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VARIETY (Wednesday, May 21, 1969)

RITORNA
(THE RITUAL)
SWEDISH

Cannes, May 20

Svensk Filmindustri release and production. Stars Ingrid Thulin, Anders Ek, Gunnar Bjornstrand, Erik Hell. Written and directed by Ingmar Bergman; camera Sven Nykvist. No other credits. Reviewed at Cannes Fest (Non-Competing). Running Time, 75 MINS.

Thea.....Ingrid Thulin
Sebastian.....Anders Ek
Hans.....Gunnar Bjornstrand
Judge.....Erik Hell

Whatever that high-domed filmmaker sitting implacably up in Sweden does is of interest to world film people, press and personages, and especially film fests ...it is a series of scenes concerning three famous actors, who have a variety troupe they take around the world, appearing before a judge on some vague charge of obscenity against one of them.

The trio consists of a neurotic woman, Ingrid Thulin, her husband, more bland and balanced but caught between a love-hate for her, and another member of the troupe who is her lover. Latter two are played by Gunnar Bjornstrand and Anders Ek, respectively, with the prying judge shrewdly limned by Erik Hell.

The acting is knowing, direct and professionally dazzling as is Bergman's calm technical prowess. But again the personal symbols, the ritual of art and whether it is necessary or not, and other inferences may engross many or leave others puzzled or somewhat left out of Bergman's constant attempts to communicate with God or mankind and usually finding it wanting or impossible but at least making the attempt.