AT BERLIN
In Competition
GEHEN DIE WANDB
by Fatih Akin
DIE NACHT SINGT
IHRE LIEDER
by Romuald Karmakar

TRUTH &
THE UNIVERSE
Directors’ Portraits of
Esther Gronenborn &
Veit Helmer

SHOOTING STAR
Actress Maria Simon

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What makes great events so satisfying? The fact that they begin in a small way, like everything else. One example is a story from exactly a year ago. Visiting French distributors had just seen a film called Good Bye, Lenin! at the Berlin Film Festival, and in fact, for a German film, it wasn’t bad at all. The professionals acknowledged afterwards that it might attract 100,000 viewers in France, but they also hesitated. Who would have the courage to release such a film – in France, where German cinema has been poison to the box offices for years? Then suddenly, the man called “Jeannot” by the big Parisian family of distributors charmingly begged his colleagues: “Oh, let me have it, I have a space in my program at the moment.” So Jean Hernandez, director of the young Océan Films Distribution, secured himself the scoop of the year 2003 as casually and cleverly as that – and Fabienne Vonier from Pyramide Distribution related the tale at the first German-French film meeting in Lyon in November 2003, to the great amusement of 150 specialists from the field. It was a modesty that was destined to pay: Wolfgang Becker’s Good Bye, Lenin! – deliberately marketed as a German film available only in the original version with subtitles – drew almost 1.5 million viewers to cinemas in France. “That is really tremendous,” says Hernandez today – but the “emotional quality” of the mother-son relationship before the background of the fall of the Wall, a topic that fascinates people in France as well, gives the film its simple conviction. Good Bye, Lenin!, Océan’s first German film, thus became the first German-language blockbuster in France for 22 years – since Uli Edel’s drug story We Children from Bahnhof Zoo (Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo, almost 2.9 million viewers).

Generally speaking, 2003 was a year of international successes for German cinema: an OSCAR for Caroline Link’s Nowhere in Africa (Nirgendwo in Afrika), Wolfgang Becker’s triumph worldwide, the Coppa Volpi in Venice for the very German star, Katja Riemann – perhaps this really has triggered the “renaissance of German film” in France, too, as the French film magazine Positif so obligingly predicted. On the other hand, it is of course true to say: where there was scarcely anything left, even a little is a lot. But what would a renaissance deserving the name actually signify? One or two German films in the competition at Cannes each year, current films by German directors everywhere in French cinemas, and the number of viewers watching these running to six figures on a
reliable basis? A renaissance would mean – in other words – conditions like those 20 to 35 years ago.

PARADISE LOST: CANNES

At that time, France was a true paradise for some German filmmakers: Volker Schloendorff and Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog had a safe platform in Cannes, and that was right at the top, in the competition – Schloendorff as early as 1966 with his debut Young Toerless (Der junge Toerless) and above all with the Golden Palm in 1979 for The Tin Drum (Die Blechtrommel); Wenders with Kings of the Road (Im Lauf der Zeit, 1976), going on to become the unchallenged German record-holder with a total of seven films up until 1997; Fassbinder in 1974 with Fear Eats the Soul (Angst essen Seele auf) and again in 1978 with Despair; and Werner Herzog in 1975 with Every Man For Himself and God Against All (Jeder fuer sich und Gott gegen alle), for which he received the Grand Prix Special du Jury, and later with other films including Woyzeck (1979) and Fitzcarraldo (1982). And there was influential French film criticism, more powerful than today and led by the Cahiers du Cinéma, which supported and presented German films to audiences – so well that these directors’ films, or at least some of them, ran more successfully in France than in Germany, particularly Wenders’ Golden Palm winner, Paris, Texas (1984).

The Germans, for their part, were interested in the greats of the Nouvelle Vague, in François Truffaut, Claude Chabrol and Eric
Rohmer, but also in the unwieldy Jacques Rivette and Jean-Luc Godard – all star directors who in their turn made French acting stars from Catherine Deneuve to Fanny Ardant, Isabelle Adjani, Jean-Pierre Léaud or Jean-Paul Belmondo better known in Germany. The other way around, Romy Schneider and Fassbinder’s icon Hanna Schygulla became international stars after moving to France, surely the world’s most attractive terrain for the projection of the self-image. Meanwhile, one or two generations have passed since this curiosity for great European names in artistic film, which also reflected vital impulses from Great Britain and Italy. Not much has matured subsequently, at least nothing with a fascination beyond the national boundaries; the old names still retain an echoing sparkle. Chabrol and Rohmer still attract in Germany their regular audiences of over 100,000 and the French are true to Wenders, Herzog and the legend of Fassbinder. A characteristic symptom: the last primarily German-speaking competition film in Cannes was Wenders’ sequel to Wings of Desire (Der Himmel ueber Berlin): Far Away, So Close! (In weiter Ferne, so naht) in 1993 – 11 years ago!

Far away, so close: today the title is more fitting than ever. France and Germany have grown apart cinematically in the last ten to twenty years. This already becomes clear in the true field of combined creative effort, in co-productions. In the early sixties, legendary works like the Artur Brauner production Menschen im Hotel with O.W. Fischer and Michèle Morgan drew in audiences to view German-French collaboration, and well into the seventies many entertainment films, led by the inexhaustible Angélique series, were co-produced – but there has been a decline in activity since then. Of course, in the nineties there were examples of a bilateral...
readiness to invest, for example in the production of Margarethe von Trotta’s *The Promise* (*Das Versprechen*, Bioskop/ Munich, Odessa/Paris) or Volker Schloendorff’s *The Ogre* (*Der Unhold*, co-produced by Studio Babelsberg and Renn/Paris), but this was no longer an everyday phenomenon, by any means. Thinking of the two recent important examples, *Amélie from Montmartre* (co-produced by Victoire and Tapioca in France, and by MMC on the German side) or the two *Astérix* films with real actors dating from 1998 and 2002 (both Claude Berri productions, supported on the German side by Bavaria and Odeon Film in one case and by CP Medien in the other), to a certain extent these million sellers were the object of polemics in Germany. After all, they were based on extremely French material and passed officially as German films because of the German share of the budget: good for the statistics and the German market share, but – let’s be honest – bad for German self-confidence.

The two countries – and this is true of Germany’s other important neighbors, too – are also moving apart fundamentally, and that has a follow-on effect, not only on the desire for joint film productions. First and foremost, this is due to Hollywood’s campaign to conquer Europe: the French state is so busy defending its own cinema against such influences that everything revolves around that confrontation: David against Goliath, but using a magic potion mixed from a variety of substances. Which means it is rather like *Astérix* against the new Romans. The painful side effect being that the other European film countries disappear from the field of view. By contrast, in terms of structure Germany has largely given in to the inexhaustible vitality – put more succinctly: the ideological and mercantile exportation – of its big, younger brother USA. Exceptions prove the rule: Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s *Amélie* also seduces German audiences, François Ozon (*8 Women, Swimming Pool*), the Truffaut of our times, stirs memories of the great star directors – and so establishes new stars such as Ludivine Sagnier in Germany as well.

The only points Germany has recently gained in France seem to come from Wolfgang Becker. The vanguard of young author filmmakers around Andreas Dresen, Christian Petzold and Oskar Roehler – who have found themselves a respectable place in German cinema – have had little chance in France as yet.

### DISGUIRING THE ORIGINS

A sad rule of thumb: searching for success with a film by one’s neighbors, attempts are made to disguise its origins as far as possible. In 1988, for example, Percy Adlon’s *Out of Rosenheim* was a great success in France (with more than 2 million admissions) as the – seeming American – *Bagdad Café*, but Tom Tykwer’s *Run Lola Run* (*Lola rennt*) was a painful failure in France by comparison to its triumph at home. And the Berlin distributor Tobis – which adopted French film in its company program for a certain time with StudioCanal and Pathé – does not like to emphasize the origins of the new mainstream French films it distributes – for example *Die purpurnen Flüsse* (*Les rivières pourpres*) or *Taxi, Taxi*. Apparently this could endanger their commercial success. By contrast, the Tobis hits during the seventies – with Louis de Funès and Pierre Richard – were real brand names of popular French cinema. Today, it is as if most of these films have an infectious illness outside their own borders: lack of success.

If you ask around, every distributor has his own philosophy to explain the malaise. For example, Christian Suhren from the Berlin distributor Peripher – who launched Noémie Lvovsky’s *Oublie-moi* and Benoît Jacquot’s *La fille seule* in the mid-nineties and later discovered the powerful, austere films by Bruno Dumont (*L’humanité*) and the Dardenne brothers for the German market – thinks that French films have been rather weak “for around two years.” Fabien Arséguel, director of the Munich distributor Alamode believes that German audiences – unfortunately also those dominated by young people and students – have become too lazy for arthouse films, which is why he now has fewer French films in his program. Stephan Hutter, managing director of Prokino, was certainly pleased by the huge success of *Amélie* and will be releasing the new film by Ozon
(5 x 2), but he is more skeptical with respect to the general chances of French film in Germany: "Today there are no old-style masterpieces anymore." Finally Klaus Gehrke, who runs the small distributing company k-films in Paris, has difficulty in finding cinemas for his films, which range from *Fuehrer X* to *A Handful of Grass* (*Eine Hand voll Gras*) – he complains that the domestic majors have the profitable venues under complete control, with their own cinemas and distributors.

**PROTECTING A NATIONAL TREASURE**

But there are also structural reasons for this new estrangement between the neighbors, which also affect the aesthetics and self-understanding of the two cinematic languages. France uses all conceivable means to protect its cinema like a state treasure, a “trésor national” – indeed, this solemn formulation originated from President Jacques Chirac. There is such a strong political policy against the super power of Hollywood that France even wanted to anchor the “exception culturelle” in the recently proposed European constitution by right of veto. However, in economic terms, the French themselves act in such a protectionist manner that the country seems to be a bastion of film production affluence against any other cinematography. Another aspect is that France protects its cinema in a direct cultural manner: against television. All funding of cinema films applies exclusively to cinema films, and television has to pay. And that’s that!

How about a few figures? At €215 million per year, the statutory purchase of advanced licenses by the five French free TV and two pay TV broadcasters already makes up as much as the entire budget for film promotion in Germany. The central state organ for recording, promotion and control, CNC (Centre National de la Cinématographie), is responsible for another almost €500 million; the German pendant – the German Federal Film Board (Filmförderungsanstalt, FFA) – has scarcely ten percent of this budget. And in addition: the French cinema and video operators have to pay a compulsory levy of around €150 million for film production per year, around four times as much as their German colleagues – which makes the latter’s recent laments over a slight increase in their compulsory levy laid down by the new German film promotion law appear rather insignificant.

Such a policy of massive subvention, backed by a ban on televised feature films on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, gives French film an amazing annual share of the market ranging between 35 percent and, recently, almost 50 percent. In 2003, German film enjoyed almost 17 percent of the domestic market, but usually the figure is well below this. And above all: it must – by absolute contrast to the French – take into account the essential co-finance television,
which has – up until now – paid only voluntarily. This is the reason why German cinema “almost always looks like television”, as the president of the newly founded German Film Academy, Günter Rohrbach, has categorically stated. That means: it is not fit for international competition. And in France, which expressly invests in moving images for the big screen, it is therefore of no interest at all.

Indeed, the French have had more noticeable success with their films in Germany recently than the other way around. Apart from the two *Astérix* films, *Amélie* and *8 Women*, it is true that no French film has beaten the million viewer mark in Germany during the last six years. But almost 40 films sold more than 100,000 tickets at the box offices – a sign of distribution structures that continue to function. By contrast, during the same period in France, German film – aside from the one millionaire *Lenin!* – has only asserted itself with children’s films (*The Little Vampire/Der kleine Vampir, Help! I’m a Fish/Hilfe! Ich bin ein Fisch*), English-language co-productions (*Resident Evil, Enemy at the Gates*) and two Wenders’ films: *The Million Dollar Hotel* and – not extremely German, this one – his Cuban world-hit documentary *Buena Vista Social Club*. Thus the German market share in our neighboring country France was recently considerably less than one percent. The other way around, on an average over the last five years, the French have just managed to make it to two and a half percent. What remains of the old curiosity for “Le goût des autres”, to paraphrase the title of the enchanting French debut film by Agnès Jaoui from the year 2000? Put it another way: what remains of our knowledge of others’ taste in film, of an exchange with their reality – so far away, so close?

**MAKING A TURN AROUND**

At least neither country is prepared to accept such skeptical diagnoses and prognoses. For a long time now, there has been institutional opposition to this state of affairs, with state sponsored funding. There is, for example, the activity of the Goethe Institutes in Paris and Lille, which work together with cinemas, festivals, universities and schools, sending corresponding German film packages on tour. There are also media impulses from the state promotion agencies, Unifrance and the Export-Union, which bring journalists from the other country together with new films and their directors once a year. There is also the Festival of German Cinema organized by the Export-Union each autumn in the Paris cinema l’Arlequin, featuring new productions and retrospective showings (and since 2001, also in Lyon and Toulouse in collaboration with the local Goethe Institutes). And for 20 years now, there has been the Tübingen Film Festival, an event for French film enthusiasts repeatedly undervalued by the media – offering a €20,000 award for distributors funded by Unifrance and the MFG Baden-Württemberg.

This all helps with every new film that finds an audience, and every initiative checks the European neighbors’ tendency to turn away from each other. But a real turn around will only be possible if producers and distributors alter their ways of thinking – and politicians create the best possible structures within which they can do so. Three and a half years ago, the German Chancellor Schroeder and French President Chirac made a start with the foundation of the German-French Film Academy. The impulses radiating from it may not change the world overnight, but they are beginning to have an influence in people’s minds.

This academy rests on three still slim, rather abstract pillars; it is more the outcome of a political will than a real institution with its own building and administration. Its aim is to support the up-and-coming generation, fund more co-productions and – perhaps the most enduring aspect with a view to future work – to anchor the annual meetings of decision-makers from both countries in the field at the charmingly named “Rendez-vous”.

The third year of young-generation filmmakers are already being trained: since October 2001, German directors Peter Sehr and Jan Schuette and, on the French side, Marc Nicholas and Claire-Lise Muse have been running a master class supervised by the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg and the Paris Film Kino.
School "La fémis". Here, small groups of young Europeans are trained to become the "co-producers of the future", as the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media Christina Weiss has already enthusiastically predicted. The graduates are to see themselves as creative actors fully aware of the barely compatible film production and financing systems of Germany and France, but nonetheless capable of exploiting these for projects that cross over the border.

A second pillar, as yet only a hopeful beginning, is the "mini-traité" – a co-production fund endowed with €3 million that was established by the two countries in May 2001 and is administrated by the two organizations CNC (France) and FFA (Germany). The rather small sum total has been used up until now to subsidize around a dozen generally smaller films, slightly enlivening – at least statistically – the once so lame co-production market of both countries. Most funded films were predominantly French up until now, for example Benoît Jacquot’s Tosca and Werner Schroeter’s Deux, but this is a lack of balance that those responsible aim to redress. And the fact that the minority of German films supported, for example Nina Grosse’s tender story Olga's Summer (Olgas Sommer), sometimes have difficulties finding their way into
French cinemas: a further symptom of the distribution problems in both countries, especially with respect to smaller, independent films. This is absolutely clear to Unifrance director Margaret Menegoz: “If we do not solve this problem,” she said to the German film magazine Blickpunkt Film, “all our efforts will have been in vain.”

**MEETING HALF WAY**

It is clear, therefore, that the French and Germans have begun talking to each other more openly. The first Rendez-vous in Lyon, well-attended with 150 producers, distributors, directors, film functionaries and politicians from both countries, was a forum for such discussion, although it may not have led to concrete results. But isn’t the existence of the forum itself, which is to take place annually from now on, a hopeful enough first result? There were debates on production, financing and distribution – and about film political strategies. These sharpened the beginnings of a joint understanding of the value of the two film languages – also in opposition to Hollywood. There were plans to, if not harmonize, at least make more transparent the different systems of film promotion, and even to act in concert at future film political decisions in Brussels, as the

and at the same time – via cinema – sharpened our primarily cultural identity as Europeans, will certainly not return at once because of these efforts. It is a matter of new, individual signatures – and an ever-increasing number of these. There are already isolated examples: the films of Pedro Almodóvar and François Ozon awakened interest in an entire œuvre, something that was natural in the past. In addition, there are sudden, peaceful attackers such as Roberto Benigni, for whom borders mean nothing – and recently Wolfgang Becker has joined this category too.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

This year’s Berlinale will introduce another step in German-French cooperation: the French broadcaster TV5 and the German-French Youth Organization are joining forces to present a new prize, the Dialogue en Perspective, to one of the German films screening in the Perspectives German Cinema sidebar. The jury will comprise three young German and four young French cineastes, giving them the opportunity to develop a dialogue through the exchange of views about the art of cinema.

Six and a half million viewers in Germany, around one and a half in France, a huge success in England and worldwide sales in around 70 countries: as a tremendous individual event, Good Bye, Lenin! may not immediately save German film on the international stage, but it has set something in motion. “The international distributors are now paying more attention to the German market,” says Jean Hernandez, the lucky Lenin! of Océan Films. “We have all become more watchful.” After all, nobody likes to let the best bargain in the world to slip through his fingers.

Jan Schulz-Ojala, film editor for Berlin’s Der Tagesspiegel

"motor of Europe" (to quote French Minister of Cultural Affairs Jean-Jacques Aillagon). Big words. But perspectives, at least. Aside from this, there were interested approaches between the centralist state’s treasurer of the cultural asset film, on the one hand, and the less comfortably equipped “funding acrobats” – as Bavaria director Thilo Kleine ironically described the federal German self-image – on the other. Motto: we are not so foreign to each other, after all.

It is possible to lament that Germany and France need such events in order to bolster their courage: but what if – as seems to be the case – joint film projects develop again from them? And if they lead to a new, sharper focus on what is going on culturally and financially in film circles across the border; a border that will soon be no more than one of language? The network of great European directors who fascinated European film fans during the sixties and seventies,

Scene from “Good Bye, Lenin!"
“People always think that I came from the field of music videos. But that is not actually correct. I have made a few clips, but that’s all.” Esther Gronenborn stresses the fact that she has had proper training in her craft as a director of documentary and feature films. Those who saw her first feature film alaska.de, which was launched in German cinemas three years ago – can surely have no doubts about that. The film concerns a group of young people in the satellite towns surrounding Berlin. Surprisingly realistic and yet full of affection for its characters, it tells of conditions that German film usually prefers to avoid: isolation, despair, helplessness. Its will to go on looking, to retain authenticity even when things become unpleasant – or worse still – incomprehensible, means that alaska.de recalls works like Kids or La Haine (Hate). “The life of these youths in the desolation of the Berlin suburbs had a magical attraction for me,” she relates, “I really had something to say about them. I wanted to portray a situation, but also to show that each of us can take his life into his own hands.” Despite the film’s great authenticity, it still puts emphasis on style, and looking at the images again today – dense, clip-like, often submerged in a mild, yellow light – it is impossible to overlook the influence of her experience producing successful music videos.

Gronenborn, however, did indeed receive sound training before making this film. After having studied Literature and Philosophy at the Free University in Berlin, As early as 1985, she founded the association “WAND 5” (www.wand5.de) and organized the film festival “Stuttgarter Filmwinter”. Meanwhile, she collected practical film experience making her own Super 8 shorts – Hundstage (1985), How to use a car (1986), and Tief unten (1987). She then began studies in the documentary film class at the Munich Academy of Television & Film (HFF/M) in 1989, during which time she made five further films. Parallel to her studies, she worked as a dubbing manager for Columbia, supervising the German synchronization of American films, and also worked in the Hong-Kong office of Columbia. Since the mid-nineties, she has also been producing music videos for such artists as the Quarks, Surrogat, and Nalin Inc., among others.

Gronenborn won a series of awards with her feature film debut alaska.de, including the German Film Award 2001 for Best Direction, the Bavarian Film Award for Best New Director, the German Film Critics’ Award, a nomination for the European Film Award 2001, and prizes at the international film festivals in Moscow, Karlovy Vary, Jerusalem, Giffoni, Buenos Aires and London. Her other films include:

Sie schaemen sich ihrer Traenen nicht (documentary satire, 1990), I Wonder in Pornoland (documentary 1991), Morgengrauen (short, 1995), Die Strasse zum Glueck (documentary, 1997), and Balkanrhapsody – Hildegards und Dorits ost-europaeische Bildungsreise, a short film as part of the episodic 99euro-films (2001). She is currently working on her next feature, Adil, wo gehst Du?

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in a "9 to 5" mentality. Sobering that most of the people at the TV studios were stuck or going on film shoots," he says, although it was also "very various areas, whether it was the editing suites or the film labs had to use his own initiative to find a way into the business. He Not having any family connection to the film industry, Helmer had to make a start by working as a trainee floor manager at broad- casting the West’s perception of eastern Europe.

Her interest in the East also plays an important role in Grenobrn’s new project, a second feature film, which was shot during autumn 2003 and is now being completed. Adil, wo geht Du? is set among young Albanians and Roma growing up in Germany. On the one hand, their residential status is uncertain, they live with the constant fear that they may be deported. At the same time, however, they face the same hopes and worries as any other normal teenager. The hip-hop scene and music play an important part, but "the film will be more sedate and less clip-like than alaska.de," Grenobrn emphasizes.

That was not going to be the way Helmer wanted to work: "I could see that I’d have to get into the independent film scene, and since films with a heart in Germany are mainly made in Berlin, then that would be where my home would have to be."

Arriving in Berlin, Helmer worked as a driver, assistant director and location manager on films to finance the making of his own shorts. Thinking that he needed a formal basis for his filmmaking, he applied to Berlin’s German Film & Television Academy (dffb), but he was too young. "I didn’t want to go to Munich at the time for other reasons and so I applied to the film school in Babelsberg. The procedure took such a long time that I had only signed up for a few weeks practical work experience."

Indeed, Helmer’s all-encompassing obsession with cinema earned him the nickname of “Little Werner” when he attended the Equinoxe scriptwriting program to work on the screenplay of his latest feature Gate to Heaven (cf. p. 44). But the allusion to that legendary obsessive Werner Herzog doesn’t faze Helmer. "If you are not possessed by an idea, you won’t have the strength to hold through to the end. So, you need a good helping of passion.”

Not having any family connection to the film industry, Helmer had to use his own initiative to find a way into the business. He made a start by working as a trainee floor manager at broadcast-er NDR in Hamburg. "I was too young for film school, but it was a great introduction because I could have a look at all the various areas, whether it was the editing suites or the film labs or going on film shoots," he says, although it was also "very sobering" that most of the people at the TV studios were stuck in a "9 to 5" mentality.

One critic wrote of alaska.de that at least the mistakes Esther Grenobrn makes are the right ones. And in the future we may expect from Grenobrn’s films what alaska.de offered at its best moments: a portrait of a generation characterized by the director’s ability to empathize and by her interest in what remains valid above and beyond individual characters. "I am interested in stories, and I am interested in giving form to them. Good films ought to be truthful – and sexy.”

Ruediger Suchsland, German correspondent for Cannes’ Semaine de la Critique and film critic for the Frankfurter Rundschau and Filmidienst, spoke with Esther Grenobrn

That continues to cite Ken Loach and Mike Leigh as her role models. But she supplements this by saying that recently she particularly enjoyed films by Patrice Chereau, giving an indication that the stylization of images and a dynamic camera are more important to her than they are to the British Social Realists. Like Loach and Leigh, Grenobrn likes to work with untrained actors, and we already had evidence of her lucky hand in this respect in alaska.de: she cast a complete unknown, fifteen-year-old Jana Pallaske, in the main role. Actually Pallaske had only signed up for a few weeks practical work experience. And this time around, too, she hopes that she has found the right "talented laymen" who will be able to bring to the screen what she personally expects of cinema: directness, spontaneity, a closeness to events. "For this is a matter of truth, at least of my own truth. There are not enough people who simply produce what they themselves think is good. That is exactly what I want to do. In Germany there is too much fear of making mistakes.”

A portrait of Veit Helmer

Veit Helmer’s life has been dominated by a passion for filmmaking ever since he saw Truffaut’s Night for Day at the age of 14. “From that moment, I never asked myself again about what I was going to do with my life,” he recalls.

From the outset, Helmer was involved in every aspect of production and also interested in what happened to the films after the answer print is delivered. “I can’t really imagine doing it any
Born in Hanover in 1968, Veit Helmer began making short films as a teenager and received prizes at amateur and youth film festivals. At the age of 18, he began a two-year training program as a floor manager at NDR, which also included internships in the cutting room, film lab and dubbing studio. He subsequently moved to Berlin and worked as an assistant director and production manager with such directors as Mathieu Carrière, Heiko Schier and Philip Groening. Shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, he moved to East Berlin to study at the Hochschule fuer Schauspielkunst "Ernst Busch". In 1991, he was accepted onto the directors’ course at the Academy of Television & Film in Munich (HFF/M). In 1992, he set up his production company in Berlin and has been a visiting lecturer on “visual storytelling” at film schools in Germany and abroad (Uzbekistan, Jakarta) since 1999. After winning several prizes for his short films, Helmer made his first feature Tuvalu in 1998, receiving the FIPRESCI Award at Ghent/Flanders and Audience Awards at Saarbruecken, Kiev and Luenen, the Bavarian Film Award for Best Newcomer Director, acting awards and special prizes in Moscow, and a nomination for the 2000 German Film Awards in the category of Best Director. His second feature film Gate to Heaven (2003) received its world premiere at the 2003 Hof Film Days and was released by Prokino in German cinemas in December 2003. His other films include: Tour d’Amour (short, 1989), Die Raeuber (short, 1990), Zum Greifen nah (short, 1992), Der Fensterrutzer (short, 1993), Tour Eiffel (short, 1994), Surpriselt (short, 1995), Die Bruder Skladanowsky (as screenwriter and co-producer, dir: Wim Wenders, 1996), City Lives (documentary, 1999), Hati-Hati, Malam-Malam (short, 2000), and Uzbek Express (short, 2002).

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As Helmer’s shorts and the two features Tuvalu and Gate to Heaven show, he is about as “un-German” as one can get; he cannot be easily compartmentalized and himself doesn’t see any kindred spirits in the German film scene.

“I developed my own special brand of humor in my shorts and my attention was on expressing things visually rather than through words,” he explains. “I always try to get around using dialog. The result was that I received lots of invitations to festivals. I am not wanting to cater exclusively to the German market, but rather want to make films that will show all over the world. As Tuvalu didn’t have any dialog as such, I could take actors from any country and so was able to discover new faces for a wider international audience. I am proud that I did this with Chulpan Khamatova [who has since been seen as the nurse and Alex’s girlfriend in Wolfgang Beckers Good Bye, Lenin!] and want to do the same now with the Indian actress Masumi Makhija in Gate to Heaven.”

“In every country there are people who want to bring the art of cinema forward and that’s what I try to do,” he continues. “Rather than go down well-trodden paths, I’d rather turn off the autobahn and try out new things. That’s where my heart beats for the cinema, not in copying myself or looking for tried-and-tested formulae. But, at the moment, people say that films have to be particularly German so that they can have a recognizable identity and then be successful internationally. My films aren’t German like that and are still successful. So, what am I doing right or doing wrong?”

Helmer’s next feature project – due to be set somewhere in eastern Europe – will again be “fairy-tale-like and play in its own universe. I like my own universes and that’s the magic of cinema: the power of the director and the screenwriter to create another world.”

Martin Blaney spoke with Veit Helmer
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TATFILM GmbH was set up in 1994 by Christine Ruppert, her brother Dr. Peter Ruppert and Dr. Philip Reisert, and has offices in Cologne, Munich and Leipzig (since the beginning of 2003). There was a change of shareholders in December 2003 when Reisert’s shares were transferred to Markus Reischl. The company produces German and European feature films, TV movies and documentaries for an international audience. In 1998, TATFILM and Little Bird (Dublin/London) established a joint development and distribution arm in Cologne, Zephir Film, which was reorganized at the end of 2003. TATFILM’s productions have included the feature films Croupier (dir: Mike Hodges, 1997), Ordinary Decent Criminal (dir: Thaddeus O’Sullivan, 1998), 100Pro (dir: Simon Verhoeven, 1999), Invincible (dir: Werner Herzog, 2001) and Gun-Shy (Schussangst, dir: Dito Tsintsadze, 2003), the TV two-parters The Writing on the Wall (dir: Peter Smith, 1995/1996) and Relative Strangers (dir: Giles Foster, 1999), and the documentaries Waiting for Harvey (dir: Stephen Walker, 1998), My Best Fiend – Klaus Kinski (Mein liebster Feind, dir: Werner Herzog, 1999), The Making of the Misfits (dir: Gail Lewin, 2002) and Sautet’s Cinema (dir: N.T. Binh, 2002). TATFILM’s productions have screened at such international festivals as Cannes, Venice, San Sebastian, Toronto, Munich and Tbilisi, among others. Tsintsadze’s Gun-Shy won San Sebastian’s Golden Shell and the Golden Prometheus main prize in Tbilisi, while Nora Hoppe’s The Crossing was awarded the screenplay prize at the Arcachon Film Festival.

This year will see Christine Ruppert celebrating ten years in the business as head of the German production company TATFILM whose output has ranged from Thaddeus O’Sullivan’s Ordinary Decent Criminal through documentaries like Werner Herzog’s My Best Fiend and N.T. Binh’s Sautet’s Cinema to Dito Tsintsadze’s San Sebastian winner Gun-Shy.

“How it all came about is really quite simple,” Ruppert recalls. After studying Business Management, she brought her theoretical knowledge together with concrete practice by working from the bottom up as an assistant director as well as script and continuity consultant on numerous German productions. It was during her work as an assistant director on Dagmar Hirtz’s Moondance which was shot in Ireland that she met the lawyer-producer James Mitchell of Little Bird. “I subsequently brought him together with Michael Verhoeven as a co-producer for the film Mutters Courage where I also worked as an assistant director. Then he had another project planned and asked if I would like to co-produce it because we knew each other. That was the birth of TATFILM.”

The first project together was the TV two-parter The Writing on the Wall, starring Lena Stolze, Herbert Knaup and Bill Paterson, which was co-produced with Little Bird, BBC, BBC Worldwide, WDR and ARTE, and with support from the
At the moment, for instance, she has four projects being developed: “I take at most 10% completed screenplays because I was constructed in Germany at the Info Studios in Monheim Rhine-Westphalia. Nobody noticed the fact that the whole casino was one-sided to just do international productions. At the same time, we didn’t want to concentrate on German TV films given the existing competition. Our niche was our contact with partners outside of Germany.”

Among the international feature co-productions with Little Bird are Mike Hodges’ Croupier, which proved something of a sleeper hit in the USA and launched the career of young UK actor Clive Owen; Thaddeus O’Sullivan’s Ordinary Decent Criminal, which was shot on location in Ireland, but included German actors Christoph Waltz and Herbert Knaup in the cast; and Werner Herzog’s Invincible which was an official entry in Venice’s Cinema Del Presente sidebar in 2001.

Ruppert says about Hodges’ film: “Apart from four to five days outside shots in London, all of the rest was done in North Rhine-Westphalia. Nobody noticed the fact that the whole casino was completely believable. Even some of the gamblers were German as well!”

A CREATIVE PRODUCER

Ruppert sees herself very much as a creative “hands on” producer: “I take at most 100% completed screenplays because I think it is much more interesting to develop one’s own projects: “At the moment, for instance, she has four projects being developed in-house: a second collaboration with Dito Tsintsadze, entitled Helfers Helfer about culture clashes with humanitarian aid workers in a war zone, which he is writing with TATFILM dramaturg Thomas Heinemann for shooting in Georgia in autumn 2004; Netzflickerin, adapted by Gun-Shy author Dirk Kurbjuweit from a novel by the Dutch writer Maarten ’t Hart and located in the former East Germany’s Stasi state security organization; Austrian director Ulrich Seidl’s adaptation of Josef Haslinger’s novel Vaterspiel; and a three-parter based on Thomas Mann’s novel Buddenbrooks.

Furthermore, production wrapped just before Christmas on a debut feature by Beate F. Neumann – Die Zeit nach der Trauer (cf. p. 31) – shot in and around Wahrenburg with Claudia Geisler, Daniel Morgenroth and Max Hopp in the leads.

“I like co-productions, but in the way we have them with James [Mitchell] because we start very early on with the collaboration,” Ruppert stresses. “What I am not keen on are those financial co-productions where the foreign producer just wants to access German funds. The worse thing is when producers come and say: ‘I was at the film fund and you must do this and this,’ and my answer is: ‘Go and do it yourself! Why are you coming to me, what is my job in all of this?’ They are just looking for a name and a company to make the applications.”

The beginning of 2004 will see TATFILM partner with Little Bird and Canada’s Galafilm on Charles Binamé’s political thriller Endgame in Kosovo, charting the dramatic story of Louise Arbour, the former chief prosecutor in the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague in the trial against Slobodan Milosevic, and will be followed in the summer with the Irish-Spanish-German co-production Adlós, while internationally successful German director Uli Edel (The Ring) is set to direct the €15 million historical drama Duchess’ Diary, based on the novel by Robin Chapman, in winter 2005.

Ruppert admits that financing the co-production of TV films in Germany is harder, although it helps to have a track record when applying to the regional film funds. “With the TV stations, it seems slightly more difficult,” she declares. “There is a trend towards more national productions which makes it much harder for international co-productions because they are not so attractive for German television. The broadcasters say that a film for the 8:15 pm prime time slot must be a German one like the Rosamund Pilcher or Donna Leon TV movies. Originally, we wanted to shoot our TV film with Dieter Pfaff [Doubting Thomas] with SWR this summer] in English, but now we will shoot in German because we wouldn’t have gotten a prime time slot otherwise. That’s a process which has been going on for the past two years. So, our strategy is to develop the big ‘TV event’ productions like Buddenbrooks or Endgame in Kosovo.”

OPENING UP DISTRIBUTION ARM

In 1998, TATFILM and Little Bird launched the development and distribution arm Zephir Film to actively develop projects and to also handle the German theatrical release of films coming out of TATFILM.

“For the co-productions with Little Bird, we always had a world sales company and UK distribution, but it was difficult to find a distributor in Germany,” Ruppert recalls. “I wanted though to assume responsibility for seeing the films get a theatrical release here.”

However, she admits that the experiences over these past five years have taught them that their strategy needed to be corrected. “Our product portfolio was too broad. It was wrong to try and handle all types of films. I think you have to have a clear profile for distribution.”

Consequently, the end of 2003 saw the distribution part of Zephir Film – Zephir Filmverleih – hived off as a separate entity to be managed by the marketing company the distributor had been working with. TATFILM will continue to have a connection to distribution through a 20% participation, but “the new Zephir will only handle the small films from us and then only up to a certain number of prints.” Ruppert explains. “If I want to have a release with a larger number of prints, then I would need to find another distributor for the film.”

She adds that she also has reservations about producers acting as their own distributors: “you love your films too much, you aren’t objective enough because you always try to find ways to see the good aspects and avoid the bare truth. At the same time, you get another perspective on your film and on future projects. And you have a clearer idea of the audience you are aiming for.”

At the beginning of 2004, Zephir Filmverleih relaunched with Tsintsadze’s Gun-Shy, Georg Maas’ NewFoundLand (NeuFundLand) and N.T. Binh’s documentary Sautet’s Cinema which will tour with one of Sautet’s feature films. “We did the same with the Kinski documentary coupled with two of Herzog’s films and it was very successful. The distributor will focus in future on such specials,” she notes.

Martin Blaney spoke with Christine Ruppert
2003 was a particularly exciting year for 27-year-old actress Maria Simon who has been selected to be the German “Shooting Star” at this year’s Berlin International Film Festival.

To begin with, she had two feature films – Wolfgang Becker’s tragicomedy *Good Bye, Lenin!* and Hans-Christian Schmid’s *Distant Lights* – premiering at the Berlinale last February. Then there was all the excitement about the unexpected success of Becker’s film at the German box office and around the world in the following months, with the film picking up nine German Film Awards in June as well as six European Film Awards and a Golden Globe nomination in December.

Moreover, cinema audiences made Eric Till’s *Luther* – where she appeared opposite such international stars as Joseph Fiennes and Alfred Molina – into the third most successful local film at the 2003 box office after *Lenin!* and *The Miracle of Bern*.

In the second part of the year, she had roles in two TV movies made within three months of each other – Thomas Schadt’s *Doppelleben* and Sabine Derflinger’s *Kleine Schwester*. And towards the end of the year she was busy rehearsing her part as Polly for a new production of Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill musical *The Threepenny Opera* at Berlin’s Maxim Gorki Theater. For her performance in Isabelle Stever’s *Portrait of a Married Couple* (Erste Ehe, 2002), her next two film roles – which earned her a nomination in the category of Best Supporting Actress at the 2003 German Film Awards – were as Ariane, the older sister of Daniel Bruehl’s Alex, in Wolfgang Becker’s hit film *Good Bye, Lenin!* and as the interpreter Sonja in Hans-Christian Schmid’s *Distant Lights* (Lichter). She also appeared as the poverty-stricken young mother Hanna in Eric Till’s *Luther*, playing opposite such international stars as Joseph Fiennes, Alfred Molina and Sir Peter Ustinov, and worked on two TV movies during 2003: Sabine Derflinger’s *Kleine Schwester* and Thomas Schadt’s *Doppelleben*.

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Maria Simon studied Drama at the Hochschule fuer Schauspielkunst “Ernst Busch” in Berlin and initially worked in television: since the end of the 1990s, she had roles in such TV movies as Markus Imboden’s *Auf eigene Gefahr*, Sabine Landgreber’s *Zielfahnder*, Angela Schanelec’s *Mein langsame Leben*, Johannes Fabrick’s *Love Me Tender*, Zoltan Spirandelli’s *Jonathans Liebe* and Sherry Hormann’s *Die Traenen meiner Mutter* as well as in series like Jenny Berlin, Baldo and Tatort. In the theater, she appeared on stage in *As You Like It* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (in the production by Juergen Gosch) and in the title role of *Das Kaechchen von Heilbronn* at the Schauspielhaus in Duesseldorf. At the beginning of 2004, Maria returned to the stage as Polly in a production of the Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill musical *The Threepenny Opera* at Berlin’s Maxim Gorki Theater. Her first feature film role was the lead in Judith Kennel’s *Zornige Kuesse* (1999) for which she won a prize as Best Actress at the 2000 Moscow Film Festival. She then received the First Steps Award 2002 and the Max-Opuels Award 2003 for Best Newcomer Actress for her performance in Isabelle Stever’s *Portrait of a Married Couple* (Erste Ehe, 2002). Her next two film roles – which earned her a nomination in the category of Best Supporting Actress at the 2003 German Film Awards – were as Ariane, the older sister of Daniel Bruehl’s Alex, in Wolfgang Becker’s hit film *Good Bye, Lenin!* and as the interpreter Sonja in Hans-Christian Schmid’s *Distant Lights* (Lichter). She also appeared as the poverty-stricken young mother Hanna in Eric Till’s *Luther*, playing opposite such international stars as Joseph Fiennes, Alfred Molina and Sir Peter Ustinov, and worked on two TV movies during 2003: Sabine Derflinger’s *Kleine Schwester* and Thomas Schadt’s *Doppelleben*.
I was like that as well. I was very inquisitive, emotional and wanted to express everything through movement and the spoken word.”

From 1990, Maria spent four years with her parents in New York where her father works at the United Nations, but decided that she wanted to come back to Germany and become an actress. In fact, she applied for a place at the Hochschule fuer Schauspielkunst “Ernst Busch” in Berlin while taking her school graduation exams back in the USA.

Initially, the course at “Ernst Busch” was set to last four years, but she ended up taking five years to complete her studies because of the birth of her son. “Having my child during my studies was really good, though, on a personal level because it gave me distance to everything and made me see things from a different perspective,” she explains. The fact that the focus there was on theater was in line with her own particular interests at the time, although she says in retrospect it was a shame that no attention was given to film acting.

So it was “a great stroke of luck” when she met Swiss filmmaker Judith Kennel in 1999 and was cast in the lead role for Zornige Kuesse opposite Juergen Vogel. “It was great opportunity to become acquainted with the film medium for the first time and I was fortunate to have Juergen Vogel as a partner,” she says. “It was quite a different challenge from that of theater, but I like doing both.”

Over the next couple of years, Maria made occasional forays into the theater and did a bit of work for television. “I learned a lot from this work,” she observes. “It was a bit frustrating at times, but since I see my profession as a calling, I take everything very seriously. Sometimes, it is the case that you have got to earn money and earn a living, but at least one can try and do something as best as one can.”

Her second role in a feature film was for Wolfgang Becker’s Good Bye, Lenin!: “Wolfgang is an incredibly precise director and that also goes for the choice of actors,” she recalls. “I can remember that I had been for a casting session with him almost a year beforehand and he took a very long time before he gave the OK.”

She describes the film’s shoot as being “a very turbulent time with an unbelievable intensity and euphoria as well as suffering,” but says that nobody had ever thought at the time that the film would ever be the enormous hit it became after the premiere at the 2003 Berlinale: “I just wanted to do a good job and finally see the film completed.”

The film’s subsequent success made her “incredibly proud”, but looking after her son meant that she couldn’t afford the time away to become part of the promotional bandwagon traveling all over Germany – and now around the globe – to present the film in person to cinema audiences. At the same time, she believes that she may have come to more people’s attention through the role of Ariane, “although I hope that the film alone is not the deciding factor for why I have been cast for certain roles. I think the part I played in Distant Lights has also had an influence on the parts I am being offered.”

Indeed, the two films she worked on later in 2003 within three months of each other had the kind of roles she would like to come upon more often in the future. On Thomas Schadt’s docudrama Doppelleben she was required to play the writer Carola Stern during the 1940s and 1950s, while Austrian filmmaker Sabine Derflinger’s Kleine Schwester saw her as an official of the Federal Border Guard.

Researching her roles is very much part and parcel of her work as an actress and Maria approaches the task assiduously: “I met a real-life interpreter for my role in Distant Lights, and Benno Fuermann and I went on patrol with the Federal Border Guard to get a feel for their day-to-day routine for Kleine Schwester,” she explains. “Moreover, it was very important for me to meet Carola Stern because one has a certain responsibility in how you portray a person. What was she like in the 40s and 50s? I read books and watched movies and documentaries about the time and it was a great opportunity to immerse myself in the story. I really thought a lot about my grandparents and Germany itself, what my father’s and grandfather’s generation had done. That alone heightened my awareness of things, and on Distant Lights, I learned about other people’s fates and that made me see my own life in relative terms.”

Meanwhile, Maria’s first experience of working on an international cinema production with Eric Till’s biopic Luther whet her appetite for perhaps working again on English-language films in the future. After all, language should be no problem after the four years in New York. It was “quite a mad journey” to shoot in English and then dub herself back into German, she notes, but the atmosphere on the set was “very relaxed and friendly” in spite of the larger scale of the production.

Thus, it is quite fitting that Maria has now been selected as the German representative for this year’s lineup of the European Film Promotion’s “Shooting Stars” at the Berlin International Film Festival: “I really feel honored and proud and it is something of a distinction as I know just how many other very good actors are out there,” she says. “And I am really looking forward to getting to know other acting colleagues from the rest of Europe and to see how they work in their countries.”

Martin Blaney spoke with Maria Simon
BAVARIA MET SOUTH INDIA & CONCLUDED SUCCESSFUL 2003

Three partners, one event: In cooperation with the Goethe Institute Bangalore and goto Bavaria, the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern organized the film week “Made in Bavaria – Made in South India” which took place in November and celebrated the cinematic efforts and productivity of two film industries located in the southern regions of their respective countries. Caroline Link’s OSCAR-winning film Nowhere in Africa opened the Indo-German Film-Festival, followed by a representative selection of new and “classic” films produced in Bavaria. The Indian program included eight films from Karnataka and other Southern Indian provinces. In addition to the film screenings, numerous events and workshops concerning co-productions, locations and film technology took place.

The great cultural impact of the Indo-German Film-Festival was only one of many highlights for the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern in 2003. The year started with four Academy Awards for the FFF-supported films Nowhere in Africa and The Pianist. Numerous other festival awards and great box office results followed over the course of the year – especially Soenke Wortmann’s smash hit The Miracle of Bern, winner of Locarno’s Audience Award, and the international co-production Luther starring Joseph Fiennes and Sir Peter Ustinov. 2004 will also see more exciting films supported by FFF Bayern: Currently in post-production are Oliver Hirschbiegel’s Der Untergang, Florian Gallenberger’s Schatten der Zeit, Dennis Gansel’s Napola and the sequel to the most successful film in 2001, Bibi Blocksberg II.

LUCKY LUKE IN COLOGNE CITY

Lucky Luke is hunting the Daltons in Cologne’s Wild West. The German film star Til Schweiger is bringing the comic hero to life in the adventures of the cowboy who shoots faster than his own shadow. Director Philippe Haim’s €27 million French-German-Spanish co-production (UGC Images/Integral Film), based on a screenplay by Michel Hasanavicius, is being shot in the MMC Studios in Cologne-Ossendorf and on location in Spain. Haim is no stranger to the area, having shot considerable parts of his debut film with Jean Rochefort, Barracuda, in a studio in North Rhine-Westphalia. In The Daltons vs. Lucky Luke, Til Schweiger will be joined by French colleagues and comedians Eric Judor and Ramzy Bedia, playing two of the feared Dalton brothers. The Filmstiftung NRW is supporting the project with €1.85 million reference funds from the hit Amélie of Montmartre, which was also shot in part at the MMC Studios. The cowboy is expected to trot into French cinemas with his faithful horse Jolly Jumper for Christmas 2004.

LOTS OF NEW FILM STARTS FOR HAMBURG

Five new films will hit the cinemas in February and March 2004, and all with Hamburg financial support. On 26 February 2004, the animation film Derrick – Die Pflicht ruft by Michael Schaack will be released with the voices of the “real” Derrick
and Harry, Horst Tappert and Fritz Wepper, Lars Buechel’s and Ruth Toma’s Erbsen auf halb sechs, with Fritz Haberlandt and Hilmir Snær Gudnason in the leading roles, and Yueksel Yavuz’ A Little Bit of Freedom (Kleine Freiheit), which has already been very successful on the festival circuit, including screenings in Saarbruecken, Cannes, Luenen, Warsaw, Hamburg, New York and Copenhagen, will open in German cinemas on 4 March 2004. March 11th will see Jan Schuette’s SuperTex open, followed by the award-winning (San Sebastian, Locarno) co-production Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring by Kim Ki-Duk. And another Hamburg-supported film, Rolf Schuebel’s Blueprint with Franka Potente in a double role, opened already in January.

NEW FILM PROMOTION LAW
The new German Film Promotion Law went into effect on 1 January 2004 with the goal of strengthening the economic and cultural success of German films at home and abroad. Reforms in the new law include, among others, an expansion of support possibilities to include festival prizes and high ratings, increased marketing support for film sales, as well as the improvement of the international representation of German films.

MFG SCREENPLAY AWARD AT THE BERLINALE
During the Berlinale the MFG Filmförderung will present for the fifth time its Screenplay Award. The prize, endowed with €25,000, is awarded to a screenplay whose story is set in Baden-Württemberg and will be presented during the MFG’s traditional reception in Berlin.

And from 13 - 21 March 2004, the Bergamo Film Meeting will host films from the "four motors" agreement between the international regions Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy, Rhône-Alpes and Catalonia. Anne Wild will represent Baden-Württemberg with her film My First Miracle (Mein erstes Wunder). France will present Quand tu descendras du ciel from Eric Guirado, Catalonia will show Les mains vides from Marc Recha, and Lombardy will be represented by the film Il dono by Michaelangelo Frammartino.

FILMBOARD BECOMES MEDIENBOARD
The film funding (Filmboard) and the media office (Medienbüro) for the states of Berlin and Brandenburg have merged together: the new Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg started up for business on 1 January 2004, with Petra Mueller, responsible for strategy and location marketing, as CEO. Professor Klaus Keil, CEO and director of the Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg, will terminate his contract at the end of March. Keil will move on to the position of co-director of the Erich Pommer Institut in Potsdam-Babelsberg and will continue to consult the new Medienboard until the end of 2004. The advisory board also decided to continue the principle of directorial decision-making for applications for film funding.

The goal of the newly formed Medienboard is to further strengthen the media region of Berlin and Brandenburg and to integrate the area’s media and cultural activities. The Medienboard will be the central address for the media in Berlin and Brandenburg.

FFA STUDY ON FILM PIRACY
Following its first report on film pirating, the German Federal Film Board (Filmförderungsanstalt, FFA) has released a new study, Brenner-Studie 2, on the copying of CDs and DVDs, the downloading of content from the Internet, as well as the consumption behavior of copiers and downloaders in Germany. The figures, based on a survey of 10,000 participants, point toward a strong trend of film copying: from January – August 2003, 5.1 million end-users made 30.3 million copies of feature films, as compared to the year 2002 with 27 million copies. To fight this development, the German film and video industry has initiated a campaign, with the primary support of the FFA, against pirating. The new Brenner-Studie 2 can be downloaded (in German) at www.ffa.de.

MITTELDEUTSCHE MEDIENFÖRDERUNG CELEBRATES ITS 5TH BIRTHDAY
After five years of commitment in and around the area, the media location of middle Germany has developed to an international level. Young innovative TV films and high-rated series are produced in the area. Harvey Keitel, Jackie Chan and Joseph Fiennes brought a breath of Hollywood with them and the Leipziger film market celebrates European cinema year for year. Multiplex theaters and arthouse cinemas alike are opening up all over the region. New companies have been established – some of whom moved from Munich and Berlin to set up in the area.
Distributors opened new offices, and brought with them jobs for the local work force. *Luther* has been seen by over 2 million cinemagoers, but even "small" films are finding their audiences here. And technically speaking, the whole array of professional services is available. In the field of animation, the productions are becoming more and more international. Films from the region are traveling to festivals all over the world and European decision makers are coming to middle Germany to participate in the Discovery Campus and EAVE initiatives. The network is expanding, even internationally.

**"GERMAN SHORT FILMS“ AT THE BERLINALE**

Year for year, German short films offer a consistently amazing aesthetic and narrative spectrum of subjects at the highest levels – yet they remain almost unknown outside a circle of movie specialists and professionals. Now, however, an insight into this internationally respected short film scene is available with the "German Short Films" catalog. For this purpose, the members of the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) have selected 100 short films produced in Germany over the last two years – including numerous festival highlights and prize winners. The catalog was first presented in January at the world’s largest short film festival in Clermont-Ferrand, followed up the German launch at the Berlinale 2004. German Short Films can be obtained from the German Short Film Association stand at the German Boulevard section of the European Film Market in Berlin.

And again this year, the association’s stand will be the festival’s favorite meeting point for all short film fans and enthusiasts, be they distributors, buyers, producers, or festival and talent scouts. Further information is available online at www.ag-kurzfilm.de.

During the Berlinale, several of the films compiled in the catalog can also be viewed on the silver screen. On 12 February (at 17:30 h at the Hackesche Hoefe cinema), the Short Film Agency Hamburg (KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg) is presenting the Gold Prize Winners of the German Short Film Award 2003 and the winners of the German Federal Film Board’s Short Tiger Award. This exclusive program brings together such diverse films as Sven Taddicken’s melancholy road movie *Stay Like This* (Einfach so bleiben), the short comedy dealing with childhood trauma *The Schoolboy* (Der Schueler) by Edina Kontsek, and queuing as a virtual animated experience in *Q* by Oliver Husain. For three years already, the Short Film Agency Hamburg has been dispatching the winners of the German Short Film Award on a tour of art-house cinemas throughout Germany. More information at www.kurzfilmpreisunterwegs.de and www.shortfilm.com.

**AROUND THE WORLD WITH GERMAN FILMS**

The Export-Union of German Cinema ended the film year 2003 by sending German films on a trip around the world. The Export-Union’s Festivals of German Cinema met with enthusiastic audiences in Paris, Cracow, Los Angeles, New York, London and Moscow.

At the 8th Festival of German Cinema in Paris, Margarethe von Trotta’s *Rosenstrasse* and Tomy Wigand’s *The Flying Classroom* (Das fliegende Klassenzimmer) won the Audience Award, ex aequo. The program included an selection of exciting new German films, the Next Generation reel of shorts, a retrospective of underground, gay and music films (including a live performance by Nina Hagen), and a silent film with live musical accompaniment.

Poland welcomed numerous German films at its Warsaw International Film Festival in October, featuring, among others, Hans-Christian Schmid’s *Distant Lights* (Lichter) as the festival opener and Tom Schreiber’s *Clowns* (Narren) in the official competition. The festival also hosted a second German Panorama section again this year, with 10 new films. Following Warsaw, a number of films then traveled to Cracow to participate in the Export-Union’s first Days of German Cinema, organized in cooperation with the local Nuremberg House.

Across the Atlantic, audiences in Los Angeles and New York were also invited to German film events. The 4th Festival of German Cinema "MADE IN GERMANY“ was once
again held in successful cooperation with the AFI Fest in Los Angeles, where Sikander Goldau’s short Fragile was awarded the Audience Award for Best Short in the international short film competition. MADE IN GERMANY presented 10 new films as a “festival within a festival”. And in New York, the MoMA celebrated 25 Years of German Cinema with 11 new films, the Next Generation shorts, and an impressive German retrospective, featuring 25 features by leading German directors.

In London, the 6th Festival of German Cinema awarded Zueli Aladag’s film Elephant Heart (Elefantenherz) with the Audience Award. In addition to the sold-out performance of opening film The Miracle of Bern (Das Wunder von Bern), the festival program introduced British audiences and the media to an interesting spectrum of new German productions with 10 features, five documentaries, a series of shorts, and a Fassbinder retrospective.

The year 2003 was then rounded off with the 2nd Festival of German Cinema in Moscow. The program, which handed over the Audience Award to Rosenstrasse, also included a diverse selection of films, from features to documentaries to shorts and a silent classic, as well as a Hans-Christian Schmid Showcase, featuring four of the director’s films.

Further Festivals of German Cinema will be held in 2004 in: Rome, Madrid, Paris, London, Los Angeles, New York, Sydney, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Cracow, Moscow, and for the first time, in Scandinavia. Details and dates can be found at www.german-cinema.de/festivals.
Atina & Herakles

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Genre** Cinema

**Production Companies**
SLM/Waldkraiburg, Daniel Zuta Filmproduktion/Frankfurt

**With backing from**
MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

**Producers**
Sebastian Harrer, Daniel Zuta

**Director**
Sebastian Harrer

**Screenplay**
Sebastian Harrer

**Director of Photography**
Martin von Creytz

**Music by**
C. Stoll

**Principal Cast**
Raphael Tschernuth, Nadine Konietzny, Julian Manuel, Denise Strey, Juraj Kukura

**Format**
16 mm, color

"I came relatively late to the project as the shooting schedule was already set," says producer Daniel Zuta about Sebastian Harrer’s debut feature Atina & Herakles. "But everything just came into place because they were so full of enthusiasm. In fact, the crew and actors said they would defer their payments for the sake of the project."

Atina & Herakles is a comedy of mistaken identity in which a young man, based on the Herakles of Greek mythology, tries to gain the love of a distant beloved without noticing that his great love is, in actual fact, right in front of him. At first glance, Hermann is everything else but a hero. As a result of an intrigue he is forced by the despotic millionaire August (played by veteran Czech actor Juraj Kukura) to set off on an odyssey throughout half of Europe, during which he mistakenly comes to identify himself increasingly with the classical hero’s role. It is only when he loses the great love of his life, Atina, that he realizes how blind he was and then sets everything into motion to return to a normal life and win Atina back.

The 16 mm production is also Harrer’s graduation film from the Athanor Academy for Performing Arts in Burghausen (Bavaria) after he had previously directed a number of DV shorts (Reingedrueckt. Hoffnungsfinke) and worked in the theater. "He really knows his craft," observes Zuta about the talented young director who brought such fellow students as Achim Bieler, Julian Manuel, and Denise Strey onto the project. While Harrer was shooting on location in Kraiburg, Hamburg and Paris from the end of September to the beginning of November, Zuta had another production – the English-language feature Never Enough by Romanian-born Bogdan Dreyer – in front of the camera at locations in and around Bucharest.

Co-produced by Romanian producer Titi Popescu’s Fimex with backing from the State of Hessen’s Investment Bank and BlockBusterMultimedia, Never Enough is a reality TV show hostage drama starring Rutger Hauer and up-and-coming actress Mariana Dinulescu who was voted Best Romanian Newcomer Actress of 2002 at the last CineMa lubit Festival. Meanwhile, Zuta’s Frankfurt-based production house is presently near completion on the post-production of Nina Mimica’s €7 million Italian-German-UK-Spanish co-production Mathilde, about an impossible love story set in post-war Yugoslavia with Jeremy Irons and Stephane Audran in the leads.

Die Blaue Grenze

**English Title** Blue Border

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Genre** Cinema

**Production Company**
Discofilm/Cologne, in cooperation with NDR/Hamburg, ARTE/Strasbourg

**With backing from**
BKMi, Filmstiftung NRW, MSH

**Producers**
Arne Ludwig, Felix Blum

**Director**
Till Franzen

**Screenplay**
Till Franzen

**Director of Photography**
Michael Toette

**Editors**
Till Franzen, Sebastian Schultz

**Sound Design**
M.P. Jensen

**Music by**
Lambchop, various artists

**Principal Cast**
Antoine Monot Jr., Hanna Schygulla, Jens Muenchow

**Format**
35 mm, color, 1:1.85

"It’s not really fair to Blue Border to label it as belonging to any one or even two specific genres," says the film’s writer-director Till Franzen. "The thrill lies in mixing the various
Bill Handel from “Frozen Angels”

Frozen Angels

graduated from film school with a short film titled The Haunted Chicken (screened at Cannes in 1994) this can only mean the audience is in for a “much richer and more impressive experience.”

In Blue Border, Franzen draws his influences from “Boris Vian, Nicolas Roeg, Luis Bunuel or, in its humor; also from David Lynch” to tell the story of twenty-year-old Momme Bief whose father has just died. Momme has to travel to the Danish border to tell his grandfather. Since Momme hasn’t come to terms with the death himself, he is soon entangled in a web of lies. Then his father’s ghost appears in several dreams, wanting to put the past to rights just as Momme has met the love of his life.

Granddad still hasn’t gotten over the death of his wife and now his son is gone too. He moves to a tent on the beach. It’s not until he meets a young girl that he rediscovers life is for the living.

In making what he calls “a socially realistic story with spiritual pretension”, Franzen is aiming at the growing number of people who enjoy "episodic and/or ensemble films, such as Fast Food Fast Women, Magnolia, Mulholland Drive or Lantana. Obviously the audience likes to have several characters to identify with. I like to see characters grounded in a magic reality. The melodramatic love story, which deals with the inner tension of its characters, is growing in popularity. The one-dimensional characters of the 80s and 90s belong quite rightly to the past.” At the same time, Franzen is not seeking to reject or alienate the more traditional public. Indeed, he is convinced that Blue Border will appeal also to “all fans of the classic, exciting, narrative style of cinema. And yet it will only be ‘social surrealism’.”

In California there are more procedures possible and allowed than anywhere else in the world: free market rules and little control. Lori Andrews, prominent lawyer and author of The Clone Age calls it the “Wild West of medicine”. Following a cast of characters involved in the wonderland of human making, Frozen Angels examines the personal history of several Los Angelinos and their city’s role in this brave new world.

“Everyone’s moral code is challenged,” says Sandig’s filmmaking partner, Eric Black. “Our purpose is to show the human and ethical implications of the biotech age. We propose to present these issues through a simple strategy: looking at the future already here – in the state of California.”

Frozen Angels is the second collaboration between Sandig and Black. Their first film, After the Fall, documented the mysterious, disturbing and almost complete disappearance of the Berlin Wall ten years after its fall. The film was broadcast on television worldwide including Germany, Brazil, Israel, Switzerland, Japan, Spain, Austria, Sweden and PBS in the United States. The 35 mm film version was released in Germany and selected for more than 40 international film festivals, including Berlin, Amsterdam, Karlov, Vary and Tel Aviv, and was awarded a German Camera Prize and a Golden Spire at the San Francisco International Film Festival.
“Gentlemen, in one hundred years people will show another wonderful color film which depicts the terrible days we are now living through. Don’t you want to play a part in this film, to be awakened to new life in a hundred years? Each of you now has the opportunity to select the part he will play in this film … Stay firm, so that in one hundred years the audience does not boo and whistle when you appear on the screen.”

SK
“The project was actually developed through the First Movie Program [at the Bayerisches Filmzentrum Geiselgasteig on the Bavaria Film studio lot],” recalls producer Judy Tossell. “It was a very, very long development process, and we were then brought onboard by Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) because they knew we had experience working in Georgia with Nana Djordjadze’s 27 Missing Kisses. What I think we all find exciting is that it is a debut film that’s also a genre film. It has real potential for prime-time television as well as for a theatrical release.”

“It is a bit like Green Card in a way,” Tossell explains. “The bulk of the shoot was in Munich, but we kicked off with the Georgian shoot and those all-important scenes at the airport were difficult to get with the run-up to the elections. Every time we had scheduled to shoot at the airport, Shevardnadze was in town and the airport was closed down!”

Valentina is played by Ann Eleonora Jorgensen, the Danish star from Lone Scherfig’s international hit Italian for Beginners, while lovesick Georgi is portrayed by Demetre "Duta" Skhirtladze who is one of the leading film and TV actors in Georgia and also the presenter of the Georgian version of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?. Caucasian Business marks Demetre’s first role in an international production.

Meanwhile, Georgian actor Merab Ninidze, one of the stars from Caroline Link’s OSCAR-winning Nowhere in Africa (Nirgendwo in Afrika) and another Egoli Tossell Film production England! by Achim von Borries, plays a cameole role as a Georgian soap star.

World Sales:
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2D or not to 2D? That is the question every producer is asking in the light of computer animation taking the international box office by storm. Indeed, following a string of recent 2D flops, many in Hollywood have written off traditional animation entirely.

It’s a false conclusion, argues Thilo Graf Rothkirch, "cinemagoers want solid stories, characters, situations and emotions with which they can identify. The animation is there to serve the film, not the other way round."

Stocking with what he knows and knows to work, Rothkirch’s latest film, Laura’s Star “achieves its three-dimensionality,” he says, “by using 2D for animation and putting light and shadows on characters and backgrounds. We film well-known children’s books and the characters have to retain their positive recognition factor.”

Taken from the book by Klaus Baumgart, Laura’s Star tells the story of seven-year-old Laura who moves to a new town. She finds it hard to make new friends until she finds a, quite literally, fallen star. It’s the start of a great friendship. At the end, Laura learns that love means also having to let go so the star can return to the sky.

“It reaches the heart and soul,” says Rothkirch. "People have an affinity with stars and they are fascinated by Laura who has a relationship with one."

Laura’s Star marks another step in Rothkirch’s ongoing relationship with Warner Bros., which is once again handling domestic distribution and international sales.

“We’ve had the best of good fortune with Warner Bros. since we first worked together on Tobias Totz,” says Rothkirch. “I can only describe Willi Geike (Warner Bros. Germany’s managing director) as an artist. He understands design, color, movement and composition.”

As with his last feature, The Little Polar Bear, Rothkirch is producing locally. “We don’t use large factories in Asia. We’re making bespoke shoes! Shoes which last forever! We want our films to last so we are very fussy about the quality. That’s why we’re building on our production alliances in Germany, with Animationsfabrik in Hamburg and Motion Works in Halle.”

There you have it! While others argue the pros and cons of computers versus pencils, Rothkirch and Cartoon-Film believe in long-term working relationships and quality. "The secret of good production,” he says, "is to know one another. That’s not typical for this industry.”

SK
Der neunte Tag

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre History Production Company Provobis Film/Munich, in co-production with Videopress/Luxembourg, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Fonds national du soutien à la production audiovisuelle Luxembourg Producer Jürgen Haase Director Volker Schloendorff Screenplay Eberhard Goerner, Andreas Pflueger Director of Photography Tomas Erhart Editor Peter N. Adam Production Design Ari Hantke Principal Cast Ulrich Matthes, August Diehl, Bibiana Beglau, Hilmar Thate Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85

Die Ritchie Boys

English Title The Ritchie Boys Type of Project Documentary Production Companies TANGRAM Christian Bauer Filmproduktion/Munich, Alliance Atlantis London, AAC Fact/Toronto for WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich, MDR/Leipzig, History Television/Toronto, Discovery Wings/Silver Spring With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, MEDIA Producers Christian Bauer, Patricia Phillips, Dagmar Biller, Donna Zuckerbrot Director Christian Bauer Screenplay Christian Bauer Director of Photography Dietrich Mangold Editor Dave Kazala Music by Aaron Davis, John Lang Format Digi Beta, color/b&w, 16:9 Shooting Language English, German Shooting in USA, Germany, Italy, March - December 2003

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The Ritchie Boys tells for the first time the exciting story of a secret US army unit during World War Two. Regular officers
considered them incapable of defending even themselves, let alone firing a shot in anger. But its members played a pivotal role in shortening the war in Europe by developing and introducing a new dimension to the battlefield in the age of mass media: psychological warfare. Taking their name from Camp Ritchie in Maryland, where they trained, the unit comprised mostly young Germans, among them many Jews, who had fled the Nazis to begin a new life in America. Driven from their homeland and determined to bring an end to fascism in Europe, they stood, says former “Ritchie Boy” Guy Stern, “for a just cause. We were crusaders, convinced we were on the right side in the struggle between good and evil.”

For filmmaker Christian Bauer, “they are also representatives of a culture destroyed by the Nazis. I’ve been long concerned with the fate of those Germans forced to leave their homeland and theirs is a lost story in German-American and German-Jewish relations. They escaped Germany as victims and returned as victors.” Knowing the enemy, his psychological weak-points and language better than anyone else, they developed new concepts of psychological warfare for their fight against Nazi Germany. Their mission: to research, undermine, demoralize and induce the enemy to surrender. Landing in Europe on D-Day, the Ritchie Boys specialized in propaganda, disinformation, interrogation and the search for war criminals. “It is fascinating,” says Bauer, “they were intellectuals, highly individual. The war was only one chapter in their remarkable lives. Afterwards, they enjoyed careers in the sciences, politics or business.” Among their ranks were such famous names as the journalist/author Hans Habe, Klaus Mann (the son of Thomas Mann), the writer Stefan Heym, the director Hans Burger, and David Robert Seymour, co-founder of the Mangum photo agency.

Bauer says: “As a filmmaker I am less important than the story and the people who help me to tell it. That’s why I’ve never followed one particular style in my work. For me, a good documentary tells a story, taking in life’s humor and seriousness. It shows a new perspective on reality.” With more than 50 documentaries to his credit, Bauer won the 1993 Adolf Grimme Award for his film about the withdrawal of an American garrison, Farewell to Banana (Der Arni geht heim). His most recent film, Missing Allen, won Best Documentary at Montreal in 2001 and at Venice in 2002. It was also nominated for the European Film Award in 2002.

It’s been over ten years since Hans W. Geissendoerfer sat in the director’s chair or put pen to paper for a screenplay - the last occasion was for the 1992 film Justiz which starred Maximilian Schell and Thomas Heinze, based on the novel by Friedrich Duerrenmatt. That’s not to say that he has been idle all these years. Far from it. Indeed, Geissendoerfer is the producer of ARD’s highly successful soap Lindenstrasse (on air since 1986) and his UK-based production outfit Strawberry Vale was co-producer on Ben Hopkins’ The Nine Lives of Simon Katz.

A friend’s recommendation that he should read Swedish authoress Elisabeth Rynell’s bestseller Hohaj laid the groundwork for Geissendoerfer’s return to the cinema. “After reading 20 pages I knew that this book had to be filmed,” he says. “There are many inner monologues so I knew that it would be hard to transpose these mental games to the cinema screen.” Moreover, there are two time levels in Rynell’s novel separated by 50 years, although both stories are set in the same North Sweden landscape, the “Hohaj” of the book’s title.

The story begins with the writer Elisabeth being left alone with her three children after her husband is killed in a car accident. In desperation, she decides to follow her beloved into death by traveling to the snowy wastes of Lapland where they had first met many years previously. On her way there, she stumbles upon the story of an extraordinary and radical love affair between Aron and Ina. Through the power of their love and their stand against the workings of fate, Elisabeth finds her way back to her own life and her children …

“It is a great film for actors,” explains Geissendoerfer who has cast “new face” Julia Jentsch, Thomas Kretschmann, Maria Schrader, Ulrich Muehe and Ina Weisse in the five main leads, with Joachim Krol in a guest role. “Nessie Nesslauer suggested Julia and it was a giant stroke of luck. She is sensational, very intensive and so authentic.”

The summer and autumn scenes were shot in one block one thousand meters up on a high plateau in Sweden during August and September, and shooting of the winter scenes is set to crank up at the beginning of February. “We are prepared for the temperatures way below freezing. With the wind chill factor it is even lower and seems even colder because there is so much standing around. Dressed in our big down jackets, we all look like Michelin men!”.

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Schneeland

English Title Snowland Type of Project Feature Film
Cinema Genre Drama Production Company GFF

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Sommer Hunde Soehne

Type of Project: Feature Film Cinema  
Genre: Coming-of-Age Story, Love Story  
Production Company: Lala Films/Berlin, in co-production with Friends Production/Munich  
With backing from: Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg  
Producers: Cyril Tuschi, Nick Conradt  
Director: Cyril Tuschi  
Screenplay: Ole Ortmann, Cyril Tuschi  
Director of Photography: Peter Doerfler  
Editor: Dirk Goehler  
Music: Wir sind Helden, Ocker  
Principal Cast: Stipe Erceg, Fabian Busch, Lilja Loeffler, Daniela Ziegler, Axel Milberg  
Format: DV/35 mm, color, cs  
Shooting Language: German  
Shooting in: Berlin, Valencia and Tangiers, October - December 2003  

World Sales:  
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Director Cyril Tuschi headed for Southern climes for his first full-length feature, Sommer Hunde Soehne (working title), but there was no lazing about on sandy beaches.

“We had a very lean crew of 25 people, a bit like a mini hit-and-run team,” says Tuschi, who wrote the screenplay for his “rolling chamber piece” with Ole Ortmann. “80% of the film was shot chronologically with the first scenes in Berlin and the last ones in Tangiers, and we had our fair share of minor mishaps such as the car which kept breaking down - we had to leave it in Tangiers in the end - and the downpours of rain after such a hot summer.”

Sommer Hunde Soehne opens with mommy’s boy Frank (Fabian Busch) on his way to the local Ikea superstore, oblivious to that fact that he is soon going to be embarking on an involuntary journey with the destination of Morocco!

That is, until his path crosses with that of Marc (Stipe Erceg) who hadn’t expected that morning that he’d kidnap Frank or almost bump off a pal. After all, he really wanted to just sit in his favorite pub and have a beer in peace and quiet. Now he’s on the run. He has to get to Morocco fast and forces Frank to drive him there. So, as you can see right away, this has all the makings of a wonderful friendship …

“The work with the actors was very concentrated,” Tuschi adds, pointing out that “it was a real stroke of luck having Stipe and Fabian. They hadn’t known each other before and got on really well. In fact, I had to get them to tone things down a bit at the start because they were getting to be too friendly too quickly!”

While Fabian Busch is known to cinema audiences for his roles in Hans-Christian Schmid’s 23 and Hendrik Handloegten’s Learning To Lie (Liegen Lernen), Stipe Erceg had previously made an impression in Alain Gsponer’s Kiki & Tiger and appears with Daniel Bruehl and Julia Jentsch in Hans Weingartner’s latest feature Jan Jule Peter.

Willenbrock

Type of Project: Feature Film Cinema  
Genre: Drama  
Production Company: UFA Filmproduktion/Potsdam  
With backing from: Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung  
Producer: Norbert Sauer  
Director: Andreas Dresen  
Screenplay: Laila Stieler  
Director of Photography: Michael Hammon  
Editor: Joerg Hauschild  
Principal Cast: Axel Prahl, Inka Friedrich, Anne Ratte-Polle  
Format: Super 35 mm, color, cs  
Sound Technology: Digital Dolby SRD  
Shooting Language: German  
Shooting in: Magdeburg, January - March 2004

Contact:  
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Mr. Willenbrock is a successful car dealer. One evening, he and his wife are robbed. Although he escapes with only a few bruises, he can’t get it out of his mind. With the realization that he is indeed vulnerable, he tries bitternsly to regain control of his life, but nothing works. His business suffers, along with his love life. Together with the gun he now carries, he is a ticking bomb.

“Willenbrock is not a remake of Falling Down,” emphasizes producer Norbert Sauer. “That’s a very good action film
with a sociological background. Our film is a psychological and social study of a character. Americans stress the genre, Europeans the sensitive treatment of the characters. Besides, we have a different ending!"

Willenbrock also continues the successful collaboration between Sauer, director Andreas Dresen and writer Laila Stieler. "Even while making The Policewoman (Die Polizistin)," says Sauer, who cites English films such as The Full Monty and Brassed Off as his mentors, "we were discussing what to do next. I think he's [Dresen] the best contemporary German director. Usually, social subjects are too depressing or comedies have no link to reality. Only Andreas can combine humor and social reality."

As well as re-signing Laila Stieler to adapt Christoph Hein's novel of the same title, Sauer also recruited The Policewoman's cameraman, Michael Hammon.

Proof it's a winning team? The Policewoman (2001) picked up, among others, the Adolf Grimme Award in Gold, the German Television Award and the German Camera Award.

For the cast, Dresen chose Axel Prahl for the role of Willenbrook. His credits are almost a role call of contemporary German cinema: Liberated Zone (Befreite Zone), Dog Heads (Hundskopfe), Dresen's Grill Point (Halbe Treppe), The Pianist, Zoom, alaska.de, as well as Dresen's Night Shapes (Nachgestalten) and The Policewoman.

For the female roles, Willenbrook's wife and girlfriend, Dresen chose Inka Friedrich and Anne Ratte-Polle for their big screen debut. "Two new faces," says Sauer. "Both come from the theater and I'm convinced he has discovered two great new actresses for the cinema. I think they'll go very far."

"The location in Wahrenberg was perfect for the film," says producer Christine Ruppert, "because the story has to do with the former inner German border and the past. Some 80% of the locations were in the village and it was very pleasant shooting there. It was particularly good for a debut that we could be able to align himself to Juergen's style of camerawork so that he was able to help her come to terms with her suffering by bringing a dark story from the past to the surface again.

Ruppert recalls that the production suffered a blow when DoP Juergen Heimlich had to bow out due to injury in the middle of production, but she was luckily able to bring Rali Ralschev, the DoP on Samsara and Portrait of a Married Couple (Erste Ehe), onboard. "He was fantastic because he was able to align himself to Juergen's style of camerawork so that everything will be uniform."

The story written by Thomas Schwank focuses on a woman (played by Claudia Geisler) who lost her daughter in an accident and has to overcome the pain, grief and feelings of guilt about wanting to resume her own life. The film opens on what would have been the little girl's fifth birthday. Imke is in danger of being destroyed by the death of her child. Her husband Volker understands her pain, but wishes that normality would gradually return to their lives. He loves her, but doesn't know how they can find their way back to an everyday routine together. Of all people, it is the village's outsider Waller who is able to help her come to terms with her suffering by bringing a psychological drama will be completed by the spring, just in time for the summer festival circuit.
The young David Gray arrives late one evening at an isolated castle. The spookiness of the environment makes a strong impression on him and is the source of a strange dream. Allan dreams that a vampire, in the form of an old woman, has transformed the village doctor and his assistant into her faithful servants. The vampire is actually a dead woman who, because of her meanness during her lifetime, can find no peace among the dead and sucks the blood out of the living. After mysterious deaths and attempted suicides plague the village, Gray and the elderly castle servant, Leone, who is under the vampire’s spell, read about vampires and find out exactly who the old woman was, Marguerite Chopin. They open her grave and drive an arrow through her heart, thus destroying the vampire’s powers. Leone is saved, but the doctor and his assistant must pay for their evil deeds with their lives.

Genre Horror, Psycho Thriller  
Category Feature Film  
Cinema Year of Production 1932  
Director Carl Theodor Dreyer  
Screenplay Christen Jul, Carl Theodor Dreyer  
Directors of Photography Rudolph Maté, Louis Née  
Music by Wolfgang Zeller  
Production Design Hermann Warm, Cesare Silvagni  
Producers Nicholas de Gunzburg, Carl Theodor Dreyer  
Principal Cast Julian West, Maurice Schutz, Rena Mandel, Sybille Schmitz, Jan Hieronimko, Henriette Gérard, Albert Bras, Jane Mora  
Length 83 min, 2,271 m  
Format 35 mm, b&w, 1:1.37  
Original Version Silent  
Dubbed Versions English, German  
Subtitled Versions English, German  
Sound Technology Mono  
German Distributor Filmmuseum Berlin  

Carl Theodor Dreyer was born in 1889 and died in 1968. He worked as a journalist and scriptwriter before he began directing during the 1920s in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany and France. His films include: Die Pastorenwitwe (1920), Die Gezeichneten (1922), Die Braut von Glomdale (1925), La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc (1927), The Vampire (Vampyr, 1932), and Zwei Menschen (1944), among others.
Der Prozess

In over eight years of research, Der Prozess follows the longest criminal proceedings in Germany’s legal history - the “Majdanek Trial”. In interviews with judges, the accused, victims and eye witnesses, and with the use of documentary footage and reports, the film recounts (in three parts) the legal trials against the workers and perpetrators of the Lublin/Majdanek concentration camp from the first day to the pronouncement of the judgment.

Genre: History
Category: Documentary Cinema
Year of Production: 1975-1984
Director: Eberhard Fechner
Screenplay: Eberhard Fechner
Directors of Photography: Frank Arnold, Nils-Peter Mahlau, Bernd Schofeld
Editor: Brigitte Kirsche
Producer: Dieter Meichsner
Production Company: Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR)/Hamburg
Length: 260 min, 3,076 m
Format: 16 mm, color/b&w, 1:1.37
Original Version: German
Sound Technology: Optical Sound
German Distributor: Filmmuseum Berlin

Eberhard Fechner was born in 1926 Silesia/Poland and died in 1992 in Hamburg. He studied Acting in Berlin from 1946-1948, followed by numerous theater engagements in Berlin, Hamburg and Milan. In 1954, he began acting in television and cinema productions. In 1965, he became an editing assistant at NDR and was given the opportunity to direct on his own with Selbstbedienung (1967). His other films include: Nachrede auf Klara Heydebreck (documentary, 1969), Tadelloeser & Wolff (1975), Comedian Harmonists (1976), Ein Kapitel fuer sich (1979), Der Prozess (documentary, 1975-1984), and Wolfskinder (1991), among others.

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kino 1 2004

the 100 most significant german films – no. 64

(*no. 63 Tagebuch einer Verlorenen was already presented within the framework for the former series “German Classics” in KINO 1/1999)
Hans Epp signs up for the foreign legion in order to escape his loveless existence with his mother. When he returns, she greets him with the comment, “The best ones stay in, people like you come back.” Hans then works for the police department but is soon fired because he let himself be seduced by a prostitute at the station. He starts selling fruit in back courtyards. His “big love” refused to marry him because he was beneath her social status, and his wife doesn’t really love him, but she loves to torture him. His only escape are his regular visits to the local bar. Watching his unexceptional life disintegrate and rejected to the point of a nervous breakdown, Hans systematically drinks himself to death before the eyes of his loved ones.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 1971 Director Rainer Werner Fassbinder Screenplay Rainer Werner Fassbinder Director of Photography Dietrich Lohmann Editor Thea Eymesz Production Design Kurt Raab Producer Rainer Werner Fassbinder Production Company Tango Film/Munich for ZDF/Mainz Principal Cast Hans Hirschmueller, Irm Hermann, Hanna Schygulla, Andrea Schober, Gusti Kreissl, Kurt Raab, Klaus Loewitsch, Ingrid Caven, Karl Scheydrt Length 88 min, 2,481 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.33

Original Version German Subtitled Versions English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish Sound Technology Optical Sound International Awards 3 German Film Awards 1972 German Distributor Basis-Film Verleih GmbH/Berlin

Rainer Werner Fassbinder was born in 1945 and died in 1982. He was one of the most significant directors of the “New German Cinema”. In just 13 years, between 1969 and 1982, he made 44 films, including Katzhelmacher (1969), The Merchant of Four Seasons (Der Haendler der vier Jahreszeiten, 1971), The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant (Die bitteren Traenen der Petra von Kant, 1972), Fear Eats the Soul (Angst essen Seele auf, 1973), Despair (1978), The Marriage of Maria Braun (Die Ehe der Maria Braun, 1979), Lili Marleen (1981), Lola (1981), and Querelle (1982), among others. He wrote 14 plays, revised six others and directed 25. He wrote four radio plays and 37 screenplays and worked on a further 13 scripts with other writers. Fassbinder’s films are among the most valid social documents produced between the late 60s and early 80s in Germany; his plays are among the most performed of any post-war German dramatist.
Paris, late 19th century. Madeleine leads a double life. She is married to an upright, honorable bank clerk, a model husband who hardly knows his wife. The young composer Michael falls in love with Madeleine; he gives her a valuable pearl necklace because she inspired his “Romance in a Minor Key”. She tells her husband the pearls are only a cheap imitation. While her husband is away, Madeleine and Michael visit the latter’s brother; the rich playboy Viktor falls in love with the woman and leaves no stone unturned in his efforts to make her his. Viktor is appointed manager of the bank in which the unsuspecting husband works; he promotes the husband and transfers him to another branch so that he can devote his attention to Madeleine without interference. When this strategy also proves unfruitful, he tries to blackmail her with his knowledge of her liaison with Michael. In a fit of despair after the premiere of “Romance in a Minor Key”, Madeleine takes an overdose of sleeping pills in order to protect her husband from the truth. Michael challenges Viktor to a duel and kills the playboy.

Genre: Drama
Category: Feature Film
Cinema Year of Production: 1943
Director: Helmut Kaeutner
Screenplay: Willy Clever, Helmut Kaeutner
Director of Photography: Georg Bruckbauer
Editor: Anneliese Sponholz
Music by: Lothar Bruehne, Werner Eisbrenner
Production Design: Otto Erdmann, Franz F. Fuerst
Producer: Hermann Grund
Production Company: Tobis-Filmkunst/Berlin
Rights: Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Foundation/Wiesbaden
Principal Cast: Marianne Hoppe, Paul Dahlke, Ferdinand Marian, Siegfried Breuer, Eric Helgar, Karl Platen, Anja Elkhoff, Elisabeth Flickenschildt, Walter Lieck, Ernst Legal, Hans Stiebner
Length: 100 min, 2,728 m
Format: 35 mm, b&w, 1:1.37
Original Version: German
Sound Technology: Optical Sound
Distributor: Transit Film GmbH/Munich

Helmut Kaeutner was born in 1908 in Duesseldorf and died in 1980 in Italy. He studied German, Art History, Philosophy, Psychology and Theater Studies and was one of the founding members of the cabaret group “Die vier Nachrichten”, which was banned in 1935. Originally working in the theater as an actor and director, he began his film work as a scriptwriter. His directorial debut was with the film Kitty and the World Conference (Kitty und die Weltkonferenz, 1939), but the film was withdrawn by the Nazi government due to its ”pro-English tendencies”. His other films include: Kleider machen Leute (1940), Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska! (1941), Anuschka (1942), Romance in a Minor Key (Romanze in Moll, 1943), Great Freedom No. 7 (Grosse Freiheit Nr. 7, 1944), Seven Journeys (In jenen Tagen, 1947), The Original Sin (Der Apfel ist ab, 1948), The Last Bridge (Die letzte Bruecke, 1953) – winner of a German Film Award in 1954, Sky Without Stars (Himmel ohne Sterne, 1955), The Devil’s General (Des Teufels General, 1955), The Captain of Koepenik (Der Hauptmann von Koepenik, 1956) – winner of two German Film Awards in 1957, The Affairs of Julie (Die Zuverlicher Verlobung, 1957), The Restless Years (Zu jung, 1958), Stranger in My Arms (Ein Fremder in meinen Armen, 1959), Lausbubengeschichten (1964), and Die Feuerzangenbowle (1970), among others.
For Robby and his pals Alex, Hedwig and Lilly, summer just isn’t summer if it doesn’t have one big adventure in it, like saving the world. But this summer, saving a little dog named Mozart will do. The kids find Mozart next to Auntie Mimi, who fell off a ladder in her back yard. The ladder, however, was sabotaged: someone tried to kill the little old lady! They take Mozart home with them, which promptly infuriates the mean-spirited janitor and, more dangerously, pits them against feared boxer Titus the Claw. Undaunted, the kids investigate and discover that the late, fabled singer Gloria Parmigiani left her entire fortune to her pet, Mozart, who is to be cared for by Auntie Mimi. Only after Mozart and Mimi die does Gloria’s nephew Titus get the inheritance. Much too long for Titus, who wants it now, and will get rid of any four- or two-legged creatures who try to stop him. Soon, Robby, Alex and Hedwig are tied, bound, and locked in a basement. Their fate is in the hands of four-year-old Lilly, but she knows exactly where to go for help: to Titus the Claw’s boxing rival, Monster Man...

Genre
Children & Youth, Comedy

Category
Feature Film

Cinema Year of Production 2003

Director Gabriele Heberling

Screenplay Markus Steffl

Director of Photography Michael Berti

Editor Simone Klier

Music by Don Philippe & FK Band

Production Design Uwe Riemer

Producers Gunter Fenner, Bernd Gaul

Production Companies Saxonia Media Film/Leipzig, Perfect Film/Berlin, in co-production with X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin

Principal Cast Alexander Gaul, Kai-Michael Mueller, Martha Reckers, Nicole Mueller, Martin Semmelrogge, Michael Lott, Elisabeth Scherer, Axel Schulz

 Casting Ines Rahn

Special Effects Volker Buff, Buff Connection/Berlin

Length 77 min, 2,105 m

Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85

Original Version German

Subtitled Version English

Sound Technology Dolby Digital

Festival Screenings Golden Elephant Hyderabad 2003, Taiwan 2004

With backing from BKM, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung

German Distributors X Verleih AG/Berlin, Warner Bros./Hamburg

Gabriele Heberling studied German Studies and Sport in Tuebingen, followed by studies at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin. She has worked as an editing assistant and as a directing assistant at the Schiller Theater in Berlin. Her shorts have screened at numerous international film festivals, with Yok winning the first prize of the Pedagogical Academy Berlin. Since then, she has directed numerous TV movies, including: Bier – Anschlag auf das Oktoberfest (1997) and Die Kumpel (2001), several episodes for the television series HeliCops – Einsatz ueber Berlin, Cobra 11 – Die Autobahnpolizei, and Im Namen des Gesetzes. 4 Pals and a Dog Called Mozart (4 Freunde & 4 Pfoten, 2003) is her feature film debut.

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The history of medicine is the never-ending story of the struggle for life: a saga of triumphs and defeats. Some of the most important and intriguing aspects are covered in this four-part documentary. To draw the viewer into the narrative, the people portrayed are presented as members of a family gathered together at a garden party. The episodes depict four human periods of aging and the typical medical challenges that go along with them, based on a statistical model of the World Health Organization.

The scenes are centered on one particular person: by means of the time slice technique the action is turned into a “frozen” 3-dimensional scene and follows the selected person to hospital treatment – and goes back into history. A family member suffering from heart problems, for instance, leads to a segment on the discovery of the circulatory system by William Harvey in 1628. Authentic locations, original instruments, historically accurate re-enactments – these are the hallmarks of the fascinating documentary sequences alternating with moving scenes of a 21st century host family.

**Genre** History, Medicine  
**Category** Documentary TV  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Directors** Nina Koshofer, Stefan Schneider  
**Screenplay** Christian Feyerabend, Dr. med. Ulrich Knoedler  
**Director of Photography** Martin Christ  
**Editor** Jens Greuner  
**Producer** Uwe Kersken  

**Production Company** GRUPPE 5 Filmproduktion/ Cologne  
**Length** 4 x 52 min  
**Format** Digi-Beta, color  
**Original Version** German  
**Dubbed Version** English  


A group of young speed-freaks with supercharged cars, organize regular high-speed races on the autobahn. These adrenaline loaded, illegal events have lately been disturbed by regular police raids, actually aimed at a group of high-tech car thieves, who are stealing expensive sports-cars from transporters driving along the autobahn.

Centering all available forces on this case, the investigating inspector assigns Carl, a young rookie officer, to the illegal car races. Carl has a problem: his car is a rusty old piece of junk and he quickly falls for the beautiful Nicki, co-pilot of a lightning-fast BMW M3. Carl is quickly drawn into this world of cool guys, fast cars and beautiful girls and after a high speed cruise with Nicki, Carl is hooked.

The car thieves strike again: Ferrari, Maserati, Lamborghini and Viper – a million dollars on wheels. Now there are cops everywhere. Carl and his new friends take action: They need to catch the car thieves or they will never be able to burn rubber without being hassled by the police – they need to defend the very last resort of freedom and individualism – the German autobahn – the one and only highway without a speed limit.

Based on the extremely successful videogame by Davilex that has sold millions of copies in Germany and other countries, A2 Racer is an action-comedy filled to the rim with adrenaline and gasoline.

**Genre**  Action, Comedy

**Category**  Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production**  2003

**Director**  Michael Keusch

**Screenplay**  Robert Kulzer, Herman Weigel

**Director of Photography**  Hannes Hubach

**Editor**  Stefan Essl

**Music**  by Stephen Keusch

**Production Design**  Christina Schaffer, Ralf Kuefner

**Producers**  Oliver Berben, Robert Kulzer, Jimmy De Brabant

**Production Company**  Constantin Film/Munich, in co-production with Delux Productions/Luxembourg, in cooperation with MOOVIE-the art of entertainment/Berlin

**Principal Cast**  Luke J. Wilkins, Alexandra Neldel, Henriette Richter-Roehl, Niels Bruno Schmidt, Manuel Cortez, Ivonne Schoenherr, Collien Fernandes, Thomas Heinze

**Casting**  Rita Serra-Roll

**Length**  83 min, 2,283 m

**Format**  35 mm, color, cs

**Original Version**  German

**Sound Technology**  Dolby Digital

**With backing from**  Film Fund Luxembourg, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

**German Distributor**  Constantin Film Verleih GmbH/Munich

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During the night from the 27th to 28th September 1994, the Swedish-Estonian ferry *Estonia* sank in the middle of the Baltic Sea. 852 people lost their lives, only 145 were saved. Until today, this has remained the biggest shipping catastrophe in European waters since the end of World War II.

Julia Reuter, a German journalist, is trying to get the scoop on military black market arms trafficking from Russia. Her investigations lead her to Tallinn in Estonia, where on the evening of the 27th September 1994 she misses the ferry *Estonia* by mere minutes.

Erik Westermark is a Swedish lawyer, who is returning from a sailing trip along the Estonian coast with his 10-year-old son aboard the *Estonia*. But the ferry doesn’t make its port of call, it sinks in the midst of the cold Baltic Sea. Erik is among the rescued, but his son’s fate remains unclear.

While reporting about the tragedy, Julia meets Erik in a hospital in Stockholm. Both notice that the hastily assembled governmental investigating commission is very concerned with hushing up the actual background facts of the sinking. Together, they seek to get to the bottom of the whole story and become embroiled in the intricate crossfire between secret services and militaries. What started out as a “normal” search for the truth, ends as a final confrontation between “David” and “Goliath.”

**Genre** Political Thriller  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2003  
**Director** Reuben Leder  
**Screenplay** Reuben Leder  
**Directors of Photography** Robert Nordstroem, Nicolas Joray  
**Editor** Alan Strachan  
**Music by** Mauri Sumén, Katarina Holmberg  
**Production Design** Joris Hamann  
**Producers** Jutta Rabe, Kaj Holmberg  
**Executive Producers** Mimi Leder, Terence S. Potter, Jacqueline Quella, Guy Collins, Keith Cousins  
**Associate Producers** Tino T. Lahtinen, Birgit Stein  
**Production Company** Top Story Filmproduction/Potsdam, in co-production with Aquarius LLP/Cardiff, Baltic Storm/London, Smile Entertainment/Copenhagen  
**Principal Cast** Greta Scacchi, Juergen Prochnow, Donald Sutherland, Dieter Laser, Barbara Schoene, Juergen Tarrach  
**Casting** Birgit Stein  
**Length** 113 min, 3,356 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** English  
**Dubbed Version** German  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Additional Credits** Backing from Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Nordmedia, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg, NDR, ARTE  
**German Distributor** Buena Vista International (Germany)/Munich  

Reuben Leder is active as a writer, producer, and director. His film and television work includes: *The Rockford Files*, *Incredible Hulk*, *Magnum, P.I.* *Walker Texas Ranger*, *Zeus & Roxanne*, and *Baltic Storm*, among others.

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Sometime in the near future …

Years ago, the world famous pianist and composer Iris Sellen was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Determined not to let her musical talent die with her, she convinced the ambitious scientist Dr. Fischer to produce a clone of herself, her daughter Siri.

When Siri finds out at the age of thirteen that she is her mother’s clone, her whole world falls apart. The once very close and sweet relationship between mother and daughter turns into an emotional struggle. They fight for the same man, compete with their musical careers, and nearly pay with their lives.

In order to escape the disappointment of her own existence, Siri later moves to Canada where she lives a lonely life in the woods. But fate grants her the possibility of release from her self-imposed isolation when she meets Greg, a charming architect who brings love back into Siri’s life and even paves the way toward reconciliation between mother and daughter.

Cast  Franka Potente, Ulrich Thomsen, Hilmir Snærd Gudnason, Justus von Dohnányi, Wanja Mues, Każa Studt
Casting  Heta Mantscheff
Special Effects  Tim Mendter
Original Version  German
Subtitled Version  English
Sound Technology  Dolby Digital EX
Festival Screenings  Berlin 2004 (German Cinema)

Charlotte returns to Berlin after having lived in New York City. Alone in the big city, she looks for a connection to the comfortable life with the people she once knew. Along the way, armed only with an evening dress and five Euros, she tries to find the life that she once had. Eventually, Charlotte has to learn that she can neither escape her past nor determine her future.

**Genre** Drama, Women's Film  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Director** Ulrike von Ribbeck  
**Screenplay** Ulrike von Ribbeck  
**Director of Photography** Kolja Raschke  
**Editor** Karin Nowarra  
**Production Design** Caroline von Voss  
**Producer** Nicole Gerhards  
**Production Company** Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (dfb)/Berlin, in cooperation with 3sat/Mainz  
**Principal Cast** Geno Lechner, Beata Lehmann, Henry Arnold, Thorsten Merten  
**Length** 30 min, 825 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Berlin 2004 (Perspectives German Cinema)  
**With backing from** Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA)

**World Sales: please contact**  
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**Ulrike von Ribbeck** was born in 1975. She studied Visual Communication at the Hamburg Academy of Arts and worked as an assistant director for several film productions. She has been a student at the German Film & Television Academy Berlin (dfb) since 1999. Her films include: the shorts *Laurentia* (1999), *Kleine Traeume* (2000), *Little Star* (2001), *Am See* (2002), and *Charlotte* (2004).
The dentist Sue and the philosophy professor Anton have been leading a seemingly intact life; juggling careers and a family with four children. Until one day, however, when their 18-year-old son Thomas has a break down. Thomas’ situation threatens the stability of the family. While the other almost grown-up children continue on with their own lives, Sue and Anton are suddenly left to themselves. Sue recognizes that she has fallen in love with another man, and Anton’s current mistress is pregnant with his child. When Thomas suddenly dies, Sue realizes that she must do something to change her life. Faced with the decision of ending or revitalizing her relationship to Anton, she understands that sometimes it can be quite easy to be happy.
We were friends. Were we?

He doesn’t mention that he’s leaving, says no goodbyes. He parties one last time as if there was no tomorrow and the next day simply disappears: Yunes, 22 years old, a process engineering student in Berlin, born in Yemen.

Chris, his German roommate, begins to worry. He remembers their friendship: how they first met in a Turkish grocery shop, the careful approach of two foreign cultures, the discussions about women, the great times with Julia and Nora. In cases when it really mattered, Chris and Yunes were always there for each other.

But there are also things Chris never understood: moments in which pride and anger flared up in Yunes and frightened everybody around him. Times when his thoughts seemed to be infinitely far away. And the changes in his beliefs and his behavior for which there were never any explanations.

Chris starts looking for him. Yunes’ parents in Yemen don’t know anything. Neither does his ex-girlfriend. He broke off contact with his friends, his Islamic group has disbanded. He remains untraceable.

And then it’s September 11, 2001.
Millions of people pass through the Frankfurt Airport on their way from one city to another; for Alexej and Nisha, however, the airport is a city in itself — their own. With the help of airport technician Dak, Alexej breaks out of the holding area for refugees. Dak puts up the Russian, who yearns to become a pilot, in an underground labyrinth of pipes and vents. The young Indian woman Nisha pictures herself as a flight attendant, but the only time she ever boards a plane is to clean it … The two meet one night inside an empty jet as they are both acting out their dreams. Enraptured, the passionate Alexej offers her his love — and wins her heart. When Alexej learns that Nisha’s dream is fueled by the desire to bring her little son to Germany, he hands Dak his own savings, along with Nisha’s, to have the boy smuggled out of India. Their plan runs smoothly until the plane lands in Frankfurt and the boy, mistaken for another child, is put in detention. Alexej promises Nisha to rescue her son — and to do so, he makes his own dream of flying come true …

Shot in English based on a script by Gordan Mihic (Black Cat, White Cat), award-winning director Veit Helmer (Tuvalu) has created a tender and uplifting tale of love and longing with a mesmerizing cast of actors from ten countries. As Nisha, celebrated young Indian superstar Masumi Makhija brings a vibrant warmth to her role.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2003 Director Veit Helmer Screenplay Gordan Mihic, Veit Helmer Director of Photography Joachim Jung Editors Silke Botsch, Hansjoerg Weissbrich Production Design Alexander Manasse Producer Veit Helmer Production Company Veit Helmer-Filmproduktion/Berlin, in cooperation with ZDF/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Masumi Makhija, Valera Nikolaev, Miki Manojlovic, Udo Kier, Sotigui Kouyaté Casting Heidi Levitt, Carrie Hilton, Natalie Bielobos, Dilip Shankar, Vladimir Zeleneznakov Length 90 min, 2,475 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital With backing from Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Hessische Filmförderung, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg German Distributor Prokino Filmverleih GmbH/Munich

Veit Helmer was born in 1968 and has been making films since he was 14. He studied Directing at the Academy of Television & Film in Munich and co-produced A Trick of Light by Wim Wenders. He became known for his offbeat short films which earned him more than 50 awards at numerous international film festivals. His features include Tuvalu (1999), which was shown at 62 festivals and won over 30 awards, and Gate to Heaven (2003). Veit Helmer lives and works in Berlin.

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“You can put an end to your life without killing yourself,” whispers the doctor. And Cahit, 40, whose suicide attempt has brought him to the psychiatric clinic, knows what he means: by starting a new life. Yet the anguish in his soul continues to cry out for drugs and alcohol to numb his pain. Sibel – young, pretty and, like Cahit, Turkish-German – loves life too much for a proper Muslim girl. To escape from the prison of her devout, conservative family, she fakes a suicide attempt. But it brings shame, not freedom; only marriage can save her. And so she begs Cahit to marry her. Reluctantly, he agrees. Perhaps to save her. Perhaps to do one meaningful thing in his life. They share an apartment, but little else. She savors her freedom; he has his occasional fling with his sometime girlfriend. Until love enters his life on tip-toes. As he falls in love with Sibel, he finds a new joy in life, the strength to go on. She continues to see other men. Until she, too, realizes that she loves Cahit. But by now it is too late: an explosion of jealousy ends in a violent death. Cahit is sent to jail and Sibel flees to Turkey. Her heart, her mind, her soul are still with Cahit – but for how long?

Fatih Akin was born in 1973 in Hamburg of Turkish parentage. He began studying Visual Communications at Hamburg’s College of Fine Arts in 1994. His collaboration with Wueste Film also dates from this time. In 1995, he wrote and directed his first short feature, Sensin – You’re The One! (Sensin – Du bist es!), which received the Audience Award at the Hamburg International Short Film Festival. His second short film, Weed (Getuerkt, 1996), received several national and international festival prizes. His first full-length feature film, Short Sharp Shock (Kurz und schmerzlos, 1998) won the Bronze Leopard at Locarno and the Bavarian Film Award (Best Young Director) in 1998. His other films include: In July (Im Juli, 2000), Wir haben vergessen zurückzukehren (2001), Solino (2002), and Head-On (Gegen die Wand, 2003).
Kleinruppin is a fictional small town in communist East Germany where our protagonist, Tim, was born. But soon after his birth, his career-oriented adoptive parents fled with him to the West. He is now 19, an arrogant snob, successful with the girls, the year is 1985, and he has a scholarship at a world famous tennis academy in Florida. Before high school graduation, Tim goes on a school field trip behind the iron curtain entering the apparently gray and unfashionable East Germany. There, he happens to run into his twin brother, Ronny, who he didn’t know existed. The twin brother asks to let him go back to the West with Tim’s passport for only one day, but Tim only laughs at him and eventually gets knocked out by his angry brother. Tim wakes up in an East German hospital. He is now stuck in a communist country where nobody believes his absurd story, they all think he is Ronny. While planning his escape and struggling with the system and the cultural differences, he falls in love, learns the true meaning of friendship and experiences family warmth for the first time in his life. When he makes it back to his home town in West Germany through a swimming competition, he has to make a decision that will ultimately change his life forever. Florida or East Germany?

**Production Design** Bjoern Nowak **Producer** Dirk Beinhold **Production Company** Akkord Film/Berlin, in co-production with SevenPictures Film/Munich **Principal Cast** Tobias Schenke, Anna Brueggemann, Michael Gwisdek, Uwe Kockisch **Casting** Tina Boeckenhauer **Length** 103 min, 2,833 m **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 **Original Version** German **Subtitled Version** English **Sound Technology** Dolby SRD **World Sales:**

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**Genre** Comedy **Category** Feature Film Cinema **Year of Production** 2003 **Director** Carsten Fiebeler **Screenplay** Peer Klehm, Sebastian Wehlings, Peter Kuehne **Director of Photography** Bernhard Jasper **Editor** Antje Zynga **Music by** Masha Qrella, Norman Nitzsche

Carsten Fiebeler was born in 1965 and studied Directing at the “Konrad Wolf” Academy of Television & Film in Babelsberg. His graduation film 14/1 endlos was awarded the Panther Prize and Camera Award at the Filmfest Munich in 1999. His short film Strassensperre won the Panorama Short Film Award at Berlin in 1998. In addition to various commercials, shorts and documentaries, he has also directed the TV movie Himmlische Helden (2001), and the features Home Truths (Die Datsche, 2002), and Kleinruppin Forever (2003).
Kroko

She’s the blond bitch of the hood, the femme fatale of the Berlin backstreets. Coolness is heavily sitting on her eyelids. You could call it boredom — if there weren’t her rude street slang and her readiness to sweep any adversaries. She entertains herself in a likely tough way, and terrorizes the streets with her gang. But, on one of her joy rides she causes an accident, and is condemned by the juvenile court to do welfare work in a home for disabled people, a fact that she thinks is impertinent. But the “normal people” she is living with aren’t that thrilling either, and it seems as if Kroko finds something with the “spastics” that’s lacking in her daily life.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2003 Director Sylke Enders Screenplay Sylke Enders Directors of Photography Matthias Schellenberg, Katrin Vorderwuelbecke Editor Frank Brummundt Music by Robert Philipp, Marc Riedinger Production Design Tom Hornig Producer Gudrun Ruzicková-Steiner Production Company Luna Film/Berlin, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, HR/Frankfurt, RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg Principal Cast Franziska Juenger, Alexander Lange, Hinnerk Schoenemann, Harald Schrott, Danilo Bauer, Sabrina Brahmer Length 92 min, 2,734 m Format Mini DV Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.77 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Hof 2003, Berlin 2004 (German Cinema) With backing from Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) German Distributor Ventura Film/Berlin

Sylke Enders was born in 1965 in Brandenburg and initially studied Social Studies in Berlin. Also active in dance and theater, she has worked in script and continuity and as an assistant director for various film and television productions. A student at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin since 1996, her films include: Auszeit (short, 1997), Hund mit T (short, 1999), Immer mir (short, 2000), Kroko (2003) and Hab mich lieb (2003).

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AT BERLIN GERMAN CINEMA
A young couple in Berlin’s “Mitte” district. He’s lying on the sofa, reading. She can’t stand it anymore. In the afternoon the parents come to see the baby. She goes out in the evening. The young man waits desperately. She comes back – but not alone.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2003 Director Romuald Karmakar Screenplay Romuald Karmakar, Marin Rosefeldt, based on the drama by Jon Fosse Director of Photography Fred Schuler (A.S.C) Editor Patricia Rommel Production Design Heidi Luedi Costumes Bettina Helmi Producer Romuald Karmakar Production Company Pantera Film/Berlin, in co-production with Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures/Potsdam, ZDF/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Frank Giering, Anne Ratte-Polle, Manfred Zapatka, Marthe Keller, Sebastian Schipper Casting Risa Kes Studio Shooting Studio Babelsberg/Potsdam Length 93 min, 2,558 m Format 35 mm, color, 1.1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SRD Festival Screenings Berlin 2004 (in competition) With backing from BKM, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderungsaustalt (FFA) German Distributor Prokino Filmverleih GmbH/Munich


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Ten-year-old Panka and six-year-old Mischka spend an idyllic childhood in a well-guarded villa and its overgrown garden in Rosehill. It is the summer of 1956. The children’s idiosyncratic world mirrors the grotesque combination of the superstitious and God-fearing sensitivity of the domestic staff and the parents’ efforts to build a “new world order” while, notwithstanding their communist ideals, living in the lap of luxury. The adults are busy; the children grow up without restraints, like weeds. The overgrown garden is their world.

Drama is triggered by a letter which the children hide in what they perceive to be the interest of family harmony. The letter was posted in Israel and is addressed to Papa. A photograph of a beautiful blonde woman, signed “Lolo”, is enclosed with the letter. The parents’ increasingly frequent arguments make it apparent that Lolo means a great deal to the father. The letter’s importance weighs ever heavier upon the children’s minds.

The revolution of 1956 turns family life upside down. Political events infiltrate into the villa in the genteel Rosehill neighborhood, a district popular among high-ranking party functionaries. The children feel partly to blame for these events, and this strongly affects the way they perceive events around them. They believe that what is happening around them is connected with their appropriation of the letter. In Rosehill, the issue of crime and punishment appears in a hideously grotesque, tragicomic light.
What’s a SAMS? Why, a Simply Adorable and Magical Sprite, of course!

Martin is a shy 11-year-old, an outsider who has no friends. To make matters worse, Martin is harassed by his mean gym teacher who humiliates him in front of the entire class. Even though his father, who works as a technical advisor in the school, passes out invitations to Martin’s birthday party, no classmates show up. It’s just Martin and his parents and the big empty room. But all this is about to change …

Quickly finding the small, potion-filled bottle on a bathroom shelf, his Dad mixes a few drops in his glass, drinks it … and like a colorful whirlwind of energy … the Sams is there! Now Martin has a real friend, and a magical one at that! Small and impish, full of mischief and topped with fuzzy red hair, the Sams talks in funny rhymes and has a face full of blue magical freckles, each one worth one wish! But there are only so many freckles … and crazy side effects that come with every new batch!

After a flurry of hilarious “wishtakes”, Martin quickly learns how to wish with precision and begins a wild escapade of magic-making that wins him lots of new friends, good grades in school, and unfortunately, the greedy attention of his gym teacher. Then suddenly the Sams is gone! And all at once, strange things start to happen: The gym teacher becomes school principal, suddenly has a new dream car and a beautiful villa, and he’s also captured the heart of the gorgeous math teacher. Worst of all, Martin is kicked out of school and his dad gets fired! There’s only one possibility: the gym teacher must have kidnapped the Sams and is using his freckled powers! Everything seems to be lost, but Martin is determined, magic or no magic, to go in search of his friend. It might be difficult, but where there’s a Sams, there’s a way!

Ben Verbong was born in 1949 in Holland and is one of the most well-known directors in his homeland. His films include: Der Skorpion (1984), Lily Was Here (1989), and House Call (1996). He has been living and working in Germany for several years, directing the television films Schock – Eine Frau in Angst (1998), the Tatort-series episode Kinder der Gewalt (1999), the thriller Lieber, booser Weihnachtsmann (1999), The Slurb (Das Sams, 2001), Hanna – Wo bist Du? (TV, 2001), and My Magical Friend Sams (Sams in Gefahr, 2003).
Ben leads the kind of life that others can only dream of. The 24-year-old is a celebrated editor at one of Berlin’s hippest music magazines, a regular guest at all the coolest parties, and good friends with all kinds of stars. But his wonderful world suddenly becomes less wonderful when his girlfriend Katharina breaks up with him – via text message on his mobile phone – after three years.

Such a bitter blow even gets the best of self-infatuated Ben. With the help of his two best friends, he tries to pull himself up by the bootstraps and get on with his new single life. But that is not as easy as it may seem, particularly since Ben’s boss doesn’t have much sympathy with him. Ben is prepared to do anything and everything to win Katharina back. And, at the same time, anything and everything to forget her.

Gregor Schnitzler was born in 1964 in Berlin. During his studies of Communication Design, he worked as a set photographer. Together with Eleni Ampelakiotou, he directed the shorts Das Fenster (1991) and Sonntage (1992) and the feature Finnlandia (1999). His other films include: the episodes Unternehmen Feuertaufe and Toedlicher Wind from the Team Berlin series, Gefahrliche Vaterschaft from the Balko series, the features What To Do In Case of Fire? (Was tun, wenn’s brennt?), 2001, and Soloalbum (2002), as well as over 65 music videos and commercials.
Drawing manga-style comics is Angela’s passion, but it won’t get the dreamy, 18-year-old blonde out of her European hometown. Hungry for adventure, Angela spontaneously takes up the idea of Japanese DJ Yamamoto, whom she meets at her graduation party, and flies to Tokyo to work as a hostess. Tokyo instantly casts its spell on the impressionable youth, and her comics soon turn into animes – threatening, violent action comics that unreef before her eyes with terrifying vividness. Angela plunges into a dark story of cruelty and murder, of naïve young European women swallowed up into the brightly lit nights of downtown Tokyo, of men so powerful that even the police steer clear of them. Aware that she is – and must be – the heroine of her epic, Angela the Stratosphere Girl feverishly sketches the story that will reveal the truth. As she lives out the comic she is drawing, each stroke of her pencil brings her closer to triumph – or doom.

The Stratosphere Girl blends European storytelling with Japanese anime cartoon power into a stylized action-mystery. With a stunning visual concept, director M.X. Oberg (Under the Milky Way, Undertaker’s Paradise) and cinematographer Michael Mieke (Baby) vividly capture an alienating world.

M. X. Oberg was born in 1969 in Hamburg and made three short films before shooting the feature Under the Milky Way (Unter der Milchstrasse, 1996) which was shown at many film festivals worldwide. In 1999, he made his first international feature film Undertaker’s Paradise (Ein Todsicheres Geschäft), shot on location in Great Britain. In summer 2002, he directed the modern drama The Stratosphere Girl (2003), a story that takes place in Tokyo and Cologne.

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Genre: Drama Category: Feature Film Cinema
Year of Production: 2003 Director: M. X. Oberg
Screenplay: M. X. Oberg
Director of Photography: Michael Mieke
Editor: Peter Alderliesten
Music by: Nils Petter Molvaer
Production Design: Petra Barchi
Producers: Christoph Friedel, Karl Baumgartner
Line Producer: Claudia Steffen
Principal Cast: Chloé Winkel, Jon Yang, Rebecca Palmer, Tuva Novotny, Tara Elders, Linda Stainhoff, Burt Kwouk, Filip Peeters, Togo Igawa
Casting: Pia Marais
Length: 85 min
Format: 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version: English
Sound Technology: Dolby SRD
Festival Screenings: Berlin 2004 (Panorama) With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Dutch Film Fund, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), MEDIA, BKM
Three young people are spending their holidays on a camping ground in Brandenburg, south of Berlin. Sandra, a young single mother, with her daughter Jule. Benni, seriously in love with Sandra. And, Marco, hidden behind his sunglasses, colorful, smiling, but also unpredictable, and apparently with nothing much to lose.

After a few days (and a few fights), they all find confidence in each other. When Marco gets in trouble, they decide to leave the camping ground and travel further to the Polish Baltic Coast.

Step by step, new desires begin to reveal themselves. For some time a strange little family comes into being, in which each one finds what he is looking for. Discoveries and difficulties, funny moments and challenges follow their steps.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** TV Movie  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Director** Jan Krüger  
**Screenplay** Jan Krüger  
**Director of Photography** Bernadette Paassen  
**Editor** Natali Barrey  
**Music by** Max Mueller  
**Production Design** Beatrice Schulz  
**Producers** Michael Weber, Florian Koerner von Gustorf  
**Production Company** Schramm Film Koerner + Weber/Berlin, in cooperation with Tempus Film/Lodz, ZDF/Mainz  
**Principal Cast** Anabelle Lachatte, Martin Kiefer, Florian Panzner, Lena Beyerling  
**Casting** Simone Baer  
**Special Effects** Mike Bös  
**Length** 80 min, 2,280 m  
**Format** Digital Video  
**Blow-up** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Rotterdam 2004 (in competition), Berlin 2004 (Perspectives German Cinema)  

**Jan Krüger** was born in 1973 in Aachen. After studies in Electronics, Physics and Social Studies from 1992-1996, he enrolled in the Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM) to study Film and Television. Since 1998, he has been working as an author and director for an advertising agency and the public broadcaster WDR. His films include: *In den Kreis des Lichts* (documentary, 1997), the music video to Udo Lindenberg’s *Verführung von Engeln* (1999), the shorts *Hochzeitvorbereitungen* (2000), and *The Whiz Kids* (*Freunde*, 2001) which received the Silver Lion and the *Prix UIP* in Venice for Best Short, First Prize at Short Cuts Cologne and the *Prix Canal+* at Angers in 2002, and his feature debut *En Route* (*Unterwegs*, 2004).
Does it really exist, the pinnacle of life? Guenther and Paul are convinced that it does: they want to live – to the limit and with no compromises – and they expect the same of love. Together with Guenther’s sister Hilde they spend the weekend at a summer house in the country. Paul is fascinated by Hilde and falls in love with her. And at first it seems as though she feels the same about him. But Hilde has many loves. She is secretly dating Hans – Guenther’s former lover.

With a large group of friends, they have a drunken bohemian party in the garden. When Hans surprisingly turns up, he sets in motion a roller coaster of emotions that soon rages out of control. Drunk on absinthe, music and their lust for life, the four young people are caught in a deadly maelstrom.

Was nuetzt die Liebe in Gedanken

LOVE IN THOUGHTS

Achim von Borries was born in Munich in 1968. He studied History, Political Science and Philosophy at the Free University in Berlin from 1989-1993. He then enrolled at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin and graduated in 2000. His critically acclaimed graduation film England! received 15 international awards, among them the German Film Critics Awards for Best Screenplay and Best Cinematography. Further work includes the direction of several short films and the conception of the TV series Berlin Boomtown together with Hendrik Handloegten, with whom he also worked on the screenplay to Good Bye, Lenin! In 2003, he was awarded the Director’s Prize from the labor union ver.di.

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The Export-Union of German Cinema is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 as the “umbrella” association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company.

**Shareholders** in the limited company are the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers, the Association of German Film Exporters and the German Federal Film Board (FFA).

**The members of the advisory board** of the Export-Union of German Cinema are: Rolf Baehr, Antonio Exacoustos, Alfred Huemer (chairman), and Michael Weber.

The Export-Union itself has eleven permanent staff members:
- Christian Dorsch, managing director
- Andrea Rings, assistant to the managing director
- Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations
- Cornelia Klimkeit, PR assistant
- Angela Hawkins, publications editor
- Julia Basler, project coordinator
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Ernst Schrottenloher, accounts

In addition, the Export-Union shares foreign representatives in nine countries with the German Federal Film Board (FFA), (cf. page 59).

**The Export-Union’s budget** of presently approx. €4.1 million (including projects, administration, foreign representatives) comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. In addition, the seven main economic film funds (Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW, Medien- und Filmgesellschaft Baden-Wuerttemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, and Nordmedia) have made a financial contribution, currently amounting to €0.3 million, towards the work of the Export-Union. In 1997, the Export-Union and five large economic film funds founded an advisory committee whose goal is the “concentration of efforts for the promotion of German film abroad” (constitution).

The Export-Union is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, an amalgamation of 23 national film-PR agencies (Unifrance, Swiss Films, Holland Film, among others) with similar responsibilities to those of the Export-Union. The organization, with its headquarters in Hamburg, aims to develop and realize joint projects for the presentation of European films on an international level.

**The Export-Union’s range of activities:**
- Close cooperation with the major international film festivals, e.g. Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Montreal, Toronto, San Sebastian, New York, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, Moscow;
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international TV and film markets;
- Staging of Festivals of German Cinema worldwide (Rome, Madrid, Paris, London, Los Angeles, New York, Sydney, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Cracow, Moscow and Scandinavia);
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, video, and television;
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation and German films being shown;
- Organization of the annual “Next Generation” short film program, which presents a selection of shorts by students of German film schools and is premiered every year at Cannes;
- Publication of informational literature on the current German cinema: KINO Magazine and KINO Yearbook;
- An Internet website (http://www.german-cinema.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals;
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the OSCAR for Best Foreign Language Film.

The focus of the work: feature films, documentaries with theatrical potential and shorts that have been invited to the main sections of major festivals.
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**NIGHTSONGS**
by Romuald Karmakar

**WORLD PREMIERE**

- **Wed, Feb 11** 12:30 h  Berlinale Palast P
- **Wed, Feb 11** 19:30 h  Berlinale Palast WP
- **Thu, Feb 12** 12:00 h  Royal Palast
- **Thu, Feb 12** 21:00 h  Royal Palast

**EL ABRAZO PARTIDO**
by Daniel Burman

**WORLD PREMIERE**

- **Mon, Feb 9** 09:00 h  Berlinale Palast P
- **Mon, Feb 9** 16:30 h  Berlinale Palast WP
- **Tue, Feb 10** 15:00 h  Royal Palast
- **Tue, Feb 10** 21:00 h  Royal Palast
- **Wed, Feb 11** 12:00 h  CinemaxX 10

**HEAD-ON**
by Fatih Akin

**WORLD PREMIERE**

- **Thu, Feb 12** 09:00 h  Berlinale Palast P
- **Thu, Feb 12** 16:30 h  Berlinale Palast WP
- **Fri, Feb 13** 09:30 h  Royal Palast
- **Fri, Feb 13** 20:00 h  International

**THE STRATOSPHERE GIRL**
by M. X. Oberg

**WORLD PREMIERE**

- **Sat, Feb 7** 21:30 h  Zoopalast
- **Sun, Feb 8** 14:00 h  CinemaxX 7
- **Mon, Feb 9** 14:00 h  CineStar 5
- **Tue, Feb 10** 13:45 h  CineStar 5
- **Sun, Feb 15** 14:30 h  International

**OLGA’S SUMMER**
by Nina Grosse

**INTERNATIONAL MARKET PREMIERE**

- **Sat, Feb 7** 18:00 h  CineStar 6
- **Sun, Feb 8** 12:00 h  CineStar 6

**GATE TO HEAVEN**
by Veit Helmer

- **Sun, Feb 8** 18:00 h  CineStar 5
- **Mon, Feb 9** 18:00 h  CineStar 5

P = Press, WP = World Premiere

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