

the end you have reversed some scenes and you can't do that with Mozart. Everything is organic.' However, this didn't stop Karajan from asking Bergman to direct and film *Turandot* with him. Bergman agreed, despite disliking the opera, but Karajan died before the project could be pursued.

* * *

In the 1970s Bergman was dismissed by many in the politicized Swedish cultural establishment as a representative of the bourgeoisie. At the same time his international reputation was scaling new heights after the unexpected commercial success of the psychodrama *Cries and Whispers* (1972). Hollywood producers became interested in what 'the gloomy Swede' had to offer next. Bergman presented them with an updated version of *The Merry Widow*, with which he had had such a success 20 years earlier in the theatre. For the title role he hoped to attract Barbra Streisand. She became curious and even invited the director and his wife to a pool party. Bergman wanted Al Pacino as Count Danilo, although he did worry that the actor would be too short. Rumour has it that the script was rather salacious, and it is safe to assume that some nudity was required. In one scene the widow Glawari was to have an outburst, but, as Bergman put it, 'not just any ol' outburst. It is the kind of outburst that an ambitious actress can count on being rewarded with an Oscar'. Streisand had recently lost out on a Best Actress Academy Award for her role in the romantic weepie *The Way We Were*, and may not have appreciated Bergman's (unintended?) sarcasm. In any case, the project collapsed.

Bergman's next music-centred film after *The Magic Flute* was *Autumn Sonata* (1978). He wanted this structurally to resemble a sonata written in three movements. The plot has Charlotte (Ingrid Bergman, no relation), a world-renowned concert pianist, visiting her daughter Eva (Liv Ullmann), whom she hasn't seen for seven years. In an early scene Eva plays Chopin's Prelude in A minor, Op. 28 No. 2, to her mother. It is a passable stab at a deceptively simple-sounding piece. After her own attempt Eva foolishly insists that her mother plays it for her. Charlotte first explains how she thinks it should be performed ('the Prelude speaks of suppressed emotion, not reveries') and then gives a little lecture: 'Chopin was proud, sarcastic, impetuous, tormented and very manly. He was no sentimental old woman.'

■ *Ingmar Bergman*



Charlotte's interpretation is deeply felt, but eventually the camera zooms in on Eva staring at her mother, full of resentment. It slowly becomes clear that there can't be any reconciliation and the music can have no healing effect; it will only create an even deeper chasm. Laretei, by then Bergman's ex-wife, had become his musical advisor, and it was she who recorded the piano music that Ingrid Bergman appears to play.