström. Directed by Erik Gustavson. Screenplay, Lars Saabye Christensen, from Knut Hamsun's novel "Svaermere" (Dreamers). Camera (Eastmancolor/B&W), Philip Øgaard; editor, Sylvia Ingemarsson; music, Randall Meyers; production design, Tina Schwab; art direction, Billy Johansson; costume design, Inger Derlick; sound design, Meyers; sound, Gunnar Meidell; assistant director, Marius Holst; associate producer, James Frazee. Reviewed at Berlin Film Festival (competing), Feb. 17, 1993. Running time: 101 MIN.

Ove Rolandsen Bjørn Floberg
Elise Mack Marie Richardson
Mack Jarl Kulle
Cpt. Henriksen Ole Ernst
Miss Van Loos Kjersti Holmen
Levion Bjørn Sundquist
Pastor's wife Elisabeth Sand
Pastor Svein Sturla Hungnes
Olga Camilla Strøm Henriksen
Fredrik Johan H:Son Kjellgren
Also with: Knut Haugmark, Reidar Sørensen, Maria Bonnevie, Per Jansen.

"THE VARIETY 3.8.93
The Telegraphist" is a top-of-the-line Scandi costumer with a quirky edge. Lushly packaged, mildly erotic tale of a fjord Romeo and the three women in his life deserves quality arthouse playdates.

In light of disappointing biz for recent Scandi fare like "The Best Intentions," this one will need heavy marketing, good reviews and careful subtitling that conveys the subtle humor in Lars Saabye Christensen's finely crafted reworking of Knut Hamsun's novel "Dreamers."

Setting is a small coastal town in northern Norway in 1903. Local telegraphist Ove Rolandsen (breezily played by Robert Redford lookalike Bjørn Floberg) moonlights as a inventor looking for the big kill. He also has eyes for Elise (Marie Richardson), lovely daughter of local tycoon Mack (Jarl Kulle), owner of a fish-glue factory.

Elise isn't immune to Rolandsen's charms but is already promised to a German ship owner, whose business connections her dad desperately needs. In between keeping his mousy fiancée happy, and seducing the local

pastor's wife (Elisabeth Sand), Rolandsen tries to make himself financially more attractive to Elise and her dad by coming up with a marketable invention.

Rolandsen's elaborate plan works, resulting in an unexpected business alliance. However, the hand of the elusive Elise turns out to be another matter.

Shooting on stunning locations in northern Norway, well integrated with studio interiors, helmer Erik Gustavson gives a standard novelistic look to the story. What's fresh is the pic's strain of ironic humor, nicely handled by Floberg and Swedish vet Jarl Kulle, and a risk-taking quality already evident in Gustavson's previous "Herman."

There's a lightness of touch that marks pic out from the run of Scandi costumers and, though far from heavy-duty erotic, the long undertow of the pair's unconsummated desire is neatly maintained. Richardson, an Ingmar Bergman regular on stage and TV, is fine as the proud beauty, and the Norwegian-Swedish-Danish cast melds smoothly.

Philip Øgaard's eye-catching photography and Randall Meyer's evocative score are top drawer. — *Derek Elley*