

# BERGMAN ISLAND

UK (2021) 112 minutes

**Director:** Mia Hansen-Løve

**Cast:** Vicky Krieps (Chris)  
Tim Roth (Tony)  
Mia Wasikowska (Amy)  
Anders Danielsen Lie (Joseph)



**Screening 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Swindon Arts Centre**

## Synopsis

*Bergman Island* follows American film-making couple, Chris and Tony, on a retreat to the Swedish island of Faro for the summer. In this wild, breath-taking landscape where Ingmar Bergman lived and filmed his most celebrated pieces, they hope to find inspiration for their upcoming films. As days spent separately pass by, the fascination for the island has a profound influence on Chris and memories of her first love resurface. Lines between reality and fiction then progressively blur and tear the couple even more apart.

## Reviews



Female director (Vicky Krieps), in a relationship with an older film-maker (Tim Roth), spends time at a creative retreat on the island of Faro in the Baltic Sea, famously the home and workplace of Ingmar Bergman. There she develops an idea about a young woman (played by [Mia Wasikowska](#), in a beguiling film within the film), also a film-maker, visiting Faro for a wedding and reconnecting with her former lover (Anders Danielsen Lie).

Factor in the autobiographical element – *Bergman Island's* writer-director, [Mia Hansen-Løve](#), was herself in a relationship with an older film-maker, Olivier Assayas – and the story starts to feel like a refracting prism in its overlap of characters and creator. In the hands of Hansen-Løve, it's a delicate millefeuille, layering story upon story, character upon character, until it's hard to peel them apart.

Krieps's character, Chris, approaches storytelling in a manner that is inquisitive and engaged; she questions and explores. It seems likely that Hansen-Løve takes the same route: *Bergman Island* has a languid, meandering pace and a plot that is governed by chance encounters and discoveries...

...The score, a delicate motif crafted from the unlikely combination of harp, recorders and bagpipes, captures the slightly unconventional beauty of the island. But it's a location Chris chafes against: "All this calm and perfection, I find it oppressive." Likewise, she is disappointed by what she learns of Bergman himself. With the "Bergman safari" and its competitive cineastes staking personal claims to the great man's work, Hansen-Løve gently pokes fun at the reverence for an overbearing auteur, and instead allows her women to drive the story.

*Wendy Ide, The Guardian*

On paper, *Bergman Island* could easily be mistaken for the most arthouse film ever made. A film-making couple arrive for a screenwriting session at the home of cinema's doom-monger-in-chief, Ingmar Bergman, causing a crisis of confidence in their relationship. Throw in a meta film-within-a-film and, for all the world, it sounds like it can only be enjoyed along with a furrowed brow, a black polo neck and a nut roast. Instead, in her first film in the English language, French director Mia Hansen-Løve — always the most human of film-makers — has no truck with Scandi angst and paranoia, mounting a warm, beguiling, breezy exploration of a diffident artist looking to find her voice.

*Ian Freer, Empire*

## Film Facts

- Bergman Week, a tribute to the film-maker, is held on Fårö island every June.
- Half of the movie was shot in summer 2018 with no male lead in place. Tim Roth was finally cast in the role in 2019 and then the remainder was filmed.

[swindonfilm.org.uk](http://swindonfilm.org.uk)