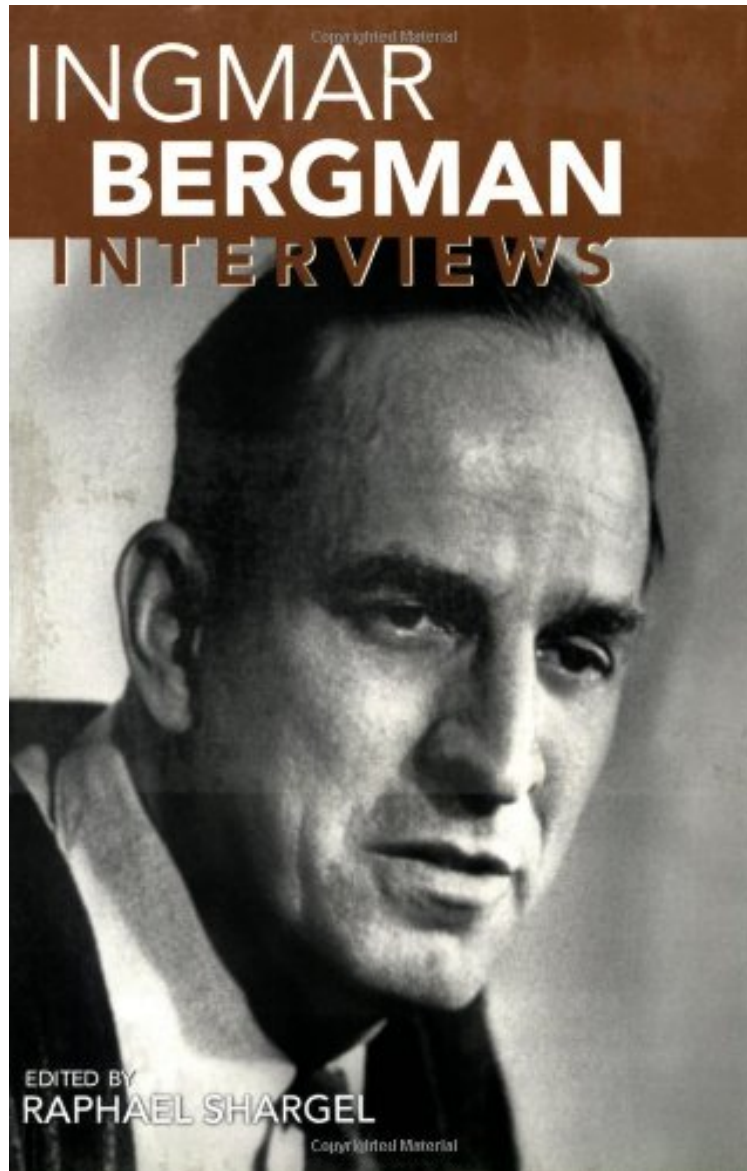


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Ingmar Bergman: Interviews (Conversations with Filmmakers (Paperback))

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From Brand: University Press of Mississippi : Ingmar Bergman: Interviews (Conversations with Filmmakers (Paperback)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ingmar Bergman: Interviews (Conversations with Filmmakers (Paperback)):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Opening up the roof
By Kerry Walters
Toward the end of his 1971 conversation with Richard Meryman, easily the best interview in this collection, Bergman says that "to make a film is to try to open up the roof--so we can breathe" (p. 112). This is as good a one-line characterization of Bergman's project as I know. Bergman's films defy easy analysis, sometimes because they're poorly conceived, as Bergman himself admits (he thinks, for example, that "Through a Glass Darkly" is a prime example), sometimes because even Bergman in retrospect isn't quite sure what he was trying to do, but sometimes because there's simply a great deal of depth to them. How, for example, to collapse the message of loneliness, despair, human nature, and hope conveyed in "The Silence" into a couple of sentences? But what Bergman at his best does succeed in doing is expanding us, opening up the roofs of our worldviews, inviting us--sometimes forcing us--to breathe in an atmosphere that's crisp and thin and heady. Readers who pick up Raphael Shargel's collection of Bergman interviews in the hope that the master will explain what his films are about will be disappointed. Bergman tells us that he wants to elicit emotional experiences first and cerebral ones second in his films; that dreams have influenced his scripts and his director's eye; that he works best when his days are rigorously scheduled; that he thinks a film is "selected reality" (p. 106), which reminds me of Tarkovsky's beautiful characterization of film-making as "sculpting time"; that he thinks a certain "childishness"--a naivete, an openness to experience--is essential for good art. But what Bergman doesn't do, appropriately enough, is tell us how to interpret his films. So in many ways, his interviews are as mysterious as his artworks. The interviews collected by Shargel vary in quality. As I've mentioned, Richard Meryman's is the best of the lot, closely followed by A. Alvarez's. The "Playboy" interview conducted by Cynthia Grenier is worse than worthless, and seems intent on focusing on little else than sex in "The Silence" (the interview was conducted shortly after the film's American debut). There are numerous typos in the text. "Feeling" is consistently spelled "felling," for example, and at one point Bergman is referred to as the "15 year old creator of "The Silence"! The only other book I've read by the University of Mississippi Press was also poorly proofed. Strange that an academic press is so careless in its copyediting. Shargel's collection is a decent starting point for readers new to Bergman, but better ones include Bergman's memoirs, *The Magic Lantern* (2007) and *Images* (1995). Jesse Kalin's *The Films of Ingmar Bergman* (2003) is highly recommended for serious students.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly valuable
By nightreader
No film critic could have approached Bergman with such passionate understanding and insight as Raphael Shargel. Following his film reviews in *The New Leader* for years, I am not surprised by his far reaching ability to grasp a life's work as he does his movies, always interested in their impact on society and us as individuals as well as the history that produced them in our time. When you get to it, your understanding of Bergman and appreciation for the value of interviews across a lifetime will be as rich as this book's index.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great book!
Highly informative!
By MadAboutFilm
I'm a big fan of Bergman, and I was thrilled to see these interviews come back into print. They tell you so much about Bergman's life, films, and his personal opinions. Organized chronologically, this book reveals a development of Bergman both as an artist and as a person. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in learning about Bergman's genius or film in general. The introduction offers terrific insight into the mind of an artist.

Although Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) holds an undisputed place in the pantheon of major filmmakers, mention of his name unjustly evokes images of monolithic gloom and despair. All of his pictures, including his comedies, deal seriously with faith, morality, and mortality, but audiences and critics too often neglect the extraordinary wit and vitality that can be found in *Wild Strawberries*, *Scenes from a Marriage*, *Fanny and Alexander*, and many others. In *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*, the director discusses various stages of his career and the many facets of his work. The man and his films are revealed to be funny, full of life, and surprising as well as thoughtful, complex, and profound. In interviews with important writers, critics, and filmmakers, including James Baldwin, Michiko Kakutani, John Simon, and Vilgot Sijman, Bergman describes a grand vision that justifies his affinity with Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Dostoyevsky. The volume begins with a 1957 piece, conducted just as he completed his early masterpiece *The Seventh Seal*, and ends in 2002, as he was preparing to direct *Saraband*, his latest film. Raphael Shargel is associate professor of English at Providence College, where he teaches literature and film. From 1997 to 2006, he was film critic for the *New Leader*. He has also written about film for MSNBC.com and reviewed movies on local radio.

From the Publisher
This book of interviews with the magnificently versatile artistic genius - Collects interviews with the famed director of *Fanny and Alexander*, *Wild Strawberries*, *The Seventh Seal*, and *Persona* - Includes interviews conducted by James Baldwin, John Simon, and Michiko Kakutani - Covers most of Bergman's career from 1957 to 2002 - Expands the *Conversations with Filmmakers Series*
From the Inside Flap
Interviews with the famed director of *Wild Strawberries*, *Scenes from a Marriage*, *The Seventh Seal*, *Saraband*, and other films
About the Author
Raphael Shargel is associate professor of English at Providence College, where he teaches literature and film. From 1997 to 2006, he is film critic for the *New Leader*. He has also written about film for MSNBC.com and reviewed movies on local radio.