

# THE BERGMAN ESTATE ON FÅRÖ



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ingmar Bergman often talked of surrounding himself with performing and creative artists here on the island of Fårö. My father imagined that, following his death, the estate would continue to be a meeting place for people who work with music, film, photography, theater and literature. The houses are also well suited, I think, for scholars, non-fiction writers and journalists.

During this last year, an idea has formed in my mind of creating a modern centre for performing and creative artists, as well as journalists and scholars from the whole world, all in Ingmar Bergman's spirit. Such a centre could employ my father's four properties on the island of Fårö, and in this document I will refer to them as **THE BERGMAN ESTATE**.

## 2. THE DREAM

- The Bergman Estate will be an international centre for artists, journalists and scholars and will be run according to Ingmar Bergman's ideals.
- The Bergman Estate will, as far as possible and within reasonable limits, operate on a non-profit basis. Artists and researchers will live in the houses for free, but they will have an obligation to "reimburse" the community through some kind of cultural or artistic contribution (see section 5).
- The Bergman Estate will be managed in a manner that pays respect to and enriches Fårö's unique nature and culture, its history and inhabitants.
- The Bergman Estate will draw on the resources and competence of local craftsmen, vocations, institutions, and organizations. This will contribute to and create new opportunities of employment.
- The Bergman Estate shall oversee a winter festival and various cultural outreach programs for children and youth. This will be accomplished through cultural activities and initiatives in established Fårö social arenas: the church, the old school and the local community centre. Naturally, Biografen (The

Bergman Cinema) at Dämba will play an important role, and some of the other houses can be used for small-scale events. The locations will provide space for small theater groups, dance classes, film and photography workshops – not just for the children of Fårö, but those of the whole of Gotland, as well as out-of-towners. Summer classes that offer writing and reading workshops will be suited to awaken children’s need for literature, reading and writing.

### **3. HOW IT COULD WORK**

- a) The Bergman Estate should be a place for artists and scholars who need somewhere to work. They will be issued a room and a desk, and be granted access to a kitchen and childcare (through a collaboration with the local preschool Fårö Förskola). There will be ample opportunity for thought, creativity and undisturbed work; these are the magnificent surroundings that inspired Ingmar Bergman, the landscape he always returned to.

With artists and scholars I mean musicians, filmmakers, photographers, performing artists, scriptwriters, fiction and non-fiction writers -- and all must have produced a substantial amount of high quality work.

Anyone wishing to use the workspaces in the Bergman Estate must apply in writing, providing a clear objective for the stay, as well as some suggestion for “reimbursement” for the community (as outlined in section 5). Decisions about applicants’ eligibility can be made by The Ingmar Bergman Foundation ([www.ingmarbergman.se](http://www.ingmarbergman.se)) or another suitable committee, consisting of Nordic or international artists, scholars and journalists.

- b) I imagine that the Bergman Estate can be a place for whole teams (of actors, directors, scenographers, composers etc.) to come and prepare for theater and film productions in a quiet and inspiring atmosphere.
- c) The Bergman Estate can also be an arena for small-scale seminars – such as gatherings for editorial boards, cultural organizations or master classes. The Bergman Estate can be a place where international and local figures meet to discuss cultural and political issues of relevance.

### **4. BERGMAN - WORK, FÅRÖ, AND MUSIC**

My father considered *work* to be the most important of all virtues. The Bergman Estate shall therefore be a centre for challenging and creative work. It is to be a place where one withdraws to create in solitude, and a place where people meet to conceive something collectively.

Music played a central role in Ingmar Bergman’s creative life. The Bergman Estate will obviously have to be available to musicians and composers, and facilitate their work.

Fårö has been Ingmar Bergman's realm since 1965. For more than forty years he lived and worked here. This landscape and its residents provided him with peace and inspiration, as well as the freedom and urge to create, work, read, study music and watch films (he watched two films a day, at 3 PM and 8 PM in his private cinema Biografen). He considered the houses he built and/or renovated as a continuation of himself. The houses remain, next to his large artistic production, *a part of his life's work*.

It is of great importance that such a place should operate in harmony with the local population and to their benefit. Bergman's interest and respect for Fårö and its inhabitants can be sensed in the two films Fårödokument 1969 and 1979, as well as the fact that he wrote, shot and/or edited his most famous films here.

## 5. ARTISTIC REIMBURSEMENT

Although the academic and artistic activity is not-for-profit, any applicant who is approved for use of the premises will have to "reimburse" the local community of Gotland and Fårö Island through artistic contributions or lectures.

A few examples:

- Let us assume that an international writer visits the Bergman Estate to finish a novel. In that case she or he will be obliged to return to Sweden and Fårö at some give time to give a lecture or a reading.
- Or let us say a group from The Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm or from Oslo's National Theater comes here to prepare a stage production. Then the team or part of it will return at some later opportunity to give a taste of the production or some other artistic contribution.
- If a screenwriter writes a script here, or a composer works on a piece of music, she or he will be obliged to accept an invitation to come back and give a talk about the writing process, or the composer will be invited to give a recital or talk about her work or both.
- An artist can donate a piece of his or her work in some way. This obligation can, if handled creatively, be a source of new and exciting artistic constellations, experiences, meetings and happenings that will benefit artists as well as scholars and the media – and, of course, the local community.

## 6. AN OPPORTUNITY AND A RESPONSIBILITY

As a writer and journalist with wide-ranging professional accomplishments in Norway and abroad, and as Ingmar Bergman's daughter, I feel a responsibility to preserve the estate for the future – not as a museum or a tourist attraction, but as a site for new art to be created, performed, and discussed, as well as a place for debating and testing new ideas. Such a place would perpetuate my father's ideals.

I also want to avoid the commercialization of the Bergman name, often presented as "preservation". A creative centre like the one I'm envisioning must benefit the public, rather than be run commercially. Naturally, t-shirts and coffee mugs carrying Bergman's picture is not part of my plan.

The Bergman Estate shall create local job opportunities and increase the well-being of the local community as well as being an inspiring retreat for international working artists and scholars

## 7. CULTURAL OUTREACH

**WINTER FESTIVAL:** The Bergman Estate on Fårö Island can contribute to the perception of Fårö Island and Gotland as something more than a summer retreat for tourists. Fårö is a vibrant community the whole year round, and I want to celebrate the Fårö winter through a beautiful Winter Festival. The festival will show the world that Fårö is at its most wonderful during winter. The Winter Festival will gather the best and brightest from literature, film, theater, music, journalism and science. International and local impulses meet: concerts alternate with readings, panels, seminars, and extracts from stage productions.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH:** As mentioned in section 2, I will also strive to make The Bergman Estate a haven for Gotland's youngest – its children and teenagers.

Ingmar Bergman worried about Fårö Island's population decline: its youngest inhabitants move to the mainland when they don't see a future in staying. This is the central theme of his movies *Fårödokument* 1969 and 1979.

I imagine regular cultural events for children: readings, music and theater productions, and film screenings at the Bergman Cinema. This will be accomplished in concert with local institutions, like schools, community houses and libraries.

These kinds of projects are not necessarily expensive, and are likely to qualify for funding from various Nordic institutions and foundations that support such concrete, well-defined projects. Since I envision The Bergman Estate as an international centre with local ties, financial support can be applied for within Sweden and abroad, and on the municipal, regional, national, and international level.

## 8. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

My dream is to find a buyer who wants to participate in the development of a concept like the one I've outlined here. The owner or owners of Ingmar Bergman's properties will not necessarily be responsible for their daily management – unless she or he wants to. However, my hope is that they recognize the long-term cultural and historical character of the investment. Also, my hope is that the new owner will want to develop the administrative guidelines and objectives of the Bergman Estate together with a select team of international artists, scholars, and possibly representatives of the Ingmar Bergman Foundation ([www.ingmarbergman.se](http://www.ingmarbergman.se))

Ideally, the Bergman Estate would have a *guaranteed* financial backing for its continuous expenses, either through municipal or state funding, or by

Nordic institutions. In this way the continued life and efforts of the centre would be secure.

As I see it, the financing process consists of a number of steps:

1. An appropriate buyer must be found for the properties. In his will, Ingmar Bergman stated that “everything I own must be sold after my death” and so all the houses are now for sale.
2. The board of directors for the Bergman Estate is constituted. The legal questions of this must be addressed, as must the board’s relation to The Ingmar Bergman Foundation.
3. Statutes, guidelines and objectives, as well as a budget, must be made.
4. Someone is hired and given responsibility for the daily management and maintenance of the Bergman Estate. Additionally I estimate that we will need a full time caretaker and housekeeper, and probably additional help on an hourly wage.

Certain measures must be taken to adapt the facilities to their new use. For this purpose, a budget must be prepared for the necessary investments in furnishings, equipment, instruments, computers and electronics etc. The need to make the houses environmentally friendly is obvious.

Finally, financial backing must be secured for specific cultural and artistic projects such as the Winter Festival, the programs for children and teenagers, the Bergman Cinema, and other events including readings, concerts, seminars and film screenings.

This requires an active pursuit of sponsors, fund raising and organizing events that will generate financial means for the Estate.

## **9. PARTNERS**

I have already mentioned a number of local partners. Let me stress again the importance of finding associates on several levels.

Locally it is important to engage the existing social arenas: Fårö church, the community centre, and the old school, which houses the kindergarten, as well as including other local institutions and assets. This point is central to assuring the local integrity of the Estate in its outreach programs.

Regionally in Gotland there are a number of possible partners including three centres: Baltic Art Centre, Visby International Centre for Composers, and the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators. Other candidates are The County Theater, The County Music Organization and the County Library.

Gotland and Fårö has a unique position in the Baltic Sea, which opens the door to National, Nordic, and Baltic cooperation, and sources for financial support are available on every level. Sweden and the EU’s new initiative

Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea, as well as other Baltic groups and programmes, are likely to create favorable opportunities for the Bergman Estate.

The objective must be to make the Bergman Estate an enterprise that fully rises to the project's intentions:

*a centre* that takes its cultural and historical heritage seriously

*a centre* where international creative and performing artists and scholars will have peace and inspiration to work on their projects

*a centre* that is managed in harmony with and to the benefit of locals and visitors alike

*a centre* that will also be a meeting ground for new ideas, sounds and images

*a centre* that through work and conversation can give birth to new and unexpected constellations within film, theater, literature, music, and photography.

An obvious partner would be the Ingmar Bergman Foundation. The foundation ([www.ingmarbergman.se](http://www.ingmarbergman.se)) is responsible for Ingmar Bergman's archive of original manuscripts, letters, notebooks etc. Other partners that come to mind are local and national cultural institutions and authorities.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

There has been much debate in the Swedish and international media about the administration of Ingmar Bergman's properties after his death. Media all over the world, especially in Europe and the USA, are watching the upcoming sale closely.

The houses and their surroundings have a great cultural value and legacy, far beyond Sweden. I hope that I may find international buyers who are serious about preserving those values. My own commitment to this project is founded in a realization that has been growing in me since my father's death: If there is to be a Bergman centre on Fårö, it has to be accomplished in his spirit – professionally and rationally, with a true vision, and heartfelt joy.

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