

After the Wedding 'Efter brylluppet' (2006) Susanne Bier

P Michell, 2015.

Good resource for things happening:
<http://www.cinemascanadinavia.com>

From the 1950s Swedish Cinema was Ingmar Bergman. He has influenced most of the new filmmakers around the world. Woody Allen is a great admirer.

In the 2000s TV shows like 'The Killing', 'The Bridge', 'The Legacy' have made their way to BBC and then onto rest of the world. Unusually Australia seems to get some Scandinavian shows before . Yay SBS!

Cast:

Mads Mikkelsen, Mona Malm, Rolf Lassgard, Sidse Babett Knudsen

Susanne Bier, Director & Writer (18 films)

Danish. Other films include - In a Better World (2010) and Brothers (2004).

International student - Arts at Hebrew Uni in Jerusalem, Architecture at Architectural Assoc in London, Danish School of Film in Copenhagen.

Wrote story for this film.

Guardian Interview:

<http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2013/apr/14/susanne-bier-love-all-you-need>

Anders Thomas Jensen, (49 films inc writer) co-screenplay.

Other films indulge In a Better World, Brothers, The Duchess, Adam's Apples, Stealing Rembrandt.

Quote:

"My first job as a filmmaker is to not make a boring film. I don't see a conflict between art and commerce, but I do see one between boredom and commerce. I think once you start structuring according to theme, things become more educational than emotional, and I don't think that works. I think it really is about addressing the conflict between the characters and addressing the storytelling and psychology. That way, the feelings are the undercurrent of the whole story, which is exciting."

Mad Mikelsen (Jacob)

Danish. 43 credits. One of the most recognised Danish actors working. Famous for Unit 1 TV series. Also speaks Swedish as well as English (and probably other languages too). Voted sexiest man in Denmark - 'I'd rather be voted that, than 'the ugliest man in Denmark'.

Favourite film Taxi Driver (1976) Scorsese.

Rolf Lassgard (Jorgen)

Swedish. Prolific actor both in film and theatre. 60 films. Known for portraying Kurt Wallander. Made quite a number of 'police' type films/tv.

Sidse Babett Knudsen (Helene)

39 credits. Danish. Famous for portraying prime minister in TV series Borgen. Currently filming 'Inferno' in USA, based on Dan Brown novel.

Style - Dogme 95

This was a movement initiated in 45 minutes by directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, where films have to abide by certain 'rules'. Susanne Bier was a member of Dogme. Though 'Wedding' is not a Dogme film. (Has elements though.)

REVIEWS

From Margaret & David 'At The Movies' ABC TV:

<http://www.abc.net.au/atthemovies/txt/s1983684.htm>

Film Comment

By Joumane Chahine

There's nothing quite as devastating as tragedy treated with sharp and precise Northern European restraint. Susanne Bier is quickly installing herself as a master in the field. Following *Open Hearts* (02) and *Brothers* (04), *After the Wedding* is the Danish director's third consecutive—and clearly symbiotic—collaboration with screenwriter Anders Thomas Jensen (a Dogme favorite who penned *Mifune* and *The King Is Alive*, and devised the characters for the recent Zentropa-produced *Red Road*). Three powerful, emotionally charged films linked by a recurring motif: the random suddenness with which calamity can enter lives, alter them forever, and yet not necessarily destroy them.

In *Open Hearts* and *Brothers*, calamity strikes directly and very early on (a paralyzing car crash in the former, the loss of a husband in Afghanistan in the latter). In *After the Wedding*, the tragedy is not so brutally evident, at least not initially. It reveals itself slowly, in tiny and often mystifying ripples, through cool shades and shaky camerawork that hints at muted undercurrents. But the impact is no less poignant.

The film's opening sequence introduces us to Jacob (Mads Mikkelsen, who also starred in *Open Hearts*, and more recently shed tears of blood as Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*), a Danish good Samaritan who has classically renounced the distasteful comforts of the West for life as a humanitarian aid worker in India, running an orphanage in dire need of funding. A mysterious magnate, Jorgen (Rolf Lassgard), seems puzzlingly keen to help—on the peculiar condition that Jacob travel to Denmark to meet with him face to face. For reasons that remain unclear at this point, Jacob is particularly unwilling to return to his native land. But the mogul is insistent. So far, the film's premise has all the trappings of a standard social drama, with the usual purging dose of Western self-loathing. Soon enough, however, Jacob finds himself back in Copenhagen, meeting with the exuberant yet unfathomable Jorgen, and accepting a casual invitation to attend the wedding of the tycoon's daughter that weekend. At this juncture the film veers off in an entirely different direction.

The seemingly random wedding invitation begins to feel fraught with suspicious intent when Jacob realizes that Jorgen's wife is his old, never quite forgotten girlfriend Helene (Sidse Babett Knudsen), and that his daughter Anna (Stine Fischer Christensen), the bride, is not actually Jorgen's biological offspring. A bare 30 minutes into the film and the business trip that was supposed to yield a clash of values and a hefty check is suddenly steering into the familiar soap territory of troubling revelations, wedding disasters, and infernal mind games. But once again, Bier and Jensen whisk us away in an unexpectedly thought-provoking direction as the forceful Jorgen, seemingly unfazed by the surrounding simmering melodrama,

makes Jacob a surprisingly generous offer. It's an offer that Jacob, humanist and idealist though he may be, initially greets with the utmost distrust, suspecting the worst.

To divulge more would be a spoiler. However, several more expectations shall be confounded, protective veneers stripped away, and emotional outbursts contained by Bier's impeccable quartet of actors before this reflection on human weakness, mortality, and the ties that bind comes to its powerfully understated denouement.

The theme of misleading appearances is a classic one. One that can all too easily become mere gimmick. Not in Bier's hands. In many ways, *After the Wedding* almost reverses that theme, calling into question the very misleadingness of appearances, putting to the test that acquired habit that we, like Jacob, tend to have, of seeking traces of ill intent in every nook of a situation we deem too replete with good intentions. Bier uses clichés not merely to upend them—that would be too easy—but to force us to challenge those short-cut judgments and ill-conceived assumptions we too often use to gauge the world around us. She confronts us with the good and the noble when we're too busy seeking proof of treachery, so convinced that the way to hell is paved with good intentions that we've almost forgotten that the way to heaven is as well.

(Film Comment - March/April 2007)

MovieMail's Review

Alex Davidson

Danish director Susanne Bier has a genius for taking melodramatic plots – *After The Wedding* features at least two wrenching revelations and many emotional scenes – and transforming them into riveting and deeply moving human dramas. Closely tied with the Dogme movement, she is one of the most exciting talents to have emerged from the recent wave of quality Danish cinema, alongside Per Fly, Pernille Fischer Christensen and Annette K. Olesen. Her superb *Brothers* confirmed her talent, and the Oscar-nominated *After The Wedding* is even better.

Mads Mikkelsen, now a familiar face after his villainous Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*, stars as Jacob, a humanitarian working on a project in Mumbai. They are in dire need of funds, and possible salvation is offered when Jacob reluctantly agrees to return to Copenhagen to meet a potential beneficiary, Jørgen (Rolf Lassgård). He agrees to attend Jørgen's daughter's wedding, but an impromptu speech given by the bride changes all their lives irrecoverably.

Scripted by Anders Thomas Jensen (*Wilbur Wants To Kill Himself*, *Open Hearts*), *After The Wedding* achieves a rare feat, given the material; although the resulting coincidences may seem far-fetched, Jensen's avoidance of histrionics and Bier's secure command of her material makes the intrigue completely believable. She is helped by a host of fine performances, with a particularly strong turn from newcomer Stine Fischer Christensen as the daughter, a performance that has already won several awards, whilst Lassgård is magnificent as Jørgen, arguably the most complex character.

Bier and her cast skillfully play with convention throughout – the aid worker is selfish and taciturn, whilst the wealthy businessman is a benevolent family man. The close relationship between Jacob and an Indian orphan, who is devastated when he leaves for Denmark, is revisited in the film's last scene, and unfolds in an unexpected and poignant conversation. An unlikely but highly successful blend of soap opera convention and Dogme aesthetics (though not officially part of the movement, the film certainly follows Dogme's "back to basics"

approach), the splendid After The Wedding consolidates the reputations of both Bier and her impressive cast.

Alex Davidson on 13th June 2007