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AGNES CECILIA

(SWEDISH)

A Svensk Filmindustri presentation of a Svensk Filmindustri-Kanal 1 Drama SVT-Swedish Film Institute production. Produced by Waldemar Bergendahl, Ingrid Dalunde. Directed by Anders Grönros. Screenplay, Grönros, based on Maria Gripe's novel; camera (color), Per Källberg; editor, Göran Carmbäck, Christer Furubrand; music, Johan Söderqvist; sound, Klas Dykhoff, Asa Lindgren-Dawidsson, Christjan Persson; production design, Niklas Ejve, Kristoffer Sjöström; assistant director, Anna Carlsten, Elisabeth Gillberg. Reviewed at Svensk Filmindustri screening room, Stockholm, Aug. 8, 1991. Running time: **133 MIN.**

With: Gloria Tapia, Ronn Elfors, Stina Ekblad, Allan Svensson, Vanna Rosenberg, Cecilia Milocco, Mimi Pollak, Meta Velander, Percy Brandt, Natasha Chiapponi-Grönos, Benjamin Elfors, Suzanne Reuter.

Thoughtful and moody, "Agnes Cecilia" combines a ghost story with a young girl's efforts to rid herself of childhood trauma. Pic should turn out a winner and travel well on the festival circuit.

Since his first feature in 1979, director Anders Grönros has worked mainly in television. Several of his works have dealt with death and near-death experiences, themes echoed in his second theatrical.

The story centers on Nora, whose parents were killed in a car accident when she was five. Told her parents moved far away, she's taken in by a couple with a son her age.

Ten years later, the family moves into an older apartment in their small city. Immediately sensing something strange, Nora hears footsteps when no one's there and sees mysterious lights. An old clock, deemed irreparable, starts to tick and its hands move backward. The family dog refuses to enter Nora's room, and someone — or something — seems intent on rescuing the young girl from accidents.

Through old photos and notes she finds hidden in the apartment, Nora attempts to unravel the increasingly intricate mystery involving Nora's family, her ancestors and a young girl who lived in the beginning of the century and with whom she has much in common. Eventually, Nora comes to terms with the death of her parents so she can put a stop to the loneliness and insecurity that has haunted her for 10 years.

Grönros has made a very good film, though somewhat overlong. He's good with actors and has a keen sense of visuals and sound. He creates a moody atmosphere amid everyday settings, and though nothing really scary happens, he manages to generate much suspense in the scenes where Nora begins sensing a supernatural presence.

Most of all, "Agnes Cecilia" (the title refers to two names important in solving the mystery) is a film about a troubled young girl's drive to come to

terms with herself. Her story is told with earnest, low-keyed sincerity, with the help of thought-provoking symbols. Every occurrence isn't clearly explained, but the mystery provides fodder for discussion.

Acting overall is good, with special laurels to first-time screen actress Gloria Tapia. All tech credits are fine, especially cinematography by Per Källberg, who contributes much to pic's overall quality.

— *Gunnar Rehlin*