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AFTER THE REHEARSAL

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(R)

(TRIUMPH)

Color/1.85

72 Mins.

Cast: Erland Josephson, Ingrid Thulin, Lena Olin.

Credits: Written and directed by Ingmar Bergman. Produced by Jorn Donner. Director of photography: Sven Nykvist. Art direction: Anna Asp.

Sparse, intense psychodrama makes minor but interesting Bergman. Only devoted fans will want to see this one-set miniature about a theatre director confronting his art, the passing years and two actresses with whom he is both professionally and emotionally entangled.

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Ingmar Bergman's *After the Rehearsal* isn't important Bergman but it is a welcome return to the more traditional mode that prevailed after his early symbolic and brooding works. In this made-for-TV film, he espouses a sparse style (one set, three major characters) to

examine the psychological underpinnings of his protagonists and, at the same time, grapples with such important issues as passion, death, and the actor's life. While *After the Rehearsal* is minimal in every respect (including its 72-minute running time), it is remarkably compelling. The film is talky but the talk is interesting. The director also achieves an almost embarrassing intimacy by resorting to emotionally-charged close-ups—a Bergman trademark.

After the Rehearsal concerns a theatre director (*Fanny and Alexander* star Erland Josephson) who, while relaxing on the set following a rehearsal, is visited by two of his actresses. One is young, talented, ambitious and very desirable; the other, played by Ingrid Thulin, another veteran of the Bergman stable, is an alcoholic, sickly, over-the-hill actress. During Josephson's two separate dialogues with the women, emotions are bared, aspects of life and art illuminated. Above all, the theme of aging—lost youth, lost opportunities, lost loves—prevails, so that the film's overall effect is rather pessimistic. But *After the Rehearsal* also has much to say about the theatre and acting (how an actor, for instance, can use his own personal problems to enrich his work on stage). The film's greatest achievement, however, is the remarkable incisiveness that Bergman and his extraordinary actors achieve.

Although confined to one set, the production looks smart, thanks largely to the efforts of *Fanny and Alexander*'s Oscar-winning cinematographer Sven Nykvist and art director Anna Asp. Critical notices will probably be respectful, so that not only diehard fans will be lured to the film—a minor but laudable addition to Bergman's brilliant oeuvre.

—Doris Toumarkine