



■ Bergman directs *The Rake's Progress* in Stockholm in 1961: (clockwise from top. l.) Margareta Hallin as Anne Trulove and Ragnar Ulfung as Tom Rakewell; the director with artists and Berger Bergling's set model; the director (third from r.), conductor Michael Gielen (second from l.) and singers Margarita Hallin, Kerstin Meyer, Ragnar Ulfung and Erik Saedén

for good measure, staged by Bergman in 1958), were very popular and were revived for many years afterwards.

During the 1950s he also found time to be married to three different women (his expertise in marriage break-ups would be put to artistic use in 1973 when he wrote his influential television drama *Scenes from a Marriage*). He was, in all, married five times. His fourth wife was the Estonian-Swedish concert pianist Käbi Laretei; soon after their marriage, in 1959, the Swedish press reported that Bergman was taking a sabbatical to write a biography of his beloved J.S. Bach. It was probably said in jest or was simply a rumour spread by Bergman. Instead he made the shockingly violent film *The Virgin Spring*, based on a medieval folk song, which won him an Oscar.

Bergman's international breakthrough came in 1955 with *Smiles of a Summer Night*, a superb comedy of manners that inspired Stephen Sondheim to compose one of his most enduring musicals, *A Little Night Music* (1973). Bergman denied Sondheim the right to use the film title, which is why the musical was named after Mozart's serenade *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. This must have amused Bergman, whose screenplay is not unlike a Lorenzo Da Ponte libretto. Da Ponte, in the form of his libretto for *Così fan tutte*, was an acknowledged influence on Igor Stravinsky while composing *The Rake's Progress*, and in 1961 it was Stravinsky's masterpiece that was the vehicle for Bergman's