LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION – TAKE 2!
focus on Studios in Germany

directors’ portraits

THE DREAM IS THE PROTOTYPE OF CINEMA
A portrait of Alexander Kluge

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
A portrait of Nicolette Krebitz

producers’ portrait

DIVERSITY IS THEIR MOTTO
A portrait of Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion

actress’ portrait

A MODEL OF VERSATILITY
A portrait of Martina Gedeck

news

in production

BUDDENBROOKS – EIN GESCHAFT VON EINIGER GROESSE
Heinrich Breloer

CLARA
Helma Sanders-Brahms

DIE FRAUEN DES ANARCHISTEN
Marie Noëlle, Peter Sehr

FRECHE MAEDCHEN
Ute Wieland

IM WINTER EIN JAHR
Caroline Link

DER LOTSE
Nicolai Rohde

MEINE SCHOENE BESCHERUNG
Vanessa Jopp

MEMORY BOOKS
Christa Graf

DER PARASIT
Toke Constantin Hebbeln

SPUREN UND ZEICHEN
Hans Henkes

TANZ MIT MIR
Doendue Kilic

DAS VATERSPIEL
Michael Glawogger

VORWAERTS IMMER
Marco Mittelstaedt

WARUM MAENNER NICHT ZUHOEREN UND FRAUEN SCHLECHT EINPARKEN
Leander Haussmann

DIE WELLE
Dennis Gansel
new german films

44 **ALLEIN IN VIER WAENDEN** ALONE IN FOUR WALLS
Alexandra Westmeier
45 **DER ANDERE JUNGE** THE OTHER BOY
Volker Einrauch
46 **BILDFENSTER / FENSTERBILDER** FRAMING
Bert Gottschalk
47 **FRUEHER ODER SPAETER** SOONER OR LATER
Ulinik von Ribbeck
48 **DER GROSSE SCHLAF** THE BIG SLEEP
Mona Lenz
49 **DIE GUTE LAGE. IN A GOOD POSITION.**
Nancy Brandt
50 **HERR BELLO** MR. WOOF
Ben Verbong
51 **HOPE**
Stanislaw Mucha
52 **DER KLEINE KOENIG MACIUS** LITTLE KING MACIUS
Sandor Jesse, Lutz Stuetzner
53 **MAX MINSKY UND ICH** MAX MINSKY AND ME
Anna Justice
54 **MIT DEN WAFFEN EINER FRAU** WITH THE WEAPONS OF A WOMAN
Ralf Heincke, Florian Leidenberger
55 **MOERDERISCHER FRIEDEN** SNIPERS VALLEY
Rudolf Schweiger
56 **NO MORE KILLING**
Wolfgang Bergmann
57 **ORBELA’S PEOPLE**
Percy Adlon
58 **PORNO!MELO!DRAMA!**
Heesook Sohn
59 **ROOTS GERMANIA**
Mo Asumang
60 **STELLUNGSSWECHEL** SPECIAL ESCORT
Maggie Peren
61 **DER UNBEQUEME – DER DICHTER GUENTER GRASS**
AN AWKWARD CUSTOMER – THE WRITER GUENTER GRASS
Sigrun Matthiesen, Nadja Frenz
62 **ZEIT DER FISCHE** A TIME FOR FISHES
Heiko Aufdermauer

65 film exporters
67 foreign representatives · imprint
What a difference eight years can make. The last time German Films devoted a special report to the studio landscape in Germany, the studio managers were still coming to terms with the many changes following the privatization of the former state-run DEFA studio complex in Babelsberg and the ambitions of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia to locate state-of-the-art studio complexes in the region as part of its strategy to become a leading player in the European film industry.

Even at that time, German studios had often been frustrated in their attempts to tempt big-budget – i.e. Hollywood – productions to their sound stages because of the higher costs of shooting in Germany compared to rival studios further East in Prague and Budapest. Over the years, the competition from Eastern Europe has not lessened and has been indeed exacerbated by the deals and facilities also offered by such studios as Boyana in Sofia or the Castel Film Studios and Media Pro outside of Bucharest.

Moreover, German studios could have another competitor on their doorstep in neighboring Poland if the initiative to invest €100 million in a 23,000 square meter Cinema City just 80 kilometers outside of Warsaw is realized. Full funding is expected to be secured by the end of this year, with construction to follow in 2008 and the first films to start shooting by the end of 2009.

Attempts to attract international productions to shoot in German studios was not made any easier before this year by the fact that potential German co-producers or studio operators did not have any incentive scheme – tax-based or otherwise – like those in Hungary or Luxemburg to wave like a carrot before the foreign producer’s nose. However, this has changed dramatically as of 1 January 2007 with the introduction of the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) with its automatic “German spend” rebate.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that in fact most feature films are shot outside of studios on location, so that studio operators have looked to television as regular, reliable tenants for their sound stages rather than banking on having a call from a Hollywood producer wanting to book up studio space for a sci-fi fantasy extravaganza. Indeed, the studios who want to host international film productions could keep stages free for a big production only to learn that financing fell through or the producers decide to go for a cheaper alternative and then be left with studio space standing idle. The other scenario, of course, is to go for the safe option and have the stages running to optimum capacity with television – until a film production turns up on the door asking about availability of studios. A way of wriggling out of this dilemma has been found, for example, by Studio Babelsberg with the establishment of the Neue Film 1 and Neue Film 2 stages across the road from the main studio lot, or by Studio Hamburg’s plans to build another film sound stage at the Adlershof lot next year.

STUDIOS WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS: DOWN SOUTH

In this overview of the key studio complexes boasting an international standard, the journey begins in deepest Bavaria in the idyllic setting of the Bavaria Film Studios (www.bavaria-film.de) on the outskirts of Munich in the leafy suburb of Geiselgasteig.

Founded back in 1919, the studios can look back on almost 90 years of making films with such directors as Ingmar Bergman, Billy Wilder, Bob Fosse, Wolfgang Petersen, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Joseph Vilsmaier, Claude Zidi, Claude Chabrol, and Tom Tykwer.

Nowadays, the bulk of the production center’s annual turnover comes from contracts for the public broadcasters such as for the daily
soap Marienhof and the ARD’s long-running Tatort crime series, as well as for the private channels, but the studio is always keen to keep a close connection with the next generation of filmmakers by working closely with the local Academy of Television & Film (HFF). Moreover, the presence of the Tribeca-style Bayerisches Filmzentrum (Bavarian Film Center) on the studio lot has created all kinds of synergies with the production complex and served as a launchpad for numerous young production companies.

As Bavaria Film’s executive responsible for sales and services, Markus Vogelbacher points out, “the studio is built on three pillars: production, services and rights exploitation. A big advantage of the studio’s location is that we can tap into the workforce and talents in Munich as one of the leading centers of the film industry, including the film school.”

Bavaria might not be hitting the headlines with stages hosting big productions from the US as Babelsberg is currently doing at the moment, but Vogelbacher suggests that Geiselgasteig “prefers to have continuity and work on acquiring smaller projects rather than putting our cards on just one big project which might not then appear after all.”
In recent years, sound stages at Bavaria were rented out for Eric Till’s *Luther*, Oliver Hirschbiegel’s *Downfall* and Helmut Dietl’s *About the Looking for and the Finding of Love*, and two years ago, the studios provided the interiors for Tom Tykwer’s €50 million *Perfume – The Story of a Murderer*, with Ben Whishaw, Dustin Hoffmann and Alan Rickman. All of the interiors – the perfumerie, the laboratory, etc. – were constructed at the Bavaria lot, and the Constantin Film production returned to Geiselgasteig after the shoot for the sound post-production by Michael Kranz and his sound studios team. Their work was then recognized by the German Film Academy with a German Film Award (aka Lola) this May to add to previous awards.

As Vogelbacher explains, the studios are involved in more than just handling film and television productions: the portfolio ranges from Internet TV for such companies as BMW and Audi to services for visiting productions in the region and from as far apart as the UK and Russia. In addition, the workshops have also been busy constructing decorations for exhibitions and trade fairs or the sets for musicals.
such as *We Will Rock You* in Zurich and *The Beauty and the Beast* in Munich as well as for the opening and closing galas of the Berlinale at Potsdamer Platz in February.

He agrees that the studios further east pose new challenges for the players in Germany, but argues that “the fact that Europe is growing together opens up so many new possibilities.” Indeed, Bavaria has secured a foothold in this growing market by having equipment rental outposts in Prague and Vienna and offering its managerial know-how for coordinating crews and facilities for international productions.

While the studio has already been involved in production through the company managed by Uschi Reich, another production outfit, Bavaria Pictures, was recently set up under Philipp Kreuzer, which “produces feature films and also gets involved in international co-productions of any budget range.”

“There is no special focus on any genre,” Kreuzer explains, “Next to commercial, higher budget features like Impy’s Island, we also produce and co-produce quality arthouse films such as Baltasar Kormákur’s Nordermoor or films of upcoming German talent like the recent Short Cut to Hollywood.”

“For any of our co-productions, the production, studio and post-production facilities, services and expertise available within the Bavaria Film Group throughout Germany is an advantage we naturally make use of to the point where it makes sense for the individual production and our co-production partners,” Kreuzer stresses. “The same applies to our sales arm Bavaria Film International as well as our video distribution and merchandising divisions.”

Elsewhere in Munich, there are the **ARRI Studios** (www.arri.de), the home of the internationally famous film cameras, which have now been reduced to one sound stage and mainly concentrate on TV shows and commercial work.

However, anyone shooting at this studio has access under one roof to the whole gamut of post-production facilities in the field of editing, computer animation and special effects.

Meanwhile, another smaller facility at the **Eisbach Studios** (www.eisbach-studios.de) in the north of the city plays a more important role for the local advertising market.

**IN THE NORTHEAST**

Traveling northwards to the city of Cologne on the banks of the Rhine, we come to the **MMC Magic Media Company** (www.mmc-studios.de) at Ossendorf which was very much the “new kid on the block” when German Films’ last report on the studio scene appeared.

At the time, there were plans to create “Europe’s largest and most sophisticated media production landscape – an interconnected network of different production units on an area of more than 350,000 square meters.”

In the intervening period, the Magic Media Coloneum has become reality and hosted several internationally renowned feature films such as *Amelie from Montmartre*, *The King is Dancing*, *The Miracle of Bern* as well *The Daltons* and *7 Dwarves*.

“In total, we now have 35 studios,” says Bastie Griese, an executive of the studio’s production arm MMC Independent. “An innovation is that we took over the former CBC studios which are also in Ossendorf and now have Peter Sehr’s *The Anarchist’s Wives* shooting there. But, mainly, the work we handle there is for television such as n-tv, Super RTL and VOX.”

Similarly, MMC stages at another Cologne suburb of Huerth are primarily occupied by television although they are equipped to take film projects as well, such as Max Faerberboeck’s latest project *Anonyma*, which moved from its exterior shots in Poland to a stage in Huerth this summer.
“About 70% of the stages are occupied by television and practically everything you see on German TV is produced here: shows like Deutschland sucht den Superstar, Let’s Dance, Nur die Liebe zählt, or the soaps Verbotene Liebe, Unter Uns, and Alles was zaehlt as well as a series like Alles Atze,” Griese notes.

While private broadcasters RTL and ProSieben SAT.1 are shareholders of MMC along with the Stadtparkasse Koeln Bonn and an investment company, this doesn’t mean automatically that the studio has more productions from RTL or ProSieben SAT.1 using its facilities. “We also have productions from other stations – we are quite independent in that respect,” Griese says.

Business is ticking over quite nicely at the moment: apart from the long-term commitments for stage space for TV productions, MMC recently hosted Joseph Vilsmaier’s ZDF historical two-parter Hafen der Hoffnung – Die letzte Fahrt der Wilhelm Gustloff about the refugee ship catastrophe of January 1945, and will also be providing interiors for Heinrich Breloer’s €15 million Thomas Mann-adaptation Buddenbrooks which began shooting in August.

Apart from functioning as a studio operator, MMC was also active through MMC Independent as a co-producer on some of the feature films in Ossendorf. A new development this year is that MMC Independent will embark on the development of in-house feature films in addition to serving as a co-producer on third party projects.

“Our recently expanded team intends to become more involved in the development of projects at all stages: from the idea through treatment and screenplay to realization, so that we are not just a co-producer, but are a producer who co-develops and accompanies a project from A to Z,” Bastie Griese explains.

“MMC will continue to work as a co-producer and service provider, but we also want to get involved in projects of young filmmakers at a very early stage,” he notes. “It is not a prerequisite that these films have to be shot at the MMC studios, although it is naturally an advantage that one has such resources. We would rather concentrate our energies on the particular project. If it makes sense to shoot in a studio, we will do this, but this doesn’t have to be the case.”

MMC Independent is currently still at the beginning of identifying interesting young filmmakers from all over Germany to work with, “but we also have contacts to Norwegians and, through [last year’s co-production] Wilhelm Tell, more connections to Switzerland.”

Development of one of MMC Independent’s first in-house projects – Cologne’s Academy of Media Arts (KHM) graduate Bernd Scharmann’s Alisha – though, is progressing “quite swiftly”. Funding has already come from the Filmstiftung NRW and the plan is to go into production in February or March of next year. Actor Vadim Glowna, who is set to appear in the film, will co-produce with his Berlin-based production company Atossa Film.
There is little competition for MMC elsewhere in North Rhine-Westphalia: true, there were the two soundstages in the Warner Bros. Movie World theme park when it opened near Bottrop in 1996 and productions such as the costume drama *Rembrandt van Rijn*, with Klaus-Maria Brandauer, and *The Little Vampire* were shot there before a period of apparent dormancy. After the theme park changed hands and was renamed Movie Park, there was a brief revival of activity at the beginning of 2005 with the shooting of Raul Ruiz’s *Klimt* with John Malkovich, Veronica Ferres and Nikolai Kinski, but the facility has slipped off the radar once more.

Moreover, the former High Definition Oberhausen (HDO) studio – a subject of much political controversy in the 1990s for the use of public funding to subsidize the construction of the studios – now operates under the name of Blue Box Studio Oberhausen (www.studio-oberhausen.de) and offers one of the largest available blue screens for film, television and commercial productions.

**WAY UP NORTH**

Traveling further north on our tour of German studios, we come to Studio Hamburg (www.studio-hamburg.de) which prides itself on being one of the largest and most modern audiovisual service houses in northern Europe with 24 studios at the three locations in Hamburg, Babelsberg and Berlin-Adlershof.

Feature films are admittedly few and far between at Studio Hamburg’s headquarters in the Hamburg suburb of Tonndorf since the focus here is on German TV shows and servicing local series.

In Adlershof, the stages were used in the past for Paul W. Anderson’s *Resident Evil*, Peter Bogdanovich’s *The Cat’s Meow*, Wolfgang Becker’s *Good Bye, Lenin!* and — most recently — Christian Clarion’s WWI drama *Merry Christmas*, although the emphasis here is also on TV production, ranging from the German version of *Ugly Betty* — *Verliebt in Berlin* — to the *MegaClever!* quiz show.

“In the past two years we have built two new studios in Adlershof — one 1,400 square meters and a second 1,800 square meters in area — and are looking at building a film sound stage of over 2,000 square meters,” explains Sytze van der Laan, managing director of Studio Hamburg Produktion fuer Film und Fernsehen. “We are at a preliminary planning phase on this.”

“He calculates that television makes up 80% of the studio’s business, with cinema projects and commercials both coming in at 10%, although “commercials are an area that is expanding, especially in Hamburg.”
As with the other leading studios in Germany, Studio Hamburg also has its feature film production arm — Studio Hamburg International Production (SHIP). “Regarding us getting involved as a co-producer in projects, you have to make a separation between the studios and SHIP,” van der Laan explains. “The studio does not function as a co-producer, but one can combine efforts. SHIP can be co-financier of up to 50% of a film’s budget and bring in studio facilities, but this latter is not a ‘must have’.”

“When attracting international productions to Germany, there should be more co-development — the policy should be for rights to remain in the country as is the case established with SHIP. In the end, the best model is to create revenues in your home territory,” he argues.

Meanwhile, in the center of Hamburg, the technical service provider Cinegate (www.cinegate.de) also offers four rental studios between 100 and 950 square meters in area. “Twelve years ago, we realized...”
that there were too few studios in the city for film and commercials,”
recalls Cinegate’s managing director Hartmut Rabe. “We have an
advantage that we are very close to the technical equipment” – 
Cinegate can offer the whole range of professional equipment in the
field of camera, lighting, grip and camera crane from its rental park – 
“and we can offer special package deals with the studio and equip-
ment.”

In the past, Cinegate has hosted interiors for Anno Saul’s Kebab
Connection, episodes of MovieMembers’ GG19 omnibus film, parts of

the second 7 Dwarves film and Relevant Film’s production of Peter Timm’s Rudy, The Return
of the Racing Pig. In June, a set was constructed on one of the sound stages for scenes of
Maria Larsson’s Everlasting Moments, the new feature film by the veteran Swedish director
Jan Troell. Produced by Hamburg-based Schneider + groos filmproduktion with
Denmark’s Thomas Stenderup, the drama
stars Maria Heiskanen, Mikael Persbrandt, 
Jesper Christensen and Ghita Norby and
spent a week of shooting in Hamburg.

Cinegate also has branches throughout
Germany as well as a new 500 square meter
studio in Berlin which has proven popular
with producers of commercials. Moreover,
subsidiaries have been established in
Budapest and Cape Town for equipment ren-
tal.

IN THE EAST

One studio location which didn’t appear in the last survey is the
Media City Atelier (MCA, www.mca.de) in Leipzig which opened
its doors in 1998 and – thanks, in particular, to the support of the
regional film fund MDM Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung – has been
able to be involved in such national and international feature projects
as Egoli Tossell Film’s Maria am Wasser and Nimm Dir Dein Leben, the
Quay brothers’ The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes, Lajos Koltai’s Fateless
and Sam Garbarski’s Irina Palm.
In the case of *Maria am Wasser*, for example, MCA boarded the project as a co-producer and provided technical equipment and services, whereas the Quays were able to create their own special fantasy world in Studio 3, and the scenes where Marianne Faithfull and Miki Manojlovic meet in the Soho sex club in the Berlinale competition film *Irina Palm* were also created in Leipzig.

“From the moment you leave the street and go down the stairs into the club, you are in the studio in Germany,” notes producer Thanassis Karathanos of Halle-based Pallas Film. *Irina Palm* was at MCA for 13 shooting days in January/February 2006 after previously being on location in Luxemburg and the UK.

**FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

Our tour of the German studios finally comes to an end at Studio Babelsberg (www.studiobabelsberg.com) which has gone through many changes and up-and-downs in its fortunes since being taken over by the French conglomerate Compagnie Générale des Eaux (CGE, later Vivendi Universal) in August 1992.

True, the studios hosted or coordinated production services on such productions as *Enemy at the Gates*, *The Pianist*, *Rosenstrasse*, *Around the World in 80 Days* and *The Bourne Supremacy* during this time, but regularly the studios were faced by the prospects of studios standing idle as big-budget projects preferred to locate at studios further east.

More than ten years later – in July 2004 – Vivendi Universal sold the studio complex for €1 to a group of investors led by Carl Woebcken, managing director of Berlin Animation Film, and Christoph Fisser, managing director of the Munich studio facility Studio Atelierbetriebe Schwabing.

At a press conference to announce the takeover, the duo explained that they “want to make Babelsberg fit for the future so that in ten, twenty and fifty years’ time it is still a living myth and not a dead legend.”

They indicated that they wanted to increase the number of television productions coming to the production complex in addition to the feature film projects so as to optimize the use of the sound stages, but “the main strategy is and remains the orientation of the studios to large, international cinema. With a view to international producers, especially from the US, we want to position Babelsberg as a premium production service provider among the European competition,” Woebcken said at the time.

Now three years into heading the studio along with Christoph Fisser, Woebcken identifies Babelsberg’s USP as follows: “Within Germany, we have very limited competition for two reasons: firstly, on higher budgets you need space, and other studios don’t have that space, and, secondly, you need the high competence for making high value sets. That particular competence we have in the Art Department is an additional USP for us in Germany. Another factor which is unique in
Germany is our company Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures which delivers production services; it is very good at putting a talent pool together from Germany and abroad and handling the tax issues of foreign talent. I think we are the only company in Germany to deal with all of the logistics and tax issues on big productions like setting up a SPV (special purpose vehicle) and we have a very long track record of working with the fiscal authorities.”

As part of the studio’s extensive program of restructuring, the new owners refurbished the new studios – Neue Film 1 and Neue Film 2 – at the new site last year and are now using them for Stefan Ruzowitzky’s family film Lily the Witch. “Also, in connection with the Speed Racer project, we invested into communications technology between the visual effects department, the art department and the stages because this film is really at the forefront of modern filmmaking technology,” Woebcken notes. “We have fiber glass connections from the green screen stages to the art department so that they can work on set extensions while the film is being shot. In addition, the FX Center at the studio has invested in its screening room for Speed Racer. There is a lot going on here because of the very high visual effects budget of this film.”

“This kind of investment is part of a process happening around the world: King Kong was a kind of benchmark for how you can shoot a complex film in a very short time, and all of the studios have to adjust their operations accordingly,” Woebcken suggests.

Through Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures (SBMP), the studio has also boarded projects as a co-producer as well as delivering production services. “The reference money we get from international productions is normally invested into German co-productions, simply because it is a rather complicated system for international producers,” Woebcken explains. “Very gradually, we are also investing our own equity into films where we think our recoupment position is sound.”

“On a film like Flame & Citron [which shot at the studios in May] we actually invested more than the other German co-producer on the project. In addition, we have also started to negotiate with American producers on whether we can participate in a slate of films and put cash into these films in order to get a certain number of them to be produced in Babelsberg.”

But Babelsberg isn’t restricting its operations only to Germany: a company located at the Barrandov Studios in Prague, Central Scope, was set up by the new owners “because we feel it is a good idea to build up a network in Europe for production services independent of running the studio. We might also take a look at Romania, Bulgaria and Spain because SBMP’s services can also be exported to other studios.”

The future strategy for Babelsberg and the other German studios has to be developed in the light of new studios mushrooming all over Europe. “Alicante, for example, is probably the most modern studio at the moment, but they don’t have the track record or the expertise in set construction and logistics to do big films. The crews and talent pool aren’t there, and [the Spanish producer] Filmax, who is building its own studio in Barcelona, says that it takes years to build up that competence in filmmaking,” Carl Woebcken observes. “I think it is the
same in Hungary where the number of studios are really growing with the opening of the Korda Studios this summer. In fact, we also see this in Germany with big films coming each year: the bottleneck is not the stages, but the talent."

Elsewhere in the Berlin-Brandenburg area, there are the traditional studios of the Berliner Union Film (www.BerlinerUnionFilm.de) near Tempelhof airport which have concentrated on handling television contracts as well as constructing outside sets for a production like the SAT.1 series R.I.S. In addition, VCC Perfect Pictures' (www.vcc.de) two studios on the Babelsberg lot have currently benefited from the "overflow" of work coming to the studio complex.

The Effect of the DFFF

After the demise of the German private media funds, which had largely benefited only Stateside productions, the current German administration had promised to draft an alternative incentive scheme which would aim to support German production and make Germany a more competitive location.

In cooperation with representatives from the film industry, State Minister for Culture and the Media, Bernd Neumann, drew up guidelines for a rebate scheme in the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), which came into effect on 1 January 2007, "to improve the economic framework conditions for the film industry in Germany, to preserve and promote the international competitiveness of enterprises in the film industry with the objective of achieving long-term effects for Germany as a production location in conjunction with further effects on the macro-economy."

According to the 'Principles and Objectives', "the costs spent in Germany in connection with the production of films are to be increased, leading to a better utilization of the capacity of technical film businesses. An improvement in film financing for production companies and the existence of the corresponding technical infrastructure constitute the prerequisites for a German and European film culture which is both creative and successful in the long term."

"Within Europe, it is always a mixture of reasons where a film goes," Carl Woebcken argues. "One important issue, of course, is the overall cost. The new subsidy from the DFFF helps because the above-the-line costs are also incentivized. On Speed Racer, for example, the €9 million rebate is more than the complete set construction costs and costs for the stages. Where would you get that if you went, say, to Bulgaria? This is a unique selling position which makes it easier for a film to come here if it is a cost issue. Often, there are other factors like the question of whether we have to do location work and have the right locations in the area, because it is very expensive to move with the whole crew from one country to another."

"We were really surprised ourselves at how efficient this system works. It is very much focused on doing work in Germany," Woebcken adds. "The post-production industry in Germany doesn’t feel this yet, but it is too early because we are at the front of the process and they are at the end. I guess they will start to feel the effect later this year and in 2008."

"The cultural test we had to pass for Speed Racer is similar to the one in England," he continues. "There are three elements: one is the cultural hub which gives you points for where the film is physically pro-
duced and, secondly, points for the key people involved — and the third part is concerned with the story and the cultural background of the script. Since the commitment to Germany is so strong on this film, they could get the minimum points to pass the test. Normally, you get up to €4 million per film, but if you spend more than 35% of the overall film budget in Germany, then one can get an exception up to €10 million. This film got very near to the maximum [€9 million].

At Studio Hamburg, though, the DFFF has not had any effect on the studio’s operations because, as Sytze van der Laan points out, “we’re booked up [with television]; therefore, we’re looking to have a film sound stage for next year. Studio G at Adlershof could be expanded because it had been conceived from the outset as twin studios.”

Looking back at the DFFF’s first six months, project manager Christine Berg revealed that international co-productions shooting in Germany had received more than half of the €20.9 million allocated by the new German Federal Film Fund to the end of June.

€12.1 million were awarded to international productions shooting in Germany, with the bulk of this — €9 million — going to one single project, Speed Racer by the Wachowski brothers.

“We are noticing a trend of more productions coming to Germany that are wanting to apply for more than the €4 million cap,” Berg noted. “And there is also a slight tendency for more post-production work being attracted to Germany.”

One such recent example is the highly-controversial Valkyrie, the United Artists’ production of Bryan Singer’s WWII drama starring Tom Cruise as Claus Graf Stauffenberg. This international co-production with Studio Babelsberg began shooting mid July in Berlin-Babelsberg after receiving €4.8 million in support from the new German Federal Film Fund.

Hans Radau of the law firm Noerr Stiefenhofer Lutz, who was a member of the group of experts drafting the DFFF guidelines, agreed that “there is more interest from abroad in the DFFF and the news has arrived in the US. We are currently also advising on three European co-productions including an €8 million historical project between Germany, France and Luxemburg which wouldn’t be coming to Germany if it wasn’t for the DFFF.”

Indeed, the DFFF might even become too successful in boosting film production in Germany! As Babelsberg’s Christoph Fisser observed at a symposium on the first six months of the DFFF at the Munich Film Festival, “we are getting to the point where crew availability and studio capacities are being stretched to the limit.”

Nevertheless, when one sees the volume of work coming to the production complexes in the Berlin-Brandenburg and Cologne areas as well as the generally upbeat mood within the German film community, it is clear that the new financing instrument has achieved its goal of bringing home some “runaway” German productions and of making Germany an increasingly attractive option for location and studio shoots over other competitors in Europe.

Martin Blaney
Alexander Kluge was born in 1932 in Halberstadt. He came to Munich in 1958 as an attorney but soon turned to film. In 1962, he was one of the signers of the Oberhausener Manifesto. Since the beginning of the 60s, he has been making short films. The first full-length feature film was Yesterday Girl (Abschied von Gestern, 1966) for which he won the German Film Award; he won it a second time in 1975 for In Danger and Dire Distress, the Middle of the Road Leads to Death (In Gefahr und groesster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod). Yesterday Girl won the Silver Lion in Venice in 1966, then Kluge won the Golden Lion two years later for The Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed (Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos). In 1982, he was honored in Venice for his entire body of work, only a portion of which was completed at that time; Kluge has proven himself to be an incomparable workaholic. As an orderly author-director, Kluge was responsible for both the screenplay and the production in his cinematic works and founded Kairos Film. In addition, Kluge wrote books – he was a member of the legendary Gruppe 47. In 1962, Lebenseleue appeared, in 2000 there was Chronik der Gefuehle, and lastly, Tuer an Tuer mit einem anderen Leben and Geschichten vom Kino. In 1987, Kluge and the Japanese media company Dentsu founded the firm dctp (development company for television programs), with which he formed program slots on several private German television channels. There, he created a forum for himself, but dctp also shows, for example, Spiegel TV, Stern TV, BBC Exclusiv, and Focus TV. In April 2007, Alexander Kluge was honored with the prestigious Federal Cross of Merit.

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“The old film is dead, we believe in the new one” – that is the concluding sentence of the Oberhausener Manifesto. Alexander Kluge was one of the authors of this legendary avowal from 1962 which marked the beginning of New German Cinema. No one meant this as earnestly as he, either at that time, when he was still making his mark on German cinema, or 45 years later. For Alexander Kluge, cinema is a constant development; the spirit of discovery and joy of experimentation are inherent to everything he touches. Then, he wanted to turn cinema upside down, and he still does. And he is probably the only filmmaker who still reflects seriously about how Internet and cinema can be united by more than the mere sales and distribution platform.

This summer takes Kluge back to the place where he had his first big film premiere in 1966 with Yesterday Girl – to the Mostra in Venice. Filmmaker and festival, both born in 1932, celebrate their 75th
birthdays together, so to speak. What he will show there are five programs especially put together for the festival. Kluge is downright libidinous when making films and his work has grown noticeably in scope in the last few years, but mainly on television. In News & Stories or Zehn vor 11 he experiments with short forms, films cut associatively, and long interview shows. He creates the shows with dctp, which arranges timeslots on its own authority (and 37.5% of which belong to him). Kluge comments: “I secretly continued with cinema on television.”

The Lido Project is the first for the screen in years. Kluge and the director of the Mostra, Marco Mueller, did not know each other beforehand. “We met in Berlin and very quickly agreed: I don’t want to make a retrospective and he didn’t want to have an antiquated festival. The Mostra has surprising qualities, and always did.” Kluge can arrange the programs in the style in which he also conceived the television programs: associatively. “Mueller coordinates something, so to speak: he browses and finds a title like The Poetical Power of Theory and based on that, I then make a program of a hundred minutes. For example, I selected sentences from philosophy, from Aristoteles to Heidigger, which seemed especially puzzling to me. These pieces are layered over techno. And then there is a piece about how Eisenstein wanted to film Das Kapital in 1929. I talked to Oskar Negt for it, who is a philosopher and social scientist, and he explained how rich in pictures the economy is – according to Marx, if you stick a knife into a machine, the blood of the person who built it should come out – and that is what Eisenstein wanted to film.”

Unique associations of past and present come out in these works and if Kluge’s associations are often arranged in a strictly logical fashion, one cannot see them as only an intellectual construction. He would also protest against that: “Cinema is concentrated emotion; there is also no science possible without emotion.”

For Kluge, the Mostra was an important moment very early in his career, when he showed Yesterday Girl there in 1966, and the fact that the road is taking him to Venice again is no accident. He has found an ideal ally in Mostra director Marco Mueller. “The oldest festival, Venice, is on the cutting edge of innovation, that is the fundamental idea. Edgar Reitz sees it that way as well.” What they are doing, he and Reitz, explains Kluge, are, so to speak, the extreme forms of the same idea – that one has to free cinema again from the rather arbitrary self-imposed 90-minute constraints. “The 90-minute cinema was an opulent European model, which is completely atypical today for the main interest on this planet. People want to test for a minute whether they find something interesting – and then latch on to it for up to 12 hours. What Edgar Reitz did with 52 hours of Heimat is an answer to that – my minute-long films are another.” Heimat was also shown in Venice in wonderful marathon presentations.

The future of cinema will find itself somehow. Kluge believes in that and does not see a threat in television and the Internet, but rather new means of transport. “I am sure that this talent, of letting pictures run through your head – that has been the prototype of cinema since the Stone Age – is the reason that we have not died out yet: because we can dream.”

Susan Vahabzadeh (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)
broke with Alexander Kluge
Nicolette Krebitz was born in Berlin in 1972 and she continues to live in the city. She began acting as a child-star in television films. After training at the Fritz Kirchhoff School of Dramatic Art, she acted in numerous films and was awarded the Adolf Grimme Award for Ausgerechnet Zoé. She has appeared in films including Bandits (1997), Long Hello & Short Goodbye (1998), Der Tunnel (2000) and most recently in the Student Academy Award-winning short High Maintenance (2006), among others. Her films as a director are: Mon Cherie (short, 1998), Jeans (2000), and The Heart is a Dark Forest (Das Herz ist ein dunkler Wald, 2007).

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“I just didn’t think ‘can I do that?’ at all. Looking back, I believe that I couldn’t – quite often and in many places – and it still turned out OK, precisely because it’s possible to see that things are a bit dodgy here and there.” Nicolette Krebitz just stumbled into her first films as a director. And it speaks in her favor, showing her modesty and self-confidence in herself and her abilities, that she makes no fuss about that. It just happened that way; years ago, she never thought that she would become a director. But now, of course, she is utterly committed.

One could point out here that attending film school guarantees nothing, that some of the best filmmakers were self-taught, and that some great cinematic works evolved from an impulse “to simply go
out one day and make a film”. But Nicolette Krebitz has no need at all for such types of defense. Her films speak for themselves.

In 1998, she made a short film that was premiered at the Oldenburg Film Festival as part of the compilation piece 99euro-films, which combined short films by 12 German directors. It ran again at Slamdance and was successful in the cinemas. Krebitz’ contribution, Mon Cherie, was an enchantingly intelligent reversal of gender roles, shot with apparent casualness.

Krebitz had already been known in Germany since the 90s: as an unusually talented all-round actress, who was always good – even in poorer films – and was one of the most sought-after German actresses for several years. And among the most striking, for Nicolette Krebitz always offers the best of two worlds: little girl and strong woman, nice but exotic, beautiful and yet also intelligent. She obviously represents a certain danger for men and directors, and perhaps that is because she still radiates something pure and fresh despite all her success and has not really found her place in German film yet. Of course, she is sometimes regarded as “touchy” and “difficult”. But perhaps the real problem is that no one really has anything concrete to say about a young woman who would have been a star long ago in France or in England. It would be good to see her in a film by Christian Petzold, or by Dominik Graf.

But the most exciting thing about this exciting actress is that acting has never been enough for her. She is a multi-talent who does all sorts of things: singing and modeling, writing, and now directing films as well. “Ultimately, as a film actress it is only possible to make one or two films a year that you feel are intelligent,” she says, “and that just isn’t enough: I don’t want to spend all day trotting to the fitness studio or painting my apartment in bright colors. And it has never been my own career alone that interested me about film. I am interested in the whole process.”

Her first full-length film followed in 2000: Jeans was premiered in Hof. Looking back, it is still one of the best, most interesting and exciting films to have been made in Germany during the last decade. Jeans does not tell a story, but observes beautiful young people in takes that have a general photographic calm; hanging around, gossiping and chatting each other up. It is fragmentary, chill-out cinema, open in places, but also with an intensity that can be searched for in vain in a lot of films. Ambient music was played, and the author Rainald Goetz appeared as a walking self-quotation. Godard’s comment that a film needs a beginning, a middle and an end “but not necessarily in that order” could certainly be applied to Jeans – but the film was less pretentious than it seemed at first glance and did not fall prey to any illusion that it could simply repeat the innocence of the Nouvelle Vague. On the contrary, it illustrated a loss of innocence that can only be overcome, rather hesitantly, through joy in experimentation – and yet despite all this, it was a fresh piece of pop cinema. One could quite happily spend 90 minutes with it, like with a favorite CD.

Six years passed before Krebitz completed her next film. This was not because of production problems, but more a matter of the precision with which the director works, and above all, simply because she continues to earn her living as an actress, and because she has also given birth to a son in the meantime.

Krebitz also wrote her own screenplay for The Heart is a Dark Forest. The outcome is a film with the same courage and energy as Jeans, but one that is the complete opposite in almost every other respect. This begins with the fact that Krebitz relies completely on professional actors this time – with Nina Hoss and Devid Striesow in the main roles, who also were seen together at the last Berlinale in Christian Petzold’s Yella. “I had already cast them before that. And if you know the two films, you can see how different they are in both, and you are amazed all the more by these two wonderful, extraordinary actors.”

The title The Heart is a Dark Forest already signals a completely different tone to that of Jeans. It is true that the film begins – like many films – as the story of a middle-class family: a couple, two children and a marriage that is showing obvious signs of wear and tear. But both the story and the style change, and what began as a cool realistic drama turns to the surreal, to a dark Romanticism – in its own way, the latter takes up “typical German tradition”, certainly, but this never emerges in an old-fashioned way. Far more, The Heart is a Dark Forest is a kind of daydream, a modern fairy-tale for adults, or also – depending on how you look at it – the portrait of a nervous breakdown. What exactly happens here and why, just how “real” it all is, is a question of interpretation. But all in all, the film tells a modern, surreal version of the classical “media” material. The Heart is a Dark Forest combines the tradition of Fassbinder’s film portraits of bourgeois women, Kubrick’s Eyes Wide Shut, and the aesthetics of a B-movie from the 70s. It is remarkable cinematic art, with which Nicolette Krebitz has catapulted herself among the leading filmmakers of her generation.

Ruediger Suchsland, German correspondent for Cannes’ Critics’ Week and film critic for the Frankfurter Rundschau and Filmdienst among others, spoke with Nicolette Krebitz
The Munich-based company was founded by the childhood friends Max Wiedemann and Quirin Berg at the tender age of 19 in 1998 before they were both accepted for the production course at Munich’s Academy of Television & Film (HFF). During their time at film school, they produced a dozen short films which attracted more than 60 national and international prizes. In their last year of studies at the HFF, they produced their first commissioned TV movie for ProSieben, Stefan Holtz’s Maedchen Nr. 1. 2003 was also the year when they started working with Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck on the realization of his feature debut The Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen) which went into production in autumn 2004. After winning four Bavarian Film Awards – including the VGF Award for Best Newcomer Producers – at the beginning of 2006, the duo producing Annette Ernst’s romantic comedy Zwei Wochen Chef with Felicitas Woll for ProSieben, and an August start is planned for Sven Unterwaldt’s submarine comedy U-911 to be followed by a film on the robber Mathias Kneissl by fellow HFF graduate Marcus H. Rosenmueller for Bayerischer Rundfunk in the autumn. Their other productions include: S. geht rund (co-prods, dir: Carsten Funke, short, 1998), Almost (co-prods, dir: Britta Olivia Goetz, short, 1998), Paranoia (dir: Peter Kocyla, short, 2000), Schneekentraum (dir: Ivan Sainz-Pardo, short, 2000), Deja Vu (dir: Stefan Holtz, short, 2001), Der Templer (dir: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, short, 2001), Simones Labyrinth (co-prods, dir: Ivan Sainz-Pardo, short, 2002), Solo ohne Ende (dir: Matthias Kutschmann, short, 2002), Kalte Schatten (co-prods, dir: Peter Kocyla, short, 2003), Im Labyrinth (co-prods, dir: Barbara Miersch, short, 2003), and Bei huebschen Frauen sind alle Tricks erlaubt (dir: Peter Stauch, TV, 2004).

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At the age of 19, they set up their joint production company **Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion** and began producing their first short films. “We shared a common perspective of what we wanted to do and decided to apply for the production class of the Academy of Television & Film (HFF) in Munich,” Quirin Berg recalls.

“We have developed a well-functioning system over the years, which satisfies our individual interests,” Max Wiedemann says. “Quirin looks after the aspects of story development and contacts, while I am more focused on the production and financing. But all of the key decisions are made jointly by us both. Moreover, we have Simon Happ as a line producer who is on the spot to look after the projects during the shooting.”

During their time at the HFF from 1999 to 2003, they produced a dozen short films which received more than 60 national and international prizes. “The shorts were a good way to draw attention to us as a kind of calling card for the company,” Wiedemann explains. “As with later feature films and TV movies, we have always looked for challenges and wanted to put as much production value up on the screen as possible.”

“The HFF was an ideal platform for working with other creative people,” he continues. “Very quickly, you found out which people were on the same wavelength. We have created a pool of people from this time with whom we like working, people who share the same vision of filmmaking as we do.”

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At this year’s Berlinale, festival director Dieter Kosslick made frequent mention of the fact that the German film industry had well and truly returned to the international stage since more than a dozen German actors and actresses were appearing in international films screening at the festival.

One of those talents “made in Germany” was the actress Martina Gedeck who passed over the red carpet this February in the company of Hollywood icons Robert de Niro and Matt Damon for the screening of the veteran actor’s The Good Shepherd and subsequently went up on stage at the awards ceremony to collect the Silver Bear for the ensemble acting performances.

Gedeck first became known to a wider international audience through her role as a successful, but lonely chef in Sandra Nettelbeck’s Mostly Martha and has now been wowing audiences from

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Birmingham to Brisbane over the past year with her appearance in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s OSCAR-winning The Lives of Others.

However, a career as an actress was not an ambition that Gedeck had cherished from an early age or had handed down in the genes by parents or other relatives in the business.

Admittedly, she had enjoyed taking part in plays during her time at secondary school, “but I had never really considered it as a career even though I was fascinated by the stage.”

In fact, after her school exams, she first enrolled at the Freie Universität in Berlin to study German Literature and History, but the acting bug evidently took effect because a year later Gedeck had changed courses and attended the acting class of the Max Reinhardt Seminar at the Hochschule der Künste.

She made her stage debut at Frankfurt’s Theater im Turm during her studies and then performed at other theaters in Hamburg, Basel, Berlin and Frankfurt on her graduation from drama school in 1986.

Gedeck is now best known to audiences for her film and television roles – her last stage appearance was in 2005 in Minna von Barnhelm at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin – “but I like the variability of my profession. It is really a question of the parts on offer. At the moment, though, I am getting interesting film parts to play.”

Cinema audiences first came to be aware of Gedeck through her roles in Svenke Wortmann’s hit comedy Maybe, Maybe Not, Rainer Kaufmann’s Talk of the Town and Wolfgang Becker’s Life Is All You Get, while her portrayal of the timid waitress Seraphina in Helmut Dietl’s Rossini was a revelation of economy for many and deservedly won her the German Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role in 1997.

As she points out, her choice of which role to accept and which to turn down is dictated by “my interest in people as real personalities. I like characters and roles which are more complex and intelligently drawn and with a particular sensitivity. Other factors affecting my decision are of course who is the director and who are my acting colleagues on a film.”

There couldn’t be a greater contrast between Gedeck’s latest two projects – Vanessa Jopp’s Meine schoene Bescherung and Helma Sanders-Brahms’ Clara – as far as the roles she was cast to play.

“The last couple of years I worked on The Lives of Others, Summer ’04 and Elementary Particles which were very dramatic stories, and so it was simply good for me to do a comedy for a change. In some respects, it is a relatively superficial kind of comedy, but also quite tough in the way it probes the state of society. It really appealed to me to play a woman who passes over all social convention and the idea of a patchwork family is very relevant these days.”

“Playing Clara Schumann is something quite different,” she continues. “It is my first historical role. And, of course, it is a fascinating love story.”

Normally, Gedeck prefers to have plenty of time to research the background to the character she is to play, but this was not possible with Clara as she only came onboard the project four weeks before the beginning of principal photography. “I had never touched a piano key before, but had lessons with two teachers every day to prepare me. And I had a teacher in Budapest to learn how to conduct. But it is seldom that I have to become acquainted with a character without referring to text. There are endless amounts of literature, including diaries. There was a lot to study.”

However, she was cast in plenty of time for her next role as Ulrike Meinhof in Uli Edel’s Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex to be able to do the necessary background research. This ambitious project is based on the book of the same name by Stefan Aust and will be produced by Bernd Eichinger for Constantin Film from mid-August until November.

As Gedeck explains, her roles in Mostly Martha and The Lives of Others and the growing international popularity of German films generally in recent years has meant that she is now on the radar of foreign producers and directors.

Her award-winning performance as the chef Martha in Sandra Nettelbeck’s film caught the attention of Robert de Niro when he was casting for The Good Shepherd, and the same film sparked interest in her with the French director Francis Girod for Un ami parfait.

With the triumphal success of The Lives of Others since the beginning of 2006 with Bavarian Film Awards, German Film Awards, European Film Awards, the OSCAR and the popularity at the box office at home and abroad, Martina Gedeck’s profile has become even more pronounced on an international level.

“This wasn’t possible before when German films had a problem being seen abroad,” she argues. “Our generation now has a chance, and I am more bankable now, for example, for German producers wanting to get involved in co-productions.”

Talking of her experiences about working on a big-budget US production, Gedeck says that “it was quite a long time since I had played such a small part. But it was rather nice to be a bit like a beginner again.”

“Of course, there were differences between our way of working and how Robert de Niro directs. They are much more generous with the material and using the technical equipment. Often, there were 10 or 20 takes. Here in Germany, one has to be economical because you will never have that much money,” she explains.

While Martina Gedeck has often worked on a number of occasions with the same director – Markus Imboden or Jo Baier, for example – for television productions, she has tended, whether consciously or unconsciously, to collaborate with as many different filmmakers as possible in the cinema.

“It has always been important for me that I retain a certain independence because I want to avoid getting into a routine. I think you have to remain variable and be open for all kinds of genres. Personally, I am interested in being involved in films as an art form, so if I can sense that a director has something to say and shows passion, that’s what interests me.”

Martina Gedeck spoke with Martin Blaney
STUDENT OSCAR FOR “NEVERMORE”

The 34th Honorary Foreign Film Award of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences went to Toke Constantin Hebbeln – a student at the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg – for his 60-minute film Nevermore which has already received numerous international prizes. This is the second time – after Thorsten Schmid’s prize for Rochade in 1998 – that the coveted award has gone to a production of the Ludwigsburg-based film academy.

At the same ceremony, the short High Maintenance by Philip Van was awarded the Student Academy Award in Silver for Best American Student Film in the Narrative category. Berlin-based production company avanti media fiction produced the 9-minute short film within the framework of the Berlinale Talent Campus 2006.

Since 1988, 17 productions from German film schools have been nominated for the prestigious Honorary Foreign Film Award and 10 films have had the honor of taking the prize back home to Germany.

VIVA EL FESTIVAL DE CINE ALEMÁN

Can you really have success with a film that’s set in the frostiest of winters in a country where the siesta is unavoidable in the summer. The 9th Festival of German Films in Madrid (5 – 9 June 2007) was proof that you can! The festival was attended by around 4,000 spectators. It looks as if the successful course for German cinema in Spain is far from coming to an end.

The Spanish audience was won over by the Bavarian charm and humor when the opening film Heavyweights by Marcus H. Rosenmueller was shown in the Cine Palafox in the presence of the producers Viola Jaeger, Molly von Fuerstenberg, Harald Kuegler and the German “Shooting Star 2007” Maximilian Brueckner.

The spectators were also enthralled by Autopilots by Bastian Guenther, Prisoners by Iain Dilthey, the children’s film Silly’s Sweet Summer by Johannes Schmid, the TV movie Nicht alle waren Moerder by Jo Baier, and the documentary Losers and Winners by Ulrike Franke.
Karl Tebbe, who traveled to Madrid as the representative for German Films’ own NEXT GENERATION program, attracted a very positive reaction with his short *Infinite Justice*.

The main program also featured *Where is Fred?* by Anno Saul, *Life Actually* by Alain Gsponer, *Grave Decisions* by Marcus H. Rosenmueller as well as the shorts *Wigald* by Timon Modersohn, *Tradition* by Peter Ladkani and *Aim* by Bjoern Kaemmerer. And Chris Kraus’ *Four Minutes* received the Audience Award at the end of the festival.

The retrospective presented the German winners of the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film: *The Tin Drum* by Volker Schlöndorff, *Nowhere in Africa* by Caroline Link and *The Lives of Others* by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck were very well received.

There was thunderous applause in particular for the silent film *Faust* by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau which was presented by the F. W. Murnau Foundation and accompanied musically by Aljoscha Zimmermann and Sabrina Hausmann.

At a Distribution Support Dinner organized by German Films, German sales agents used the opportunity to cultivate their contacts with five of the most important Spanish distributors (Alta Films, Karma Films, Wanda Visions, Gaia Films, Flins & Piniculas). As a result of the many acquisitions of German films, Spain is one of the most important partners and received the most funding from the Distribution Support Program in 2006.

**CLARA AND ROBERT SCHUMANN – BACK IN DUESSELDORF**

Classic in every aspect: a woman torn between two men. Martina Gedeck in the role of Clara Schumann in Helma Sanders-Brahms’ new feature *Clara*. Pascal Gregory has been cast in the role of Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms will be played by Malik Zidi, who won this year’s César Award as Best Upcoming Actor. After shooting in Hungary, the team traveled mid-June to North Rhine-Westphalia to film at original locations in Duesseldorf and Zons.

“The story is full of suspense, love and passion in the world of art, just as a film of this size needs. It is the story of three extraordinary people: an old music giant, Robert Schumann, a younger musician, Johannes Brahms, and a woman, Clara Schumann, who stands between the two men” is how director Helma Sanders-Brahms describes her film, an international co-production by Integral Film and Helma Sanders Filmproduktion, together with Paris-based MACT Productions and the Budapest-based Objektiv Film Studio. The photographer Konrad Rufus Mueller, who also worked on Raoul Ruiz’s artist biography *Klimt*, will be documenting principle photography.

**GERMAN FILMS DOWN UNDER**

For the 6th time, German Films and the Goethe-Institutes in Sydney and Melbourne came together to organize another Festival of German Films in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Running for ten days (19 – 29 April 2007) the festival presented 20 films and drew in more than 13,500 spectators, with more than 100 festival flags along Sydney’s busiest shopping mile providing cosmopolitan flair and visibility. Two panel discussions on the subject of Heimat and Globalization accompanied the selected films and rounded off the festival program.

The opening film *Four Minutes* by Chris Kraus was shown in the presence of lead actress and German Film Award-winner Hannah Herzsprung who promoted the film for its theatrical release in...
Australia in June. Other guests included Birgit Moeller with her feature debut Valerie and a selection of her shorts. Documentary film directors and producers Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios were also on hand to present their music documentary Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback. Festival favorite was Grave Decisions by Marcus H. Rosenmueller.

A selection of twelve short films for the main program was shown in collaboration with the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm).

**CULTURE AND BUSINESS DOING WELL: MEDIENBOARD PRESENTS ITS ANNUAL BALANCE 2006**

In 2006, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg distributed a total of €26 million in subsidies, supporting 245 projects that were responsible for revenues of €60.3 million in the Berlin-Brandenburg area. Chairwoman Barbara Kisseler, deputy chairman Erhard Thomas and Medienboard managers Petra Mueller and Kirsten Niehuus recently presented in Berlin the company’s annual balance for 2006.

During the International Co-Production Day, a Spotlight Germany was organized by the AG DOK and the Dokfestival Leipzig. German producers, including Simone Baumann for LE Vision, Christian Beetz for Gebrueder Beetz Filmproduktion, Britta Erich for Filmtank and Carl-Ludwig Rettinger for Lichtblick Film, presented themselves as partners for potential international co-productions. Further highlights included the Producer-to-Producer sessions and the German delegation’s visit to the History Channel.

**ACCESS TO GERMAN ANIMATION**

German short films were more present than ever at this year’s International Animated Film Festival in Annecy. Altogether, eighteen German short films were screened in the various sections of the festival. From the four short films in the international competition, The Runt (Der Kloane) by Andreas Hykade was awarded the FIPRESCI Award.

For the first time, German Films and the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) were partners of MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Animations Department of the Filmakademie

**AG DOK DELEGATION AT HOT DOCS**

With the support of German Films, a delegation of over 25 German producers and filmmakers attended this year’s Hot Docs International Documentary Festival in Toronto. And two AG DOK (German Documentary Association) producers pitched their projects at the Forum for international television commissioning editors.

The festival itself also presented seven German films and co-productions: Losers and Winners, Echoes of Home, The Big Sellout, Comrades in Dreams, Mother – 4 Pieces, Balkan Champion and Village of Socks. Ulrike Franke and Michael Loeken’s Losers and Winners was named Best International Feature Documentary.
Baden-Wuerttemberg and the Festival of Animated Film Stuttgart in holding a German reception. Despite some rain, the reception was a great success and some of the guests even argued that the showers helped them to establish social contacts. The organizers were happy to welcome some well-known representatives of the German animation scene such as Andreas Hykade or Thomas Meyer-Hermann, but also some future talents, who had the possibility of presenting their short films at the festival, among them Anne Breymann, Bert Gottschalk, Stephan-Flint Mueller and Felix Goennert.

The AG Kurzfilm used the reception as a platform to offer the attending professionals a more detailed insight into the German animation scene. Jutta Wille was on hand to present the brochure Access to German Animation, published in cooperation with German Films. The material features two extensive texts by Gil Alkabetz and Thomas Meyer-Hermann giving an overview of the artistic developments and the economic situation of animated short film in Germany. Furthermore, it provides detailed contact information of festivals, film schools and institutions dealing with or producing animated films. The brochure is accompanied by the preview DVD New German Animations featuring 15 recent animated short films. Both the brochure and DVD are available from AG Kurzfilm: office@ag-kurzfilm.de, www.ag-kurzfilm.de.

68.5 MILLION EUROS FOR GERMAN FILMS

In 2006, the German Federal Film Board (FFA) allocated film support totaling €68.5 million. €13.5 million of this went into 38 new, promising cinema projects on the basis of decisions made by the FFA-selection committee. “The film year 2006 demonstrated once again that quality and diversity are guarantees that the current success of German films will continue,” in the words of FFA-CEO Peter Dinges. “And the selection committee showed excellent intuition in its decisions over the past year.” Further emphases of FFA funding in 2006 were sales promotion funds amounting to a sum of €10.8 million (of which €7 million were so-called “media services”), script funding with a total of €0.7 million, and short film funding, also with an allocated volume of €0.7 million. In addition, the FFA supported German cinemas with a total of €8.4 million and video program distributors and video stores with a total of €6.9 million. In the course of the past financial year, a total of €6.7 million was allocated for marketing measures for German films at home and abroad; support for further vocational training in the film profession, research, rationalization and innovation amounted to €0.5 million, and funding in the context of the German-French Convention to a total of €0.7 million. The sum of the FFA’s “reference funding” 2006 for producers and distributors, who received a total of €19.6 million in subsidies for new film projects, should add up to some new, promising German cinema productions in the near future.

FASSBINDER MASTERPIECE GOES TO EDINBURGH

Since its foundation in 1996, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern has had a close collaboration with Bavaria Film, one of Germany’s biggest producers of quality cinema and TV. Among the highlights of FFF-funded films “made by Bavaria” are Caroline Link’s OSCAR-winning drama Nowhere in Africa and Heinrich Breloer’s docudrama The Manns which received an International Emmy Award. On the occasion of this year’s Munich Film Festival two other successful Bavaria productions were honored: Heinrich Breloer’s The Devil’s Architect and The Todestunnel by Dominique Othenin-Girard paid back their funding money.

But Bavaria Film also engages in the digital restoration of film classics. This year’s Berlinale saw the premiere of Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s series Berlin Alexanderplatz in a new remastered version that was produced with FFF-funding. Its next presentation on a big screen will be at the longest continually running film festival in the world: from 16 – 26 August 2007, the prestigious Edinburgh Film Festival is presenting all 13 episodes of the series that is considered Fassbinder’s artistic legacy.

Two other FFF-supported films, the documentary Castells by Gereon Wetzel and the drama Amour Fou by Felicitas Korn, will be shown to Scottish and international audiences as part of a special showcase “Made in Bavaria” hosted by the Bavarian State Minister Eberhard Sinner.
A CLOSE LOOK AT CINEMA AUDDIENCES: FFA INVESTIGATES TOP 50 FILMS OF 2006

The FFA has extended its analyses of the profile of cinemagoers with its Study of the TOP 50 Film Titles of 2006: how many female and male cinema viewers were infected by WM fever and went to see A Summer’s Fairytale? Which age groups were carried away by the Wild Chicks or The Wild Soccer Bunch? How many cinemagoers saw The Breakup as a couple, and which film prompted the biggest consumption of popcorn? The FFA evaluation answers a wealth of questions, revealing some surprising details in the process: productions like Summer in Berlin and Match Point, for example, were especially popular among singles, but at the same time they were typical big-city films.

This analysis of the 50 films that attracted the biggest audiences in Germany last year was made on the basis of data from the consumer panel of the Society for Consumer Research (GfK). The data takes into account the socio-demographic and cinema- and film-specific characteristics of cinema audiences, including e.g. professional and age groups, family status, film genre, or the number of cinemagoers in a group. Further information on the FFA financial year 2006 and the audience study is available under: www.ffa.de

A JOINT EFFORT FOR FILM

The signing of an expanded company agreement has now sealed the merger of film funding institutions in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, already announced and organized in the state media contract. The new Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, with headquarters in Hamburg, took effect mid-July. Eva Hubert remains its managing director.

The Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (FFHSH) will continue to run the business of the former FilmFoerderung Hamburg and will take over the assignments of the MSH – Gesellschaft zur Förderung audiovisueller Werke in Schleswig-Holstein. The shareholders are the Free Hansa City of Hamburg, with 74.9 percent, and the state government of Schleswig-Holstein, which has acquired 25.1 percent of the company’s share capital. The expanded company will receive an annual sum of €1.8 million from broadcasting fees for film support, and €300,000 for the Film Workshop Kiel. The annual budget of the FFHSH will therefore increase to more than €10 million. After operating costs and special funding, e.g. for festivals, in future the FFHSH will be in a position to allocate some €8.3 million for film support. This sum includes €450,000 for commissions and co-productions at NDR, which will still be granted as subsidies on the basis of the previous MSH rules, in order to consolidate Schleswig-Holstein as a film and television location. The modified company also took over the two colleagues from Luebeck: Sabine Schmidt will bolster the team in Hamburg; Antje Reimer will be the contact person for the Film Commission Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein in the Kiel office. In addition, the company will employ Jens Stabenow as proxy holder and deputy managing director; Stabenow was commissioned to wind up the MSH, which ceased operating on 30 June 2007. At the FFHSH, Jens Stabenow will be responsible for location marketing. The team of the Film Workshop Kiel – under the auspices of the FFHSH – will continue its work and financial support for the creative scene in Schleswig-Holstein. Besides festival funding and the provision of technical equipment, it will concentrate on promoting the up-and-coming film generation.

REGIONAL FUNDING FOR SUCCESSFUL MOVIES

Since October 1995 the MFG Filmförderung has been supporting the development of culturally significant film projects, as well as the cinema scene in south-western Germany. The funder’s annual budget of some €10 million goes into the areas of screenplay development, pre-production planning, production, incentive funding, distribution and sales, and film theater support. Measures for infrastructural improvement within the film cultural and economic landscape augment this spectrum. Particular concentration is given to the support of up-and-coming filmmakers as well as to the fields of animation and documentary film production.

The latest success of one of MFG’s funded documentaries is Workingman’s Death, directed by Michael Glawogger and co-produced by Freiburg-based Quinte Film, which won this year’s German Film Award. With that prize it is evident once more that the MFG Filmförderung’s jury has a keen sense of recognizing and funding those projects with a high potential.
Theatre in Trance
Rainer Werner Fassbinder

“Theatre in Trance” is a documentary about the Festival “Theatres of the World”. More than 30 theatrical groups from 15 different countries participated at the Festival in June 1981 in Cologne. Rainer Werner Fassbinder observed them for two weeks and shot their incredible performances.

The film consists of 14 chapters in which he presents the most important groups like: „Squat Theatre“, New York, the „Magazzini criminali“ from Florence, the „Kipper Kids“ from California or the „Pina-Bausch-Tanzgruppe“ from Wuppertal.

The text which Fassbinder reads is taken from the collection “Le Théâtre et son double” written by one of the most important theoreticians of modern theatre Antonin Artaud. But Fassbinder also adds his own commentaries to the film.

A wonderful experience with magnificent performers.

The film is being reissued 25 years after Fassbinders premature death in 1982.

Genre Documentary  Year of Production 1981
Director and Scriptwriter  Rainer Werner Fassbinder, with texts from Antonin Artaud’s “Le Théâtre et son double”
Director of Photography  Werner Lüiring  Editor  Juliane Lorenz, Franz Walsch (aka Rainer Werner Fassbinder)  Sound  by Vladimir Vizner  Music by Kraftwerk, Billie Holiday  Producers  Thomas Schüibly, Bernd Wördehoff  Production Company  Laura Film
Commissioned by  Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF Mainz)
Length 91 minutes  Format  16mm, color, 1:1.33
Original Version  German  First Release  8. October 1981 Film Weeks in Mannheim
Miscellaneous  TV Broadcast: 8th October 1981 (ZDF); „This film is dedicated to the initiator of "Theatre in Trance" Ivan Nagel”
Associates  Het Werktheater, Amsterdam; Squat Theater, New York; Sombrad Blancas, Mexico; Kipper Kids, California; Magazzini Criminali, Florence; Pina Bausch and the Dance Theatre from Wuppertal; Jérôme Savary; Yoshi Oida;

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**Buddenbrooks – Ein Geschaeft von einiger Groesse**

*Type of Project* Feature Film Cinema  
*Genre* Drama, Literature  
*Production Companies* Bavaria Film/Geiselgasteig, Colonia Media/Cologne, in co-production with FilmInterest/Munich  
*With backing from* MEDIA, Filmfoerderungsrat (FFA), Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Deutscher Filmfoerderfonds (DFFF)  
*Producers* Uschi Reich, Michael Hild, Winka Wulff  
*Director* Heinrich Breloer  
*Screenplay* Heinrich Breloer, Horst Koenigstein  
*Director of Photography* Gernot Roll  
*Editor* Barbara von Weitershausen  
*Music by* Hans Peter Stroeer  
*Production Design* Goetz Weidner  
*Principal Cast* Armin Mueller-Stahl, August Diehl, Iris Berben, Jessica Schwarz, Martin Waschke, Lea Bosco, Maja Schoene, Martin Feifel, Andre Hennicke  
*Casting* An Doerthe Braker  
*Shooting Language* German  
*Shooting in* Cologne (MMC Studios), Luebeck, Augsburg, Munich, Bruges, August – November 2007  
*German Distributor* Warner Bros. Entertainment/Hamburg

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Breloer recalls sitting as a teenage in a cinema in Recklinghausen in 1959 and watching Alfred Weidenmann’s film version of the novel and notes: “I saw such characters as Tony Buddenbrook again with Scarlett O’Hara in *Gone with the Wind* and Thomas Buddenbrook appeared to me in the cinema as *The Leopard*. Strong emotions, moving fates – the cinema overwhelmingly shaped what one had read.”

“It is a stroke of luck that, with *Buddenbrooks*, this most widely read German novel, we also find such citizens of the world who, with their life stories, allow us to live through the times of radical change in a seemingly established society,” Breloer continues. “Each day, people are dragged into exactly the same whirlpool of globalization and modernization of their world as happened to the Buddenbrooks in their time.”

“*The book with its characters has accompanied my whole life,”* he explains, pointing out that “the personal meeting with the Mann family and my extremely successful adaptation of their family history in *Die Manns – Ein Jahrhundertroman* showed me how intimately Thomas Mann was speaking here about his own person and how much of the family history of the Manns from Luebeck he had handed down to us in his *Buddenbrooks*. Thomas Mann knew his characters. This is why he succeeded in making them so true-to-life.”

Moreover, Breloer believes that his previous work will come in useful when tackling this ambitious family drama: “As a filmmaker, people have called me the ‘archaeologist of German history’ and attribute significant parts in the development of the docudrama to me. All these movements now come together in the adaptation of *Buddenbrooks* for the cinema: documentary and drama, the closeness to Thomas Mann, the knowledge of his family history and the course of events.”

For producer Uschi Reich, who is known in particular for her successful family entertainment films such as *Bibi Blocksberg* and *Wild Chicks*, this is the first time she will be working with Heinrich Breloer. “He is a great expert on the material,” she says. “Moreover, he will be telling the story in a way that will not upset the Thomas Mann connoisseurs, but retain the spirit of the novel.”

*Buddenbrooks*’ cast will be headed by the veteran actor Armin Mueller-Stahl, who played the author Thomas Mann in Breloer’s *Die Manns* and is now the pater familias Johann Buddenbrook, while other parts are taken by August Diehl, Iris Berben, Jessica Schwarz, Martin Feifel, Andre Hennicke, and ‘new face’ Mark Waschke who has previously worked on the stage.

Reich admits that a budget such as *Buddenbrooks*’ €15 million would not be possible with the usual TV participation. “The television partner has to be involved financially with more than a normal cinema co-production,” she argues, explaining that a two-part mini-series will be produced alongside the feature film version.

MB
The role of Schumann was cast with Pascal Greggory (Arsène Lupin) and Nikolai Kinski (Klimt) as the young Schumann, while Brahms will be portrayed by Malik Zidi who won the Best Newcomer Actor César this February for his performance in Emmanuel Bourdieau’s Les Amitiés Maléfiques.

Helma Sanders-Brahms sees a link between her award-winning Germany, Pale Mother and her latest project as both films address particular images of Germany and both have a woman at the center of each story.

As she recalls, Germany, Pale Mother was “a very personal story between me and my mother in the middle of the Second World War which was acknowledged by the audience as the story of a whole generation and, more than this, had a decisive influence in many countries on their image of Germany.”

With Clara, she wants to tackle another big German subject “which has a great personal significance for me as a woman in the culture and arts industry” and, at the same time, is connected with another of the images of Germany which was cultivated by Romanticism and its music.

“It is about a highly gifted and inspired woman in the conflict between her career, husband and children, who has to sacrifice herself against her will in order to preserve life around her – at a moment when she discovers her first fears about growing old. Doubts about love and about herself in both roles – that of the celebrated star as well of the housewife and loving spouse and mother. A conflict which occurred more than 150 years ago and yet is red-hot.”

Producer Alfred Huermer, who joined the project two years ago, points out that, as part of the preparation for their roles, the three leads had to learn to play the piano and also conduct, while the hunt for suitable locations for scenes in concert halls from the 19th century took the team to Hungary. “We looked for halls in Germany and France, but didn’t have any success. It wasn’t until we started scouting in Hungary that we found buildings that are practically unchanged from that epoch.”

Principal photography on Helma Sanders-Brahms long-gestating biopic Clara wrapped at the end of July after 40 days of shooting in Hungary and Germany at original locations.

Budgeted at €4.7 million, the German-French-Hungarian co-production by Integral Film, Helma Sanders Filmproduktion and B.A. Produktion with MACT Productions and Objektiv Film Studio focuses on the love triangle between Clara Schumann, her husband Robert and the 14-years-younger composer Johannes Brahms which developed when the Schumann family moved to Duesseldorf in 1850.

Sanders-Brahms, distantly related to the composer Brahms, had been developing this film on Clara Schumann for the past eleven years and originally had the French actress Isabelle Huppert in mind for the title role.

However, when Huppert became ill earlier this year and was no longer available for the production, the role was re-cast with Martina Gedeck, the female lead in the OSCAR-winning film The Lives of Others, who came from shooting Vanessa Jopp’s Meine schoene Bescherung to Clara in Hungary at the end of May.

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Companies Integral Film/Munich, Helma Sanders Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with MACT Productions/Paris, Objektiv Film Studio/Budapest, B.A. Produktion/Munich With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Eurimages, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF) Producers Alfred Huermer, Helma Sanders-Brahms Co-Producers Martine de Clermont-Tonnerre, Janos Rosza Director Helma Sanders-Brahms Screenplay Helma Sanders-Brahms Director of Photography Juergen Juerges Production Design Uwe Szielasko Principal Cast Martina Gedeck, Pascal Greggory, Nikolai Kinski, Malik Zidi Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Shooting Languages French, German Shooting in Budapest, Kerpen, Duesseldorf, Zons, June – July 2007 German Distributor Kinowelt Filmverleih/Leipzig World Sales ARRRI Media Worldsales · Antonio Exacoustos Tuerkenstrasse 89 · 80799 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-38 09 12 88 · fax +49-89-38 09 16 19 email: aexacoustos@arri.de www.arri-mediaworldsales.de

On the set of “Clara” (photo © Integral Film)
Die Frauen des Anarchisten

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Drama, Family, History, Love Story  
**Production Company** P’Artisan Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with ZIP Films/Barcelona, Ciné Boissière/Paris, KV Entertainment-IBARRETXE & Co/Bilbao  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderunganstalt (FFA), Deutsch-Französisches Miniteriat, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg  
**Producer** Peter Sehr  
**Directors** Marie Noëlle, Peter Sehr  
**Screenplay** Marie Noëlle  
**Director of Photography** Jean-François Robin  
**Editor** Luis de la Madrid  
**Music by** Frédéric Sanchez  
**Production Design** Marta Blasco, Juan Botell Ruiz Castillo  
**Principal Cast** Maria Valverde, Juan Diego Botto, Nina Hoss, Ivana Baquero, Jean-Marc Barr, Laura Morante, Irene Montala  
**Casting** Yolanda Serrano, Eva Leira  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SRD  
**Shooting Languages** Spanish, French  
**Shooting in** Annonay, Cerbère, Madrid, Barcelona, Cologne, May – July 2007

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Marie Noëlle and Peter Sehr’s new feature *Die Frauen des Anarchisten* might not have come about if Noëlle hadn’t started doing some private research into the lives of her grandparents.

“I am half-Spanish, but the fact that I was born in France is connected with what happened to my grandfather as an anarchist in the Spanish Civil War and Second World War,” she explains. “In the course of my research I learned more about my grandmother’s life and found it to be very romantic and cinematographic. The film is a love story rather than a war film; it is more about keeping true to one’s ideals and shows a woman fighting for her love.”

Initially, Noëlle had come up against a brick wall of silence when she tried to find out more about her grandfather and his involvement in the Civil War and stay in the Mauthausen concentration camp: “The traumas of the past were too strong and people in Spain had suppressed all memory. It is only in the last five years that they have started talking. But in France, the situation is even worse: for example, nobody speaks about the fact that it was the Spanish who built up the Resistance because they were experts in building bombs and sabotage from their struggle against Franco and then started against Fascism in France.”

According to Noëlle, the film’s story, based on the real-life experiences of her grandparents from the struggle against Franco in the Spanish Civil War followed by a decade of separation during the Second World War to new beginnings in post-war France, is “such a universal one, it is not specific to Spain.”

“The historical background to the film is not like in Ken Loach’s *Land and Freedom*,” Peter Sehr stresses. “It was much more complicated with the anarchists, Communists and Trotskyites all fighting together. There was three years of resistance against Franco in Madrid.”

He recalls that it was quite a challenge to initiate the film out of Germany for casting the actors and scouting the locations. “But both of us think that cultural exchange is important for the future of Europe and cinema can play a key role for people to be able to learn and respect other cultures,” Sehr suggests, adding that the project could serve in the future as a case study for his work at the German-French Master Class as a project between three countries. “You can learn here what you have to do, what is demanded and what perhaps ought to be changed in the regulations.”

“The Spanish were quite surprised that we managed to get 50% of the financing for the project from Germany,” he adds, “but this fact helped us to get co-producers in Spain and France. It was also important for us that BR and FilmFernsehfonds Bayern were involved in the project from the very beginning.”

After shooting for three weeks in the French town of Annay to recreate France of the 1950s, the production then moved to Madrid and Barcelona, and finally arrived at the MMC studios in Cologne at the end of June for two-and-a-half weeks for the interiors of one Spanish and two French apartments before wrapping on 17 July.

The husband and wife team Peter Sehr and Marie Noëlle jointly founded their production company P’Artisan Filmproduktion in 1988. The New York-set *Love the Hard Way* with Adrian Brody in 2001 was their last feature.
Freche Maedchen

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genres Family Production Company collina Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich, With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) Producers Ulrich Limmer, Director Ute Wieland Screenplay Maggie Peren Director of Photography Peter Przybyszski Music by Oliver Bieler Production Design Elena Wegner Principal Cast Anke Engelke, Armin Rohde, Piet Klocke, Ralf Schmitz, Anna Boettcher Casting Stefany Pohlmann Casting, Nicole Fischer Casting Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Surround Shooting Language German Shooting in Cologne, Wuppertal, Munich, July – September 2007 German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

Based on the best-selling series of Freche Maedchen (translation: “Cheeky Girls”) novels, this film of the same title tells the story of Mila, Kati and Hanna. They are best friends, 14-years-old and stick together through thick and thin. And being a young, teenage girl is not easy! It involves the first time falling in love, trouble with boys at school, stress with parents, lovesickness, the first kiss, in fact everything a girl this age goes through and gets up to. And things don’t always run smoothly between themselves, either …

Screenwriter Maggie Peren is nothing if not prolific, with her comedy Stellungswechsel soon to be released by 20th Century Fox Germany. Among her many other writing credits are Napoli – Elite fuer den Fuehrer, Bloody Germans, and the two Madechen, Maedchen films.

“I was given a big bag of books by Constantin Film,” says Peren. “I found the character of Mila so funny. She is super. These might be young girls but the books are anything but dumb. The challenge was to turn seven books of one hundred and fifty pages each into a 90-minute script!”

Another key player involved is Freche Maedchen’s producer Ulrich Limmer, whose latest film, the family entertainment dog-becomes-man, uh, dog story, Herr Bello, has been cleaning up at the local box office.

“The novels are very well-known here,” Limmer says. “We’re making a teeny comedy, but we’re also making the film cheekier, more unconventional. There will be leaps in time, flashbacks, some illustrated scenes. It’s a new cheeky look for us!”

While the juvenile leads are still to be cast, the adult cast features Germany’s “First Lady of Comedy”, Anke Engelke, and Armin Rohde, one of the most popular and respected character actors in the business. While Engelke has been rationing her appearances of late following the risk of being over-exposed, she is an immediately known face and a star of screen and TV, having had her own comedy and talkshow series. Rohde’s credits include the above mentioned Herr Bello (2007), Barfuss (2005) and the award-winning, TV event movie Das Wunder von Lengede (2003), among others.

Director Ute Wieland studied at Munich’s Academy of Television & Film. With her forte being the light touch, her last theatrical feature was FC Venus – Women with Balls, a charming and very funny film about women who take on men at their own game – football!

collina Filmproduktion was founded in 2002 by producer-writer Ulrich Limmer. Previously he was head of Kinowelt Filmproduktion and head of production at Bavaria Film. His track record includes, among nominations for an OSCAR and Golden Globe, the films Bella Martha, Der Felsen, Das Sams, and Schnick!

Im Winter ein Jahr

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genres Drama Production Company Bavaria Filmverleih & Produktion/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich, With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF) Producers Ulsci Reich, Martin Moszkowicz Director Caroline Link Screenplay Caroline Link, based on the novel Aftermath by Scott Campbell Director of Photography Bella Halben Editor Patricia Rommel Music by Niki Reiser Production Design Susann Bieling Principal Cast Karoline Herfurth, Josef Bierbichler, Corinna Harfouch, Hanns Zischler Casting An Dorthe Braker Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Munich and surroundings, July - August, November 2007 German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich
By the end of 2006, and asked if she would be interested in taking on the project to be shot in German since the film rights were now with Constantin Film in Munich.

An agreement was subsequently reached between Constantin and Bavaria for a joint co-production, with Robert Cort serving as executive producer. Reich says that Link’s adaptation of the US novel “is so good that you wouldn’t have thought that it was planned anywhere else.”

The drama, adapted by Link from Scott Campbell’s novel Aftermath, follows a renowned artist Max Hollander (played by Winter Journey’s Josef Bierbichler) and the 22-year-old dancer Lilli (Karoline Herfurth) whose portrait he has been commissioned to paint together with her younger brother who was tragically killed in a recent traffic accident. To complete the portrait he must uncover the young woman’s darkest secrets. During the work on this double portrait, Max slowly begins to understand the depth of the relationship between Lilli and her brother, and is himself touched and changed by this highly unusual commission.

“As in Caroline’s previous films, it is a big family story, but this time without children. It is about overcoming grief through art and how you find your own way through life,” Uschi Reich explains. “And, like in her other films, the ending is full of hope.”

“Casting went very quickly,” she recalls. “Very early on, we had the idea of Corinna Harfouch and Josef Bierbichler for the leads, but the part of the young woman took longer to cast.” In the end, Karoline Herfurth, who appeared in another of Constantin Film’s productions, Tom Tykwer’s Perfume – The Story of a Murderer, was chosen to play Lilli.

“One special thing in this film is that Bierbichler plays a painter and he had to get himself acquainted with the technique of painting,” Reich says. “The paintings in the film were provided by a young German artist, Florian Sussmeyer, who has been gaining quite a reputation internationally.”

Oscar-winning director Caroline Link has a great desire to try out things visually and approach a subject through images.”

For his second feature, Rohde teamed up with authors Nicolai Rohde and Lars Neuwoehner to write the screenplay for the story which was inspired by the real-life case of the Swiss air-traffic controller who was murdered by a grieving father after the collision of two airplanes in 2002.
A dramatic air crash becomes a personal tragedy for four people: Franziska (Marie Baumeier) can hardly cope anymore with the bouts of depression of her husband Markus (Wolfram Koch). He was the flight controller on the day of the crash and feels responsible for the death of over 80 passengers. Erik (Filip Poeters) lost his wife and child in the crash and is obsessed with the idea of taking revenge for this personal misfortune. Once in Leipzig, he has a chance encounter with the impulsive, chaotic Daniela (Hannah Herzsprung) and feels for once that life can offer more than just sorrow. Meanwhile, the policeman Harald (Sebastian Blomberg) has been suffering from post-traumatic panic attacks since being on duty at the crash site, although his wife Svenja (Anna Loos) tries to help and support her husband wherever she can. As the air crash's first anniversary approaches, the next catastrophe is just around the corner.

“It is inspired by the case, but our story is completely fictional,” stresses Sigrid Hoerner, while the director explains that he was “interested by the chain reaction which was triggered by the air crash and the ensuing events. That fateful aspect is what fascinated me. It was something that I had addressed in my first film and hadn’t yet finished with.”

“If there is a common link between his films, it would be that Nico is interested in looking at the extreme circumstances people have to live in and how they correspondingly behave,” Anne Leppin adds.

While Leipzig was reportedly not the first choice for the film’s setting, the producers and director are more than happy now with the shooting conditions and locations they found in Leipzig, Leppin enthusing that “it is really great fun to shoot there and the people are very friendly.”

Meine schoene Bescherung

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Comedy Production Company X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in coproduction with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filminstiftung NRW, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF) Producer Manuela Stehr Commissioning Editors Barbara Buhl (WDR), Andreas Schreitmüller (ARTE) Director Vanessa Jopp Screenplay Monica Rolfner, adaptation by Eva Callenbo, Harald Hamrell, Richard Reitinger Director of Photography Hans Fromm Editor Brígitta Tauchner Music by Loy Wesselnburg Production Design Peter Menne Principal Cast Martina Gedeck, Heino Ferc, Jasmin Tabatabai, Roeland Wiesenekker, Rosa Enskat, Andreas Windhuis, Ursula Doll, Matthias Matschke, Meret Becker, Rainer Sellien, Alexandra Neldel, Ingrid Maedel, Feo Aladag, Petra Kelling, Eva Loebau, Guenther Kaufmann Casting Simone Baer Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Shooting Language German Shooting in Huerth and Potsdam-Babelsberg, March – May 2007 German Distributor X Verleih/Berlin

Contact X Verleih AG Kurfuerstenstrasse 57 · 10785 Berlin/Germany phone +49-30-26 93 36 00 · fax +49-30-26 93 37 00 email: info@x-verleih.de · www.x-verleih.de

Producer Manuela Stehr has made a personal dream come true with Vanessa Jopp’s latest feature film Meine schoene Bescherung.

“I had always dreamed of shooting at the Babelsberg studios and when I began working on this project, I thought this is one I can at last shoot there. It is wonderfully suited for shooting in a studio,” says Stehr.

The marketing consultant Juergen Fabritius had drawn her attention to the original Swedish film by Kjell Sundvall which had been very successful in his home country in 1999. “Juergen had suggested that after Go for Zucker! I would be the right person to continue making comedies,” Stehr recalls. “I saw the film and was as impressed as him by the superb storyline, but it was extremely Scandinavian in the way it was brought to the screen. I knew it would thus make sense to adapt this story and we worked with several authors and ensured that we cast in a very original way.”

“The story revolves around Sara (played by Martina Gedeck) who is now living happily together with three children from three different husbands and her fourth husband Jan (Heino Ferch) and his son under one roof. For her, Jan is the man of her life and she definitely wants to have a child with him,” Stehr explains. “What’s more, she decides – without his knowledge – to invite all of her ex-husbands together with their new partners and children for Christmas Eve. However, the biggest surprise Sara is planning is to announce that she is expecting a child from Jan. We learn as the audience – but Sara doesn’t know it – that Jan really can’t have any more children. But he has never told her this!”

“A real chaos ensues. She never even presumes to find out what the background is and he doesn’t want to explain what is wrong with him. And all kind of things come to the surface during this evening in the other relationships,” Stehr continues. “ ‘On the one hand, it is very funny, but there is also a darker, meaner side. It may be a patchwork family but, as in all families, one has to hear things spelled out that you would normally never tell one another.’

Juergen Fabritius also played an inspirational hand in the choice of director for this project. “I was really keen to make this film with a woman director and Juergen asked if I had thought of Vanessa,” Stehr recalls. “After meeting with her, I knew immediately that she was on my wavelength and understood the story like me. We then worked together with the screenwriters on the dialogues.”
For Jopp, whose previous features include Forget America (Vergiss Amerika) and Happy As One (Komm Naeher), Meine schoene Bescherung offered the opportunity to work on a no holds-barred comedy for a change. “It was also an enormous challenge for Vanessa working with this ensemble of great actors in a studio atmosphere,” Stehr explains. “With Heino [Ferch], for example, people will be really surprised because he is cast here in a completely different role from those in the TV two-parters. He has a real comic talent. And Martina Gedeck has an incredible range to her characterization and performance.”

Given the film’s setting, distributor X Verleih will release Meine schoene Bescherung in German cinemas at the end of November in good time to get the audiences in the mood for Christmas and prepared for any family scraps during the season of goodwill …

Memory Books

Type of Project Documentary Cinema Genre Society Production Company Kick Film/Munich, in co-production with Snake Film/Zurich With backing from Deutscher Filmoerderfonds (DFFF), BKM, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, Volkart Stiftung Producers Joerg Bundschuh, Markus Fischer Director Christa Graf Screenplay Christa Graf Director of Photography Roland Wagner Editor Carmen Kirchweber Music by Gerd Wilden Jr. Format HD, color, Dolby Stereo 2.0, blow-up to 35 mm, 1:1.85 Shooting Languages English, local dialects Shooting in Uganda, January - February 2007 German Distributor Stardust Filmverleih/Munich

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Without wishing to rain on anybody’s parade, we are all going to die. So the question becomes not if, but when and how. For millions of people in Africa, afflicted with HIV/AIDS, the answers to these questions are more pertinent, more actual, and, knowing their indivi-
Der Parasit

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company FRISBEEFILMS/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg/Ludwigsburg, BR/Munich Producer Manuel Bickenbach Commissioning Editor Birgit Knackmuss Director Toke Constantin Hebbeln Screenplay Johannes Heider Director of Photography Felix Novo de Oliveira Editor Simon Blasi Casting Suse Marquardt Format 16 mm, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Stuttgart and Frankfurt, November 2007

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Genre-wise, Toke Constantin Hebbeln couldn’t get further from NimmerMeer, a fantastic parable about coming of age and the power of dreams which won the Honorary Foreign Film Award at this year’s Student Academy Awards, for his feature-length debut Der Parasit which will be set against the world of international white-collar crime.

But this eclecticism is a characteristic of the young filmmaker. “I used my time [at the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg] to try my hand in different genres,” Hebbeln explains. “From the psychological drama through to the romantic film. What always interests me is the humanity of a story. That my films develop a human stance to their characters.”

While no broadcasters or public funders were forthcoming with support for NimmerMeer – Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) has now since acquired the TV rights – reaction to Hebbeln’s new project has been “suddenly quite different,” according to FRISBEEFILMS’ Alexander Bickenbach.

Indeed, the team of NimmerMeer – Hebbeln, producer Manuel Bickenbach, DoP Felix Novo de Oliveira – all decided to extend their term of studies in Ludwigsburg in order to graduate with Der Parasit.

Hebbeln and the two Bickenbach brothers came to wider recognition last autumn when NimmerMeer was an ex aequo winner of the Young German Cinema Award and picked up the Eastman Support Award for Newcomer Talents at the Hof Film Days.

However, Der Parasit’s commissioning editor Birgit Knackmuss at BR had already got to know Toke and his film at one of the ‘Highlights’ screenings at the Film Academy. “What really interested me was that he dared to work in a genre that you don’t normally tackle as a film student: a historical children’s fairytale with a very adult approach,” Knackmuss recalls. “He managed to tell this story in an extremely modern way. At the same time, Toke was recommended to me by his professor and mentor Nico Hofmann.”

Knackmuss, who is a production graduate from the Academy of Television & Film (HFF) in Munich, describes Der Parasit as “a dramatic thriller which now has more dramatic moments, whereas there were more thriller elements beforehand. It is about the continuous rise of a typical economic highflyer who suddenly realizes after all of the greed and power that the shell he has surrounded himself with is very thin and that he is rotting from within. He can no longer escape this greed and is about to be destroyed by it. Moreover, it is also a story about two close friends.”

“What I liked here is that Toke wants to portray someone who actually reflects our generation, i.e. people who through their education get the chance to go right to the top,” Knackmuss explains. “And show that one should also have certain emotional and social skills in order to stand up to this world of business.”

According to FRISBEEFILMS, it is planned to shoot the film – with a budget of around €700,000 – at locations in Stuttgart and Frankfurt in November.

Spuren und Zeichen

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (dffb) Producer Hartmut Bitomsky Director Hans Henkes Screenplay Hans Henkes Director of Photography Emre Erkman Editor Lorna Hofeffer-Steffen Production Design Juliane Friedrich Principal Cast Hans-Jürgen Schatz, Achim Wolff Format HDV, color, 16:9, blow-up to 35 mm, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin, February – March 2007
Friedbert, 65-years-old, is an actor whose work has taken him all over the world. Otherwise, he has lived his entire life in a farm house and “patrols” the neighborhood while ruminating, as one does, on the permanency of things. It is while on one of his walks that he encounters Werner, aged fifty-five. He was a laboratory technician who, before retiring, fulfilled his dream and purchased a small house not far away from Friedbert’s farm.

There develops between the nihilist Werner and the megalomaniac fantasist Friedbert a serious, and at the same time child-like, relationship that swings between friendship and hostility.

But when Friedbert one day drops the bombshell that he is terminally ill with cancer and has just a few months to live, the paths the two men are taking in life begin to concatenate.

**Spuren und Zeichen** marks the second theatrical feature outing of writer-director Hans Henkes, who initially studied Physical Chemistry at the University of Amsterdam. Deciding that being a scientist was not for him, he changed track entirely and opted to study Directing, from 1997 to 2005, at Berlin’s renowned German Film & Television Academy (dffb).

“I have lots of stories in my head and this was just one of them,” says Henkes. “But I can’t say where it comes from. When I was writing, I just imagined what it’s like to be old.”

Given the age difference between writer-director and the two protagonists, were there any problems making the film? “No,” Henkes replies. “They were very good and gave their best. The filming conditions weren’t always easy, with seventy percent of the film shot outside. I wanted to film when the weather wasn’t so good, which was unpleasant. But they’re both fit and I think by the end they were even fitter!”

With an impressive list of short film credits to his name, Henkes was busy with pen and camera long before entering film school. In 2004 he directed his first feature, *Gespenster*, on which DoP Emre Erkman also worked.

**Spuren und Zeichen**’s two main protagonists are played by Achim Wolff (Friedbert) and Hans-Juergen Schatz (Werner) respectively. Wolff is a graduate of the Hochschule fuer Film- und Fernsehen Potsdam-Babelsberg and has been active in film, theater and television since 1964. Schatz made his debut in 1978 and today has more than eighty television and cinema appearances to his name.

Among insiders, Istanbul enjoys the reputation as the gay Mecca of Europe. **Tanz mit mir**’s protagonists come from all levels and ethnic groups of Turkish society and show us, in a very personal and revealing way, their contacts and conflicts with the state, military, society, their family and themselves.

**Tanz mit mir**’s multi-hyphenate, Doendue Kilic was born in the south-east of Turkey in 1976 and came to Germany, aged four, when her family settled in Bonn. “My grandparents were farmers,” Kilic explains, “but my father studied. Where I was born, the usual thing was for men to study and women to get married. But my father let us all study. We had to!”

After graduating from high school Kilic worked in the theater and came to Berlin with the aim of furthering her career. But Berlin being Berlin … “I became politically active,” she says, modestly adding, “I wanted to start the world revolution!” Well, who doesn’t? But in 2002 she put away her red flags and began to study at the city’s renowned dffb film school.

And now the killer question, why this film? Kilic laughs. “My protagonists also asked me why a heterosexual woman would want to make
this film! I hoped to get to know the country and people, to make a connection with my so-called “Homeland”. I have a very European view, with sometimes very European prejudices. My family lives in the European part of Istanbul. It’s modern. Initially, I wanted to highlight what I thought was the bad situation of the poor Turks. Instead, they helped me deal with my prejudices. I learned that Turkey has everything. There is a chaos there that lets everything happen, far more often than in our democratic West.”

For example, Kilic cites that the first lesbian marriage took place in a Turkish village in the early 80s. At the same time, she doesn’t exclude the extremes, which range from total acceptance – such as some transvestites who are feted as film stars or singers, and thus protected – to extreme violence.

In the past, during the Ottoman Empire, it was fashionable for a man in upper circles to be seen in public with young men and boys. “They were sexual objects and proud of it,” Kilic continues. “Most of them became transsexuals, which was seen as desirable. Many men have their first sexual experience with transsexuals. There is a huge, huge, huge scene! It’s comparable with Thailand!”

Just as in the West, there is a gay elite in Turkey (artists, musicians, actors, etc.) which, says Kilic, “has a European lifestyle as we know it. But in the eastern part of the country, a man who is discovered to be a transvestite is raped by the village and forced to live as a woman. A homosexual without family support will be gang raped. Most end up in Istanbul, working as prostitutes. A son who comes out risks being rejected by his family. A homosexual without family support will be gang raped. Most end up in Istanbul, working as prostitutes. A man in my neighboring village was murdered.”

Turkish law neither forbids nor permits homosexuality. Kilic says the religious authorities “say homosexuality is forbidden, but it is also forbidden to punish people for it – everyone is guilty!” But with every big city having its gay and lesbian associations, Turkey is, Kilic says, as on many things, “schizophrenic and split”

SK

Das Vaterspiel

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Tragicomedy

Production Company TATFILM/Cologne, in co-production with Lotus Film/Vienna, Polaris Film/Paris, in cooperation with WDR/Cologne, ARTE Cinema/Strasbourg, Degeto/Frankfurt, ORF/Vienna, Newgrange Pictures/Dublin With backing from Filstiftung NRW, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Irish Film Board, Oesterreichisches Filminstitut, Filmfonds Wien, Land Niederoesterreich, Eurimages

Producers Christine Ruppert, Erich Lackner, Thierry Potok, Christophe Mazodier

Director Michael Glawogger

Screenplay Michael Glawogger, based on the novel of the same title by Josef Haslinger

Director of Photography Attila Boa

Editor Vessela Martschewski

Production Design Bertram Strauss

Principal Cast Helmut Koepping, Christian Tramitz, Sabine Timoteo, Ulrich Tukur, Itzhak Fintzi

Casting Markus Schleinzer

Special Effects & Computer Game Pixo-Ludwigsburg

Format 35 mm, 1:1.85, color, Dolby Digital

Shooting Languages German, English

Shooting in Cologne, Bonn, Vienna and surroundings, New York, Spring 2007

Distributor Alamode Film/Munich

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TATFILM was founded in 1995 by producer Christine Ruppert. The name comes from the Yiddish saying, “Tuches auf’m Tisch” (literal translation: “ass on the table”), which was used by Hollywood producers when they sat around the table to jointly produce a film and each one revealed his degree of participation to the others.

With a slate of more than thirty films, among TATFILM’s many plaudits are Schussangst (2003), a poetic thriller, which played at, among others, Toronto, San Sebastian, Thessaloniki, Rotterdam, Berlin and Tribeca, Der Mann von der Botschaft (2006), which won the Golden Leopard for Best Actor (Burghart Klaußner) last year in Locarno and, most recently, The Last King of Scotland which, in 2007, took not one but three BAFTA Awards, a Golden Globe and an OSCAR for Best Actor (Forest Whitaker for his ferocious performance as former Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin).
In writer-director Michael Glawogger’s feature Das Vaterspiel (translation: “The Father Game”) Rupert is the son of a social democrat minister, 35-years-old and, in his creator’s words, “professionally what you’d call a failure!” Ridden with guilt towards his mother and contemptuous of his corrupt father who has abandoned the family for a younger woman, Rupert spends his time developing a “father-destroying computer game.”

A letter from an old college friend and unfulfilled love, Mimi, sees him heading for New York, together with the game which he hopes to sell. But he soon discovers he’s there to help Mimi renovate a house. A house that just so happens to be where her grandfather, a Lithuanian war criminal, is hiding from his pursuers.

Rupert is suddenly confronted by history: that of three families and generations, the 20th century, and his own conscience. Meanwhile, his computer game has become a smash hit.

“Rupert is caught in a current of past, present and future,” says Glawogger. “It takes him from his self-constructed, virtual, world to a better understanding of the real world. Visually, I’m reflecting that with an associative current of narratives, experiences and realizations.”

Glawogger has cast Das Vaterspiel to reflect his intention. “Helmut Koepping, Sabine Timoteo, Ulrich Tukur and Christian Tramitz represent quite different traditions and schools of acting. From improvisational theater to ballet to the boulevard to a legend of Eastern European cinema, this theater is where the most varied characters come together.”

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The title of Vorwaerts Immer is taken from a quote by the former GDR leader, Erich Honecker (“Vorwaerts immer, ruckwaerts nimmer” Translation: “Always move forwards, never backwards”), who resisted Mikhail Gorbachev’s entreaties to reform and thus oversaw his socialist dictatorship consigned to the dustbin of history.

It is history of the personal kind which plays the central role in writer-director Marco Mittelstaedt’s drama, in the shape of Wolfgang Kreber, a police reporter who was once a big name and privileged sports journalist in the GDR. But the fall of the Wall has pulled the rug from under him and he has to start all over again. His beat is no longer Moscow, Seoul or New York, but the back and beyond of eastern Germany.

Under pressure from his boss, who sees him as a journalistic dinosaur, and seeking to get closer to his estranged daughter, Margitta, Kreber investigates the case of a missing girl from Margitta’s school. Hoping to land the big story about “the East’s lost generation”, he loses his perspective and sinks deeper and deeper into his own interpretation of history. The more he is confronted with his own past through Margitta, the more he ignores all the warning signs. In fleeing from the truth he flees from himself. Then he breaks the greatest of journalistic taboos: he begins to manipulate the story and even direct it. Will Kerber pull back before it’s too late?

Vorwaerts Immer is Mittelstaedt’s third feature after Jena Paradies (2004) and Elbe (2006). “I was born in the GDR,” he says, “and was seventeen when the Wall came down. I wanted to make a film about my parents’ generation. They had great difficulties making history of the personal kind which plays the central role in writer-director Marco Mittelstaedt’s drama, in the shape of Wolfgang Kreber, a police reporter who was once a big name and privileged sports journalist in the GDR. But the fall of the Wall has pulled the rug from under him and he has to start all over again. His beat is no longer Moscow, Seoul or New York, but the back and beyond of eastern Germany.

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After “being inspired to make this film by Joerg Schneider” (commissioning editor at ZDF), Mittelstaedt chose Edgar Selge to play Kerber because “I wanted an actor who didn’t bring the GDR’s past with him. He was completely unencumbered. He is also a very subtle and multi-layered actor who’s played most of Germany’s major theaters.” Selge has also won two Grimme Awards for the crime series Polizeiuf 110 and the German Film Award for Best Supporting Actor in 3 Chinesen mit dem Kontrabass (2000).

It was Schneider who also recommended Mittelstaedt to Frank Kaminski and Ulrich Stiinhm’s Kaminski.Stiehm.Film. Having created the now defunct music video producers Doro Film’s feature division (for which they made six films, including Baby and Meine Tochter ist keine Moerderin), they struck out on their own in 2003. Their credits now include Der Letzte macht das Licht aus! (also for ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel) and Vineta (for NDR).

Vorwaerts Immer

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama
Production Company Kaminski.Stiehm.Film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz
With backing from Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film Producers Frank Kaminski, Ulrich Steinh
Commissioning Editor Joerg Schneider (ZDF) Director Marco Mittelstaedt Screenplay Marco Mittelstaedt, Sven S. Poser Director of Photography Michael Kotschi Editor Vincent Assmann Production Design Natasa Tagwerk Principal Cast Edgar Selge Casting Simone Baer Format 16 mm, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Stereo Shooting Language German Shooting in Wittenberg, Bitterfeld, Wolfen, Berlin, July – August 2007

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It was Schneider who also recommended Mittelstaedt to Frank Kaminski and Ulrich Stiinhm’s Kaminski.Stiehm.Film. Having created the now defunct music video producers Doro Film’s feature division (for which they made six films, including Baby and Meine Tochter ist keine Moerderin), they struck out on their own in 2003. Their credits now include Der Letzte macht das Licht aus! (also for ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel) and Vineta (for NDR).
Continuing their policy of working with interesting young directors (Baby marked the directorial debut of Philipp Stoelzl), Kaminski.Stiehm.Film concentrates on contemporary material which “alongside the story’s originality and autonomy and credible characters also allows itself to be positioned for the theatrical feature market.”

Some raw text content about the film, including production details and cast information, is included. The text describes the film as a romantic comedy based on the books by Allan and Barbara Pease, and it includes information about the cast and crew, shooting locations, and distribution details.

The article also mentions a second film, Die Welle, directed by Dennis Gansel, with notable actors like Benno Fuermann and Jessica Schwarz, and it provides a brief description of the film's genre, producers, and distribution information.
Germany. The present. As part of a project about various ways of organizing a state, a high school teacher playfully introduces his students to everyday life in a dictatorship. But what begins as an educational game with the terms “discipline” and “community” develops in just a few days into a genuine movement called “Die Welle” (translation: “The Wave”).

The students are initially fascinated by the social mechanisms and fail to notice how much and how quickly they are turning into a fascist society. By the third day they are starting to exclude and persecute those who think differently. The wave gathers momentum and within six days has taken a grip on the whole school.

The teacher, himself fascinated by his role as Fuehrer, is no longer capable of ending the experiment that has now gone completely out of control. When the situation escalates at a water polo match, he finally decides he has to put an end to it. But his attempt fails. The wave has long since developed a life all of its own.

“Die Welle is based on real events that took place in a school in Silicon Valley in the 1970s,” says co-writer Peter Thorwarth. “A teacher wanted to show his students how Nazi Germany and Auschwitz came to be. Our film is based on the book by Morton Rhue and there was also a 1981 TV movie. Dennis Gansel, the director, wanted to update it and I was sceptical at first. He started writing and then asked me to take over.”

The problem, Thorwarth continued, was that the USA in the 1970s was very different to Germany today. Also, the book is taught in German schools. So how to adapt the story?

“We found a new approach,” Thorwarth explains. “Just as the USA then suffered from arrogance, we took the approach that young Germans could not believe such a thing could ever happen again. Which, in itself, is a form of arrogance.”

The teacher in the film is an ex-punk, loved by his students. But his initial idea is hijacked by a conservative school administration which doesn’t want any left-wing nonsense being taught. Faced with a full class and, says Thorwarth, “not wanting to teach the Third Reich yet again, the teacher has no choice and comes up with this game, instead: He finds himself sucked into the initially positive side of the group dynamics. Then things turn sour.”

Thorwarth is best known for his humorous take on life, as evidenced by his 1999 Bang Boom Bang and the 2002 Was nicht passt, wird passend gemacht. But, as he says, “we get older and we want to develop.
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Alone in Four Walls tells the story of imprisoned children in Russia, between the ages of 11 and 15, who would rather stay behind bars than be released to freedom. 120 children are kept here, they have been sentenced for theft, rape and murder. They receive food and clothes; they go to school and engage in sports. They no longer have to fight for existence every day; for the first time in their young lives they can be what they are – children.

Lyosha, a 13-year-old thief, is the newest inmate. He did not manage to say goodbye to his mother. For two years he will not see her, she won’t have the opportunity to visit him. Tolya, a 14-year-old murderer, will be released soon. His village, where he is going back, doesn’t give him a chance: “He should be killed, a kid like that.”

Everyone sees in them only criminals, and forgets that they are children. Children who will never have a childhood. 91% of these children will end up back inside. This time in a prison for adults.
A suburb of Hamburg is where the Morells and Wagners live, each a father-mother-son family. Both are perfectly normal families, even at second sight. The fathers have been friends for years and work together for the same company as salesmen for Swedish pre-fabricated houses. The adults meet up on a regular basis to play cards, rounding off the image of harmony and order.

What the parents don’t know: there is brutal, despairing animosity between their adolescent sons. Robert, the younger and also smaller of the two, is repeatedly fleeced by Paul. One day he finds himself cornered by his sadistic tormentor to the extent that he shoots him in blind rage. When the parents have buried the corpse of their neighbor’s son and do their utmost to cover up the crime, a most desperate and drastic tragedy begins.

Volker Einrauch was born in Kassel in 1950. He studied Literature, Linguistics, History and Politics in Marburg. In 1984 he co-founded the production company Josefine Film. Volker Einrauch is active as a screenwriter (Das verflixte 17. Jahr, 2001, and Vaeter, denn sie wissen nicht was sich tut, 2006, among others) and director: The Killer’s Mother (1996), Gangster (1999), and The Other Boy (2007), among others. In addition to his commitment to Josefine Film, he is also engaged in external projects (screenplay for Teufelsbraten and Effi Briest).
The single frames of 8 mm films are compared with windows in building façades of a city.

Various photo, video and film materials were collected and modified in a graphic way. This found footage was mounted like a collage and combined with the music of Franz Schubert.

**Genre** Art, Experimental  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Bert Gottschalk  
**Screenplay** Bert Gottschalk  
**Director of Photography** Bert Gottschalk  
**Editor** Rudi Ziegmeier  
**Music by** Franz Schubert  
**Sound** Christian Lutz  
**Production Design** Theresa Strozyk  
**Producer** Bert Gottschalk  
**Production Company** Bert Gottschalk/Berlin  
**Length** 6 min, 173 m  
**Format** 35 mm, b&w, cs  
**Original Version** no dialogue  
**Sound Technology** DTS Stereo, Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Annecy 2007  
**With backing from** Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA)

Bert Gottschalk was born in 1972 in Potsdam. He started drawing in his early childhood and began making Super 8 films in 1986. From 1991-1999, he studied Animation at the “Konrad Wolf” Academy of Film & Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Since 2000, he has been working as a storyboader, illustrator and animator. His films include: **Lazy Sunday Afternoon** (1999), **Schaeferstunden** (2001), **Die Strafe Gottes** (2004), **Framing** (Bildfenster / Fensterbilder, 2007), and animation work on numerous other projects.
Nora is fourteen and lives with her parents, Uwe and Anette, in a quiet Berlin suburb. While Uwe wrestles with his business partner Walter to save his livelihood, Anette returns to her studies and begins an affair with fellow student Daniel. The introverted Nora retreats into romantic day-dreams. When Anette’s former lover Thomas and his family move in next door, the family comes under yet more pressure. Nora starts projecting her own desires onto the charming neighbor. Uwe now feels he and the family-oriented life he has created are threatened. A dinner party leads to the two men heavily falling out. But that is just the start of an escalation that shatters the crumbling foundations of the alleged suburban idyll to their limit.

Genre Coming-of-Age Story, Drama
Category Feature Film
Cinema Year of Production 2007
Director Ulrike von Ribbeck
Screenplay Katharina Held, Ulrike von Ribbeck
Director of Photography Sonja Rom
Editor Natali Barrey
Music by Au Revior Simone, Lawrence, La Grande Illusion
Production Design Ina Timmerberg
Producers Beatrice Kramm, Steffi Ackermann
Commissioning Editors Lucas Schmidt (ZDF), Georg Steinert (ARTE)
Production Company Polyphon Film- und Fernsehgesellschaft/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg
Principal Cast Lola Klamroth, Peter Lohmeyer, Harald Schrott, Beata Lehmann, Fabian Hinrichs, Marie-Lou Sellem, Thorsten Merten, Katharina Heyer
Casting Bernhard Karl, Anja Dihrborg
Length 91 min, 2,624 m
Format 516 mm
Blow-up 35 mm, color, cs
Original Version German
Subtitled Version English
Sound Technology Dolby SR
Festival Screenings Locarno 2007 (In Competition)
With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

Ulrike von Ribbeck was born in 1975 in Minden. 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 (dffb) since 1999. Her films include: the shorts Laurentia (1999), Little Dreams (Kleine Traeume, 2000), Little Star (2001), At the Lake (Am See, 2002) which screened in the Cinefondation sidebar in Cannes in 2003, Charlotte (2004) which screened in Perspectives German Cinema in Berlin and Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes, and her feature debut Sooner or Later (Frueher oder spaeter, 2007) which she developed during the Atelier du Cinefondation in Cannes 2005.
On a scant island, three women live together in a house. They talk about love, they dream, make love, laugh, and take long solitary strolls. They are devoted to one another in a tangled triangle of love, full of agony and unfulfilled desires. A fisherman and his family are the sole further occupants on the island. They seem to be frozen in time, with a terrible, yet utterly ungraspable secret that lies just beneath the surface. Somehow these two poles are inevitably drawn to one another and the clash, when it comes in the end, causes first death and then: birth.

**Genre** Erotic Melodrama  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema**  
**Year of Production** 2006  
**Director** Mona Lenz  
**Screenplay** Mona Lenz  
**Director of Photography** Pawel Sobczyk  
**Editor** Mona Lenz  
**Music by** Janek Duszynski  
**Production Design** Stefanie Gros  
**Producer** Mona Lenz  
**Production Company** PARANORAMA Film/Munich, in co-production with RTL 2/Munich, in cooperation with Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen (HFF/M)/Munich, ZDF/Unterfoehring, Schiesser/Radolfzell

**Principal Cast** Bibiana Beglau, Steffi Kuehnert, Ursina Lardi, Julia Stabenow, Hartmut Lange, Golo Euler, Raphael Westermaier  
**Casting** Mona Lenz  
**Special Effects** Georg Korpas  
**Length** 75 min, 2,052 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

**Mona Lenz** studied at the Munich Academy of Television and Film from 1994-2002 after working as a freelance reader and producer. Prior to this she trained and worked as an editor at the Schwaebische Zeitung, was a freelance journalist for television, radio and print, and studied Empiric Cultural Studies and General Rhetorics in Tuebingen. Her films include: *Play of the Waves* (short, 1995), *The Hidden People* (documentary, 1997), *Miracle Baby* (mockumentary, 1999), and *The Big Sleep* (2006). She is currently working on her next feature *The Eighth Day*, a love story set in the 19th century Prague puppeteer milieu.
Do you have the perfect home? A small study with unusual insights...

A single shot through the apartments of families that all have one thing in common: they all live in the same building in an area with a bad reputation.


Nancy Brandt was born in 1979 in Halle/Saale. She studied Media Technology in Leipzig from 1998-2004, worked as a freelance photographer and founded 3 Kamele Filmproduktion in Leipzig in 2002. Since 2005, she has been studying Documentary Film at the Academy of Television & Film Munich (HFF/M). Her films include: the short documentaries What to drink? (2003) and In a Good Position. (Die gute Lage., 2006).
The young Max lives with his father, a pharmacist, and wishes that his mom were still alive. So when the attractive Verena rents the upstairs apartment and catches his father’s eye, Max is far from pleased.

One day his dad receives a mysterious growth potion that he tries out on his neighbor’s farm. It doesn’t work, but the potion has a strange side effect – it turns all the animals into humans!

When Woof, the stray dog that Max has found on the farm and taken as a pet, turns into a man, the quick-thinking boy hatches a plan: He’ll get Verena interested in Woof…and she’ll forget all about his dad.

However, although now human, Woof still barks, howls at the moon and sniffs around where a man really shouldn’t … and Max’s plan backfires. Then, when Max’s dad tries to explain the magic potion, Verena thinks he’s crazy and hastily flees with a broken heart.

But Woof, human or not, still has the chance to prove exactly why a dog really is a man’s best friend …
When a deeply moral and well-respected art historian steals an invaluable painting from a church, righteous and fanatic Francis records the crime on video to blackmail the perpetrator. Much to the thief’s bafflement, the young man is not interested in money but demands that the piece of art be returned to its original place. The borders between idealism and madness blur when it is revealed that Francis’ brother is in jail and his girlfriend has to tolerate Francis’ bizarre self-afflicted tests of courage …

*Hope*

Genre  Drama  Category  Feature Film  Cinema  Year of Production  2007  Director  Stanislaw Mucha  Screenplay  Krzysztof Piesiewicz  Director of Photography  Krzysztof Ptak  Editors  Jacek Tarasiuk, Peter Przygodda  Music by  Max Richter  Production Design  Anna Wunderlich  Producers  Reinhard Brundig, Raimond Goebel, Zbigniew Domagalski  Production Companies  Pandora Film/Cologne, Studio Filmowe Kalejdoskop/Warsaw, in co-production with Telewizja Polska/Warsaw, Canal+/Warsaw, WDR/Cologne, HR/Frankfurt, ZDF/Mainz, 3sat/Mainz  Principal Cast  Rafal Fudalej, Kamilla Baar, Wojciech Pszoniak, Zbigniew Zapasiewicz, Zbigniew Zamachowski, Grzegorz Artman, Jan Frycz, Jerzy Trela, Dominika Ostalowska  Length  101 min, 2,985 m  Format  35 mm, color, 1:1.85  Original Version  Polish  Subtitled Version  English  Sound Technology  Dolby Digital  Festival Screenings  Moscow 2007, Karlovy Vary 2007  With backing from  Filmstiftung NRW, Eurimages, Polski Instytut Sztuki Filmowej, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM  German Distributor  Pandora Film Verleih/Aschaffenburg


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Just before his ninth birthday, Prince Macius faces the most difficult moment of his young life: his father, the King, has died and Macius must ascend the throne. No sooner has he accepted his duty than the evil General begins intriguing against him. The General wants to rule the country and, more importantly, start a war. His first evil deed is to kidnap Macius’ friend and teacher Erasmus. Once Macius and his friends have saved Erasmus, Macius decides to found a children’s parliament and have the country ruled by the children. After a war with a neighboring prince can just barely be averted, Macius realizes that in the future, the children should only make decisions that regard them. Like opening a zoo, for which they travel to Tungupungu Island. The General, of course, has not told them about the cannibals that live there … But once again, the children outsmart the evil General and, after many adventures with false cannibals, clever animals and cowardly pirates, Macius and his friends make it back home safe and sound. The General must concede defeat, and Macius realizes how important it is to have friends you can rely on!


Sandor Jesse was born in 1953 in Hungary. After studying History, he began working as an animator for Pannonia Filmstudios. In 1985 he moved to Germany and has been active as a director and animator for numerous production companies. A selection of his other films includes: Janoschs Traumstunde (1985), Das Liebesleben der Tiere (1986), Pizzicatore, das Orchestergespenst (1996), Macius (TV, 1999-2001), and Gute Nacht Gorilla (2007).

Nelly Sue Edelmeister is a skinny thirteen-year-old Berlin school girl with a brain the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica and a brilliant career in astronomy ahead of her. But that’s before she develops a hopeless crush on handsome Prince Edouard from Luxemburg. And it’s definitely before she meets basketball ace Max Minsky, 15, Nelly’s last hope for making the school team before it heads off to Luxemburg and virtually into Prince Edouard’s arms.

Meanwhile, Mom is pushing Nelly to do the bat mitzvah thing, and her parents are bickering day and night. A comedy about friendship and family, Royals and klutzes, and how to get into a basketball team without even dribbling — well, almost.

**Genre** Children and Youth, Family, Romantic Comedy  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Anna Justice  
**Screenplay** Holly-Jane Rahlens, based on her novel Prince William, Maximilian Minsky and Me  
**Director of Photography** Ngo The Chau  
**Editor** Uta Schmidt  
**Music by** Christoph M. Kaiser, Julian Maas  
**Production Design** Andreas “Ebbi” Olshausen  
**Producer** Maria Koepf  
**Production Company** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with SevenPictures/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Zoe Moore, Emil Reinke, Adriana Altaras, Jan Josef Liefers, Monica Bleibtreu  
**Casting** Simone Baer  
**Special Effects** Bjoern Friese, Juri Stanossek  
**Length** 99 min, 2,724 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Subtitle** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  

Anna Justice was born in Muenster. After traveling to Los Angeles to complete her education as a translator, she remained there for five years and gained first experience in the film business. She then studied Filmmaking at the German Film & Television Academy Berlin (dffb) and attended Screenwriting courses with Frank Daniel (University of Southern California) and Don Bohlinger (dffb). A selection of her films includes: the shorts Lupino Brothers, Meryems Arbeit, and Tanz in Pankow, and the features Tut mir leid wegen gestern, Der Sommer mit Boiler, Ich liebe das Leben, Noch einmal lieben, and Max Minsky und ich.
With the Weapons of a Woman offers a previously unknown look behind the scenes of the phenomenon of the masses, the biathlon, and its most successful contenders: the German women’s team. Private moments in impressive landscapes bring the viewer closer than ever before to the international biathlon superstars Kati Wilhelm, Magdalena Neuner, Andrea Henkel and their team mates. During the long, private preparation and the exhausting World Cup season with the World Championship as the climax, it becomes ever more obvious that the top athletes are also young, attractive women with normal everyday needs. The fine line between muscle power and sex appeal.

The popularity of the biathlon is increasing from year to year, particularly in Germany. The World Cups are sold out months in advance. Up to 50,000 fans make pilgrimages to the top events. The biathlon is the number one winter sport, followed by some 8 million viewers daily on German TV. But during the sport reporting there is little room for the human aspects in the lives of professional athletes. In With the Weapons of a Woman the athletes speak for the first time about private issues, ones that usually remain taboo.


Ralf Heincke was born in 1968 in Verder. He has been working as a director and producer, press speaker and television commentator since 2003. Together with Florian Leidenberger he directed an advertising spot for RTL, the documentary Mit den Waffen einer Frau (2007) and numerous corporate films for such companies as Audi and MSD Pharmaceuticales.


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German films quarterly 3 · 2007 new german films 54
Matlentan/Kosovo, just before the end of the war in 1999. It used to be that victims were the Albanians and offenders the Serbs; but now it is the other way around. Two young German soldiers, Tom and Charly are in an almost hopeless KFOR mission. They are supposed to keep peace. As a sniper strikes Matlentan, Charly is injured during his attempt to rescue the young beautiful Serbian Mirjana. Tom rushes after the killer, firmly resolved to shoot him, but finds himself facing a half-grown Albanian child, Durcan, holding a sharpshooter’s rifle in his hand.

Soon Durcan’s motive becomes clear: Mirjana’s father, Dr. Jovovic, was partly responsible for the Serbian massacre and also has Durcan’s family on his conscience. Tom rushes after the killer, firmly resolved to shoot him, but finds himself facing a half-grown Albanian child, Durcan, holding a sharpshooter’s rifle in his hand.

Soon Durcan’s motive becomes clear: Mirjana’s father, Dr. Jovovic, was partly responsible for the Serbian massacre and also has Durcan’s family on his conscience. Above all, the Albanian military commander Enver wants his revenge on the Jovovic’s. With Mirjana’s help, Tom successfully wins the trust of traumatized Durcan. Tom and Mirjana fall in love, which puts the friendship with Charly to a difficult test. Durcan escapes and once again becomes involved with Enver. Mirjana is now confronted with a shocking truth: Enver has long decided to have her killed – and has commanded Durcan to execute the sentence.

Genre War Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2007 Director Rudolf Schweiger Screenplay Jan Luethje, Rudolf Schweiger Director of Photography Gerald Schank Editor Norbert Herzner Music by Robert Papst, Hugo Sziegmet Production Design Michael Koenig Producer Michael Roehrig Production Company BlueScreen Film/Munich, in co-production with Kaleidoskop Film/Gruenwald, BR/Munich, SWR/Baden-Baden, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Adrian Topol, Max Riemelt, Susanne Bormann, Anatole Taubman, Peter Bongartz Casting Uwe Buenkner Special Effects Franz Schmidt Length 91 min, 2,646 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German/Serbian Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungssanstalt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg German Distributor Movienet Film/Munich

Rudolf Schweiger was born in 1963 in Munich. While studying Theater, Arts and Psychology he worked as a lector for the Munich-based public broadcaster BR. Afterwards he wrote and directed various TV shows like Versteckte Kamera and Notruf. In 1999 he founded Kaleidoskop Film & Fernsehproduktion, for which he produced and directed a number of documentaries including Die weisse Rose (2003) and Verdon – Auf den Spuren einer Schlacht (2006), as well as award-winning short films like Snipers Alley (Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Award, Ostfriesischer Kurzfilmpreis, among others) and Haltet sie auf! Snipers Valley (Moerderischer Frieden, 2007) marks his feature debut.
People killed by pepper ball ammunition or by electro-shock weapons – these are the negative headlines of so-called “non-lethal” and “more human” weapons. After the end of the Cold War the world conjured up dreams about an era of peace. But elementary conflicts like the increasing divide between wealth and poverty and unexpected dimensions of terrorism appeared on the scene. The USA, sole remaining global power, guarantees freedom and democracy. New weapons become more precise and prevent collateral damages.

The film introduces the masterminds and critics of these weapons in the USA and Russia. The proponents mostly mean well, but the film shows shocking case studies in which the weapons have hurt innocent civilians or even killed them. Critics talk about a move backwards towards an escalation of violence. There is no need for new weapons, but rather for answers to social and political conflicts.

German arms producers DIEHL and RHEINMETALL refused to be filmed but they are in this business too.

**Genre** Society  
**Category** Documentary Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Wolfgang Bergmann  
**Screenplay** Wolfgang Bergmann  
**Directors of Photography** Bernd Mosblech, Maxim Tarasugin  
**Editor** Kawe Vakil  
**Music by** Reinhard Schaub  
**Producer** Wolfgang Bergmann  
**Production Company** Lichtfilm/Cologne  
**Length** 93 min  
**Format** HD Cam Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** English/Russian  
**Subtitled Versions** English, German  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, MEDIA  
**German Distributor** GMfilms/Berlin

Filmmakers Percy and Eleonore Adlon enter a world with no waste, no news, and no hurry – where the only desire of nine-year-old Orbela is a school sweater.

“Our experience with the Maasai (meaning the people who speak Maa) was deep, peaceful, and satisfying. But also raw, controversial, and unexpected. You enter a world with no electricity, no running water, no cars. The homestead consists of a dozen huts, made of wooden sticks, plastered with cow dung, roofed with grass. Very soon you find the eyes of the women, feel their wisdom, their sense of humor, their gentle heart. Excited laughter erupts when you say their names, Napaya, Kelelit, Nalamala.

Orbela’s people are herders. They don’t hunt. They don’t eat wild animals. But also no poultry, no eggs, no vegetables, salad, bread, cheese, pasta. They drink milk (always), they eat beef and goat (occasionally), and some potatoes (the ‘new lifestyle’).

One man owns everything, the cattle, the women, the warriors, the children. About fifty people. But he is not a ruler. He is roaming the land, sitting with the other elders, short of words, without many needs, keeping the old tradition intact. One of his sons is Orbela. In the Maa language ‘orbela’ means ‘split’. He wants to go to school. But he needs an operation of his cleft palate. Five hours from his village, in the town of Arusha, he gets what he needs. And he’ll get his school sweater!”

Genre Environment/Ecology, Educational, Ethnology Category Documentary Cinema Year of Production 2007 Director Percy Adlon Screenplay Percy Adlon Director of Photography Percy Adlon Editor Percy Adlon Music by Percy Adlon Production Design Percy Adlon Producer Eleonore Adlon Production Companies Leora Films/Santa Monica, Pelemele Film & Stage/Santa Monica & Munich Length 116 min Format HDV PAL, color, 16:9 Original Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR

Percy Adlon was born in 1935 in Munich and studied Art, Theater and German Literature at the Ludwigs-Maximilian-University in Munich. After three years as a stage actor, he worked as a narrator and editor of a literature series for radio and television. In 1970, he started his film work for television and made more than 150 documentaries about art and the human condition. His first feature film, Céleste (1981), drew international attention. His film Bagdad Café (Out of Rosenheim, 1987) was a great success, winning the Best Film Award in Rio de Janeiro and two Césars. Together with his wife, Eleonore Adlon, he has written and produced numerous films, including: Sugarbaby (1984), Rosalie Goes Shopping (1989), Salmonberries (1991) winner of the Grand Prix des Amériques in Montreal, the TV-movie The Glamorous World of the Adlon Hotel (1997), a series of 22 short films without words, Die Strausskiste (2000), Dog$hit (aka HAWAIIAN GARDENS, 2001), Koenig’s Sphere (2003), and Orbela’s People (2007).
They are three princesses, descended from a myth, whose cultural differences didn't prevent them from finding friendship.

Minju, born under the confusing sign of the rabbit, is the Asian princess of spells and magic, although these powers offer her no help in the search for her water dragon.

Ayse, the cop, is the Turkish princess of justice. Confronted with the ultra-macho Turkish gangsters surrounding her, she has developed a hard-core toughness. She uses her powers to keep the aggressive men at bay, which ensures that her own unfulfilled passions remain hidden. As a cop, her time is devoted to nabbing the infamous Oezbalik brothers, who rule their Turkish neighborhood with an iron fist.

The ice-cold Nico, the princess of the dream-world, works in a lab, where she monitors patients with sleep disorders. A lonely creature of the night, whose ability to love is frozen somewhere deep within. She is far more comfortable with the emotional distance of her sleeping patients than the men of the awaking world.

Now if only they could break through their emotional walls and find intimacy …

**Porno!Melo!Drama!**

*Genre* Melodrama *Year of Production* 2007 *Director* Heesook Sohn *Screenplay* Dagmar Gabler, Heesook Sohn *Director of Photography* Stefan Ditner *Editors* Markus Aha, Frank Brummundt *Music by* Eckart Gadow *Production Design* Gudrun Roscher *Producers* Felix Zackor, Stefan Raiser *Production Company* Dreamtool Entertainment/Geiseltageig, in co-production with WDR/Cologne *Principal Cast* Franziska Petri, Jale Arik, Young Mi Park *Casting* Tina Boeckenhauer *Length* 80 min, 2,316 m *Format* 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 *Original Version* German *Subtitled Version* English *Sound Technology* Dolby A Stereo *With backing from* Filmtifung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MEDIA

**Heesook Sohn** was born in Seoul/Korea and immigrated to Los Angeles. After earning a degree in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts in New York, she relocated to Berlin in 1994 to take up studies in Screenwriting and Directing at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb). She has since then written and directed numerous shorts. Her documentary *Happy Family* was honored with the Babelsberg Media Prize. **PORNO!MELO!DRAMA!** is her first feature.
It all began with a brutal hate song from the neo-Nazi band “White Aryan Rebels” that called for the murder of the black German Mo Asumang. In her film debut, Mo was able to take this Nazi venom and used it as a catalyst for a journey through Germany, England and Ghana. Driven by her desire to overcome her fears, Mo met with right-wing extremists in prison, with Nazi celebrity Juergen Rieger, and was even surrounded by 3000 neo-Nazis.

On her search for identity, Mo even follows the advice of the neo-Nazis to “Go back where you came from!” But in Ghana she is seen as a white person. During a ritual for the ancestors, Mo realizes she can heal her fear and her lack of German ancestry. She has even found a long forgotten connection between Germany and Ghana. Seeking this connection back in her homeland, she visits Germanic ceremonial sites, meets with scholars and descends into the “Himmler Crypt” at Wewelsburg Castle. Mo finds out how much the nationalistic theories of the neo-Nazis have led to a kind of cultural heritage amnesia among many Germans.

Mo’s journey of personal integration leads her towards the Germanic goddesses, the Matrons. Can they give Mo the necessary strength for the most challenging part of her journey: a confrontation with the leader of the neo-Nazi band “White Aryan Rebels.”

**Genre** Family, History, Society **Category** Semi Fictional Documentary **Year of Production** 2007 **Director** Mo Asumang **Screenplay** Mo Asumang **Director of Photography** Felix Leiberg **Editors** Karin Nowarra, Beatrice Babin **Music by** Johannes Malfatti **Producer** Mo Asumang **Commissioning Editor** Claudia Tronnier **Production Company** MA Motion/Postdam, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, in cooperation with Hochschule fuer Film und Fernsehen ‘Konrad Wolf’/Potsdam-Babelsberg **Length** 76 min **Format** 16 mm/DV, color, 19:9 Blow-up 35 mm **Original Version** German/English **Subtitled Versions** English, German **Voice Over Versions** English, German **Sound Technology** Dolby SR

**Mo Asumang** studied Visual Communication in Kassel and Classical Singing in Berlin. In 1996, she was only the second black TV presenter in Germany, and has since then been successful as a moderator, producer, author, director, actress, and dubbing voice. In 2004, she founded the MA Motion production company and began work on her documentary **Roots Germania** (2007).
Frank is a Doctor of Philosophy, unemployed and a house-husband.

Gy is a police officer, always at odds with his health insurance.

Olli owns a delicatessen shop, which nobody frequents.

Gislerher can’t get a job, as he is allegedly too old.

And Lasse can’t cope with anything at all!

Only an ingenious plan can help in a situation like this: the five unlikely friends decide to set up a special escort service for women, giving themselves over to the wishes of their female clientele as ‘Live German Delicatessens’ …

With witty dialogues and comedic situations, Special Escort tells the story of five guys in search of their identity – forced to adapt to present times – a time for change!

Genre Comedy Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2007 Director Maggie Peren Screenplay Maggie Peren, Christian Bayer Director of Photography Christian Rein Editor Peter Kirschbaum Music by Superstrings (Caro Heiss, Marc Sidney Mueller) Production Design Heike Lange Producers Uli Putz, Thomas Woebke, Jakob Claussen Production Company Claussen+Woebke+Putz Film/Munich, in co-production with ZDF/ Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Florian Lukas, Gustav Peter Woehler, Sebastian Bezzel, Kostja Ullmann, Herbert Knaup, Lisa Maria Potthoff Casting An Dorthe Braker Length 93 min, 2,530 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Surround With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF), MEDIA German Distributor 20th Century Fox (Germany)/Frankfurt

Maggie Peren was born in 1974 in Heidelberg. She wrote her first screenplay, Vergiss Amerika (dir: Vanessa Jopp), in 1997 while studying Literature in Munich, during which time she also wrote the screenplay to Dennis Gansel’s Grimme Award-winning TV thriller Das Phantom. Her other highly-acclaimed, award-winning screenplays include: Maedchen Maedchen, Ganz und gar, Kiss and Run, Meine Eltern, Napola, Haende weg von Mississippi, Hypochonder, her first film also as director, and her first feature Special Escort (Stellungswechsel).
The documentary *An Awkward Customer – The Writer Guenter Grass* accompanies the Nobel Prize-winner from 2005 until the presentation of his controversial novel *Peeling the Onion* in October 2006. He travels to readings, attends election meetings, award ceremonies and discussions with translators. Together with his daughter, actress Helene Grass, he gives a stage performance in Paris – while all the time working on his novel. These events are augmented by interviews with colleagues and friends such as Amos Oz, Salman Rushdie, his editor Gerhard Steidl and German ex-Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Viewing Guenter Grass from a close distance, it becomes evident that his juvenile belief in the Nazi regime is the open wound which has motivated all his work, both as an artist and as a political individual. The portrait goes way beyond last summer’s media hype about his “SS Revelation” and will still be valid after Grass celebrates his 80th birthday in October 2007.

**Genre** Biopic  
**Category** Documentary Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Directors** Sigrun Matthiesen, Nadja Frenz  
**Screenplay** Sigrun Matthiesen, Nadja Frenz  
**Director of Photography** Knut Schmitz  
**Editor** Gesa Marten  
**Music by** Stefan Doering  
**Producers** Regina Ziegler, Claudia Bissinger  
**Production Company** Ziegler Film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Length** 87 min  
**Format** DigiBeta, color, 16:9  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR Stereo  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW  
**German Distributor** Edition Salzgeber/Berlin


19-year-old Robert lives with his mother Anna in Halle-Neustadt, once Eastern Germany. The economic boom hasn’t reached here, and so Anna is constantly looking for jobs for herself and her son. But Robert would rather be a musician or a revolutionary than lead an eventless life with a boring job in the derelict high-rise district.

At first glance, it seems that Jana, who is hiding with her older brother Clemens in an abandoned kindergarten, lives that unbound life which Robert desires. The two siblings ran away from a bourgeois hell, but now Jana has to look after Clemens. Meeting Robert seems to them more like a threat.

It is only after the brother and sister get into even greater trouble after a brawl with some other youths that they let Robert help them. A tender love develops between Robert and Jana, but it becomes increasingly burdened by the demands of Robert’s mother and Jana’s brother.

In the hopes of leaving ‘HaNeu’ together, both try to free themselves from their dependent relationships. But it is hard to let go – and so catastrophe looms...

A formally uncompromising story about love and responsibility in an age of social disaffection.

**Genre** Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Love Story  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Heiko Aufdermauer  
**Screenplay** Dirk Laucke, Heiko Aufdermauer  
**Director of Photography** Gregor Schoenfelder  
**Editor** Christian Griebel  
**Music by** 206, Matthias Petsche, Timm Voelker  
**Production Design** Nina Ball  
**Producer** Gudrun Ruzicková-Steiner  
**Production Company** LUNA-Film/Berlin, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Film und Fernsehen ‘Konrad Wolf’/Potsdam-Babelsberg, SWR/Baden-Baden, MDR/Leipzig  
**Principal Cast** Janusz Kocaj, Kim Schnitzer, Christian Bluemel, Steffi Kuehnhert, Marie Gruber, Michael Wiesner, Jakob Bieber, Joachim Laetsch, Manfred Moeck, Klaus Raetsch  
**Casting** Henri Steinmetz  
**Length** 85 min, 2,436 m  
**Format** Super 16 mm Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

From “The Lives of Others” to “Four Minutes” German Cinema continues to break new ground and win over new audiences. When it comes to presenting German film worldwide, DW-TV – Germany’s international broadcaster – teams up with the German Federal Film Board, the FFA, and GERMAN FILMS. Once a month, KINO – The German Film Magazine reports on the latest productions from the cinema scene. KINO also shows up at the big international Film festivals including Berlin, Cannes, Locarno and Venice. Kino’s next editions will be broadcast on August 3rd, August 31st, September 28th 2007, at 19:30 UTC.
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German Films Service + Marketing is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, since 1966 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. In 2004, new shareholders came on board the Export-Union which from then on continued operations under its present name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

Shareholders are the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers, the Association of German Film Exporters, the German Federal Film Fund, the Association of German Television Producers, the Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the OSCAR for Best Foreign Language Film, the German Documentary Association, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern and Filmstiftung NRW representing the seven main regional film funds, and the German Short Film Association.

Members of the advisory board are: Alfred Huermer (chairman), Peter Dinges, Antonio Exacoustos, Dr. Klaus Schaefer, Ulrike Schauz, and Michael Weber.

German Films itself has 14 members of staff: Christian Dorsch, managing director; Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations/deputy managing director; Petra Bader, office manager; Kim Behrendt, PR assistant/festival coordinator; Sandra Buchta, project coordinator/documentary film; Myriam Gauff, project coordinator; Simon Goehler, trainee; Christine Harrasser, managing director’s assistant/project coordinator; Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor; Barbie Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support; Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator; Michaela Kowal, accounts; Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film; Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television.

In addition, German Films has 10 foreign representatives in nine countries.

German Films’ budget of presently €5.4 million comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. The seven main regional film funds (FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, and Nordmedia) make a financial contribution – currently amounting to €360,000 – towards the work of German Films.

German Films is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, a network of 27 European film organizations (including Unifrance, Swiss Films, Austrian Film Commission, Holland Film, among others) with similar responsibilities to those of German Films. The organization, with its headquarters in Hamburg, aims to develop and realize joint projects for the presentation of European films on an international level.

German Films’ range of activities includes:

- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Locarno, San Sebastian, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Nyon, Shanghai, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Sydney, Goeteborg, Warsaw, Thessaloniki, Rome, and Turin, among others.
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai).
- Staging of the “German Premiers” industry screenings in New York, Los Angeles and Rome.
- 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 about current German films and the German film industry (German Films Quarterly), as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures.
- An Internet website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions.
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the OSCAR for Best Foreign Language Film.
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany.
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward European artthouse distributors and buyers of German films.
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films.
- On behalf of the association Rendez-vous franco-allemands du cinéma, organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting.

In association and cooperation with its shareholders, German Films works to promote feature, documentary, television and short films.
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Scene from “Sooner or Later”
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