

OFFICIAL SELECTION



CANNES CLASSICS

A film by
Margarethe von Trotta

SEARCHING FOR
**INGMAR
BERGMAN**

(1918-2007)

EPICENTRE



MONDEX



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SYNOPSIS

Internationally renowned director Margarethe von Trotta examines Ingmar Bergman's life and work with a circle of his closest collaborators as well as a new generation of filmmakers. This documentary presents key components of his legacy, as it retraces themes that recurred in his life and art and takes us to the places that were central to Bergman's creative achievements.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

The daughter of Elisabeth von Trotta and the painter Alfred Roloff, Margarethe von Trotta was born in Berlin in 1942 and spent her childhood in Düsseldorf. After fine art studies, she moved to Munich to study Germanic and Latin language. She then joined a school for dramatic arts and began an acting career, in the theatres of Düsseldorf and afterwards in the Kleines Theater of Frankfurt in 1969 and 1970. At the end of the 1960 she moved in Paris for her studies and immersed herself in the film-lover circles of the time. She took part in script redacting and directing of short films and discovered via the Nouvelle Vague directors and critics the films of Ingmar Bergman and Alfred Hitchcock.

In Germany, Margarethe von Trotta has worked with a new generation of young filmmakers: Herbert Achternbusch, Volker Schlöndorff who she married in 1971 and with whom she directed and wrote *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* (1971) and *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1975), as well as Rainer Werner Fassbinder who made her act in four of his films. She directed in 1978 her first long feature, *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages*. The next year *Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness* marked the beginning of her trilogy, completed by *Marianne and Juliane* (Golden Lion at Venice Film Festival in 1981) and *Love and Fear* (1988). As in *Sheer Madness* (1983), presented at the Berlin Film Festival and one of her most popular film to this day, these films explored the destinies of politically committed women, who refuse the role society gave them.

Three years later her film *Rosa Luxemburg*, on the personal and public life of the German activist, came out in theatres after its presentation in Competition at Cannes Film Festival, where Barbara Sukowa received the Best Actress palme for her performance in the film. In 2012 Margarethe von Trotta completed her exploration of women's destinies with *Hannah Arendt*.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

- 1975: *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*
- 1978: *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages*
- 1979: *Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness*
- 1981: *Marianne and Juliane (The German Sisters)*
- 1983: *Sheer Madness*
- 1986: *Rosa Luxemburg*
- 1988: *Felix*
- 1988: *Love and Fear*
- 1990: *The African Woman*
- 1993: *The Long Silence*
- 1995: *The Promise*
- 2003: *Rosenstrasse*
- 2006: *I Am the Other Woman*
- 2009: *Vision*
- 2012: *Hannah Arendt*
- 2017: *Forget About Nick*
- 2018: *Searching for Ingmar Bergman*

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Ingmar Bergman inspired me to become a director. Making this film, I tried to create a path that would lead to him, but in so doing also reflect who I am as a creative artist.

I first saw *The Seventh Seal* in Paris when I was 18. Although I moved away from him when I shot my own films, working in the political environment of Germany, I have carried Bergman in my heart all my life since then. In the last scene of this film, I lean against an enormous rock looking out at the sea. I felt very small there, quite like being in front of the Master himself. This rock is like him, it protects me, and I remain in its compassionate shadow.

I made a point of focusing on Bergman's life in Munich, as I was part of the creative community there at the time. *The Serpent's Egg* and *From the Life of the Marionettes* were two very harsh films reflecting the dark period he was going through. Bergman left Sweden precipitously because he felt terribly humiliated over disputes with the tax authorities. In these two films, the darkness and brutality he felt is central. You can see how much it hurt him to leave the country he loved so much and where he had made his life. His depression is evident. At the same time, at the Residenztheater in Munich he worked with great actors and they loved working with him on stage and screen. Nevertheless, his fluency in German never matched that of his native Swedish; and he remained something of an outsider. Ultimately, he failed to achieve the critical success he expected in Munich. At first, the press was enthusiastic about having the Master

come to work there. But those were very political times; and his staging was received as altogether old-fashioned. Bergman felt humiliated and retreated to live in Fårö for the rest of his days. All in all, his life was far more troubled than what you would expect of a genius.

Bergman presided over the Jury for the best film at the European Film Academy in 1990, for which he had chosen all the members himself. Among them were Jeanne Moreau, Theo Angelopoulos and Deborah Kerr and I. It was only later I learned he chose me because he was an admirer of my 1981 film *Marianne and Juliane*. At the festival, he told me he saw it at a time he was depressed and didn't want to make films anymore – and that my film gave him the strength to go on and to shoot *Fanny and Alexander*. At first, I thought he made the compliment only because he wanted to put me at ease, knowing how intimidated I was by him. His friend Jörn Donner reminded me that the compliment was coming from a ladies' man. I put it out of my mind until two years later the Gothenburg Festival asked him to compile a list of his ten favourite films of all time. Mine was on it.

My ex-husband, Volker Schlöndorff, and I were very good friends with Sven Nykvist, Bergman's director of photography. Sven did several films with Volker, notably in 1972 *A Free Woman*, in which I played. We always talked about the Master when we were together. One day some years later, he told us that Bergman had seen Volker's 1976 *Coup de Grace*; and had really liked my performance. Thinking that Bergman first recognized me as an actress, I couldn't help imagining that for all the time I spent acting, I could well have joined his theatre company.

Searching for Bergman was an active but inward process. The film might appear to be an external quest, as it travels from Sweden, to Germany, Spain and France. But the protagonists, and particularly his sons, his actresses, like Liv Ullmann, Gunnel Lindblom, Julia Dufvenius, former work companions and directors and filmmakers of the next generation, like Ruben Östlund, Olivier Assayas and Mia Hansen-Løve express themselves in such a very moving and intimate way that in those encounters I found what I was looking for: a world of personal experience that resonates with the films.

CAST - SELECTED PROTAGONISTS

- Liv Ullmann (Actress – *Persona, Cries and Whispers*)
- Daniel Bergman & Ingmar Bergman, Jr. (Bergman's Sons)
- Olivier Assayas (Writer, Director – *Personal Shopper* – Author of *Conversations with Bergman*)
- Ruben Östlund (Writer, Director, Palme d'Or Winner – *The Square*)
- Stig Björkman (Author of *Bergman on Bergman*)
- Mia Hansen-Løve (Writer, Director – *Things to Come*)
- Katinka Faragó (Former Assistant of Bergman)
- Carlos Saura (Writer, Director – *Tango, Carmen, Cria Cuervos*)
- Jean-Claude Carrière (Writer – *Belle de Jour*)
- Gaby Dohm (Actress – *The Serpent's Egg*)
- Rita Russek (Actress – *From the Life of the Marionettes*)
- Gunnel Lindblom (Actress – *The Silence, Virgin Spring*)
- Julia Dufvenius (Actress – *Saraband*)

CREW

Director

Margarethe von Trotta

Co-director

Felix Moeller

Co-director

Bettina Böhler

Written by

Margarethe von Trotta

Felix Moeller

Producer

Benjamin Seikel

Co-Producers

Stéphane Sorlat

Guy Amon

Produced by

Konstanze Speidel

Executive producer

Edward Noeltner

Cinematographer
Börres Weiffenbach

Sound Recording
Helge Haack

Editing
Bettina Böhler

Line Producer
Dirk Wilutzky

Production Manager
Jan Heuser

Post-production Supervisor
Stephan Herzog

A production of
C-Films (Deutschland)

Co-produced by
Mondex & Cie

With support from
FFA – Filmförderungsanstalt
DFFF - Deutscher Filmförderfonds
FFHSH - Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein
FFF - FilmFernsehFonds Bayern
Eurimages
CNC

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