

Strand Releasing

presents

A Woman in Berlin

Written and Directed by Max Färberböck

Based on the diary of Anonyma, "A Woman in Berlin"

Starring

Nina Hoss, Evgeny Sidikhin, Irm Hermann, Rüdiger Vogler, Ulrike Krumbiegel, Rolf Kanies, Jördis Triebel, Roman Gribkov, Juliane Köhler

"Special Presentations" 2008 Toronto Film Festival
Film Society of Lincoln Center's 2009 "Film Comment Selects"

Germany, Poland 2008

131 min

Screen Ratio: 1:2.35, Sound Format: Dolby Digital

Original Version: German and Russian

With English subtitles

NY/National Press Contact:

Sophie Gluck

Sophie Gluck & Associates

phone: 212.595.2432

sophie@gluckpr.com

LA/National Press Contact:

Justin Lo / Marcus Hu

Strand Releasing

phone: 310.836.7500

justin@strandreleasing.com

marcus@strandreleasing.com

Please download photos from our website:

<http://extranet.strandreleasing.com/login.aspx>

Cast

Anonyma	Nina Hoss
Andrej	Evgeny Sidikhin
Widow	Irm Hermann
Eckhart	Rüdiger Vogler
Ilse Hoch	Ulrike Krumbiegel
Friedrich Hoch	Rolf Kanies
Bärbel Maltaus	Jördis Triebel
Anatol	Roman Gribkov
Elke	Juliane Köhler
Andropov	Samvel Muzhikyan
Mongol	Viktor Zhalsanov
Mascha	Aleksandra Kulikova
Soldier #1 (Rapist)	Oleg Chernov
Refugee Girl	Anne Kanis
Gerd	August Diehl
Greta Maltaus	Rosalie Thomass
Steffi	Sandra Hueller
Eighty-year-old Woman	Erni Mangold
Young Soldier	Sebastian Urzendowsky
Dr. Wolf	Hermann Beyer
Bookseller	Ralf Schermuly
Lisbeth	Isabell Gerschke
Petka	Alexander Samoylenko

Crew

Director	Max Färberböck
Producer	Günter Rohrbach
Executive Producer	Martin Moszkowicz
Screenplay	Max Färberböck

Script Advisor Catharina Schuchmann

Based on the diary of Anonyma, "A Woman in Berlin," published by Eichborn Verlag

Music	Zbigniew Preisner
Cinematography	Benedict Neuenfels
Art Director	Uli Hanisch
Costume Designer	Lucia Faust
Editor	Ewa J. Lind
Make-up	Waldemar Pokromski
	Anette Keiser
Casting	Simone Baer
Production Manager	Astrid Kühberger
Story Editor ZDF	Caroline von Senden

Short Synopsis

A true story, based on the controversial international bestseller by Anonyma published in more than 20 countries, and directed by Max Färberböck (Golden Globe nominee AIMÉE & JAGUAR).

Set in 1945 during the Red Army invasion of Berlin. German women are victims of rape and devastation; one of them is Anonyma (NINA HOSS), a former journalist and photographer. In her desperate quest for survival, she decides to look for an officer who can protect her. She meets Andrej (EVGENY SIDIKHIN), a Russian officer with whom she develops a complex relationship that forces them to remain enemies until the bitter end.

Long Synopsis

The last days of the war, Berlin, April 1945. In a partially destroyed building, people cower in the basement – and wait. They have survived the nighttime bombing raids and the artillery bombardments. Most of them are women, and they have a foreboding of what awaits them. The Red Army is poised to march in and take Berlin.

The survivors include a widow (IRM HERMANN), who is always there to lend a helping hand; the vivacious sisters Bärbel (JÖRDIS TRIEBEL) and Greta (ROSALIE THOMASS); the elderly bookseller (KATHARINA BLASCHKE); the owner of a liquor factory (MARIA HARTMANN), whose husband has left her for a younger woman; the lesbian lovers Steffi (SANDRA HUELLER) and Lisbeth (ISABELL GERSCHKE); a resolute 80-year-old (ERNI MANGOLD); a desperate refugee girl (ANNE KANIS); as well as mothers with their children and a few elderly men, whose energy has been sapped and sucked dry by the war. Then there is Anonyma (NINA HOSS), barely thirty years old, who once worked as a journalist and photographer. She records the events of the next few days for her boyfriend, Gerd (AUGUST DIEHL), who disappeared on the Eastern Front years ago.

The days ahead of them are filled with horror and contradictory experiences. Anonyma, like most of the women, is raped several times by the victors. She, however, refuses to be a victim and summons up her courage and an unconditional will to defend her dignity. She reaches a decision to look for a “wolf,” in other words a Russian officer who will protect her from the other soldiers. In return, she will sleep with him – voluntarily. What she had least expected happens. She discovers she is interested in the polite, melancholic Russian officer Andrej (EVGENY SIDIKHIN). They start to develop a relationship that feels like love. Still, there is a barrier between them, which never lets them forget that they are enemies.

The other women also come up with their own personal strategies to survive. Sometimes they act flippant, sometimes submissive, and they are always on the lookout for the slightest advantage. They realize the Russian soldiers also crave some warmth from a fellow human being. They set up a camp in a destroyed building. In the end, the victors and the vanquished celebrate the end of the war together because there is something that they all share: they have escaped death – and the long war is finally over.

After enduring the brutality of violent men and their emotions have been ripped to shreds, once again they are looking ahead to a future when they can slowly start to lead normal lives.

ANONYMA's diary excerpt
Friday, April 27, 1945,
Day of catastrophe, wild turmoil — recorded on Saturday morning

“It began with silence. The night was far too quiet. Around twelve o'clock Fraulein Behn reported that the enemy had reached the gardens and that the German line of defense was right outside our door [...]

Things started happening around 6:00 P.M. A man built like a bull came into the basement, dead drunk, waving his pistol around and making for the distiller's wife. No one else would do. He chased her with his pistol up and down the basement, shoved her ahead of him, toward the door. She fought back, hitting him, howling, when all of a sudden the revolver went off. The bullet went right through the supports and hit the wall; no one was hurt.

The basement broke into a panic, everyone jumped up and started screaming. The hero seemed to have frightened himself and slipped off into the corridors.[...]

Then they have me. Two men were lying in wait. I scream and scream . . . I hear the basement door shutting with a dull thud behind me. One of them grabs my wrists and jerks me along the corridor. Then the other is pulling as well, his hand on my throat, so I can no longer scream. I no longer want to scream, for fear of being strangled. They're both tearing away at me; instantly I'm on the floor. Something comes clinking out of my jacket pocket, must be my key ring, with the key to the building. I end up with my head on the bottom step of the basement stairs. I can feel the damp coolness of the floor tiles. The door above is ajar and lets in a little light. One man stands there keeping watch, while the other tears my underclothes, forcing his way—I grope around the floor.”

Copyright: “Based on the diaries entitled *A Woman In Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City* by Anonymous. Originally published by Eichborn Verlag. Copyright © 2000 by Hannelore Marek. Copyright © Eichborn AG, Frankfurt am Main, 2003. English language translation available, by Philip Boehm © 2005 by Philip Boehm. Reprinted by arrangement with Henry Holt and Company, Publishers, New York.”

About the production

Director Max Färberböck (“AIMÉE & JAGUAR”) and producer Günter Rohrbach (“THE WHITE MASSAI,” “SCHTONK!,” “THE BOAT”) based the film on a diary by an author who remained anonymous until after her death. She is the only woman ever to have reported on a subject that is still taboo: at the end of the Second World War, Red Army soldiers systematically raped German women. The book is a unique historical document that caused a controversy across the globe and was on every bestseller list after a new edition was released in Germany in 2003.

Anonyma is played by Nina Hoss, German Film Prize (German Academy Award) and Silver Bear winner for Best Actress for her role in “YELLA.” The rest of the German cast includes such prominent actors as Irm Hermann, a member of the Fassbinder ensemble; Jördis Triebel (“EMMAS GLUECK”); August Diehl (“THE COUNTERFEITERS”/Academy Award Best Foreign Language Film 2008); Wim Wenders regular Rüdiger Vogler; and

Juliane Köhler ("AIMÉE & JAGUAR"). The Soviet soldiers are played by leading film and stage actors, including Evgeny Sidikhin (Russian officer, Andrej)

Director's Notes by Max Färberböck

When I read the book "Anonyma" for the first time, I could not make up my mind. On the one hand, I was shocked by what happened in Berlin at that time. On the other hand, I was fascinated by the intelligence and bluntness the anonymous author displayed in reporting on the events. I was drawn in by her narration. Yet, there remained a small, nagging distance. That was the author's aura. Her absolutely unsentimental way of writing, her harsh view of herself and everybody else – Germans and Russians – was irritating. But why?

Perhaps because a woman who experiences something like this would have to suffer more, be more of a victim? It opened up a lot of questions. And the only thing I knew at that time, in the very beginning, was that I had to confront those questions.

First, there was the issue of the historical significance of the diary. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of people did not talk about the events that occurred back then. What happened was and is a taboo subject, both for the Germans and the Russians. Are you allowed to break such a taboo? If you are, how do you write about and film such horrible events without compromising the people who were involved, or without hurting them? Who gives someone the right to break the silence of so many people?

Historical stories are very popular. Yet, I think that often makes them dubious. Of course, cinema and television plots can make stories emotional and allow us to "re-experience" them again. However, why do we have to get inside every woeful period? Is it because they offer good stories? Or are we supposed to imagine how life must have been at that time, in order for it to fit into a plotline that contemporary audiences want to see?

I think so. Authors, who invent stories, and the storytelling film and television industry, can do this. The only question is whether these invented, sometimes very manufactured stories should at least be on eye level with the reality they are depicting, regardless of whether they are attempting to let reality have priority, or whether they are meant to reflect just a very small part of what actually happened.

With "Anonyma" my co-author, Catharina Schuchmann and I have attempted to adhere to the diary and numerous other research sources. We worked together with the historian Dr. Elke Scherstjanoi and immersed ourselves in this very contradictory period, and we tried to hear what the period wanted to tell us in its many different voices.

This was a time consuming process. The second meeting with my producer, Günter Rohrbach, took place about seven months after our first meeting. Those seven months were filled with stories of despairing and, oddly enough, strong-willed women, who had the courage to move beyond the sufferings of their husbands and boyfriends in order to survive. There were women who sometimes preferred to become prostitutes rather than be raped in order to preserve their dignity. Some of them had a strong sense of humor and were at times cantankerous. They were women who simply did not fit into a plot.

Despite this, I increasingly wanted to get them to break their silence because it is important to talk about how people react when things happen to them that never should happen. Because the mass rapes that happened back then are going on right now today. In addition, it may make sense that a woman who becomes a prostitute no longer see its immorality as falling into one's own abyss.

How many of these women continued to live with this "guilt," this "crime" that wasn't a crime, and with this lifelong silence, which presumably weighed more and more heavily on them as time passed? How many husbands suspected what had happened and kept silent? What was it like in these marriages later on? You can't approach these events without thinking about how deeply this influences family life. How many women lost their respect for men they once admired and worshiped as heroes, and summoned up their own strength and got to work? Nowadays, you would call this emancipation. Back then, it had to do with silence, denial, and rebuilding. Rebuilding not only the cities, but also the weakened men who were needed as soon as possible to be the head of families again.

The author of "Anonyma" saw all of this with a sharp and cutting eye; she suspected what the future would bring and refused to remain silent. She was intelligent enough to recognize what was universal, even archaic, about these brutal events. At the same time she was interested in every detail and human emotion. She wanted to capture and report what happened, and understand it. She laughed off the expectation that such a report would be life altering. She was more interested in the truth than in morality.

Not only did she break the taboo of not letting someone get close to her as she was having a brief sexual relationship with a Russian army major, she also wrote about it. She was well aware that someone like her was not made to better the world. I disagree. It was her courage to depict the most extreme things that can set an example for all of us. Because when events are silenced, it is that silence that hurts the period the most.

Then there are the Russians who are described as beasts. Most of them were run ragged and abused by their own leadership, and many were sent through hell. Many of them were Soviets convinced of the ideology, and others were murderers and rapists. Historians estimate Soviet WW2 fatalities at around 26 million people. At least half of these were civilians, elderly, women, and children. The soldiers who made it to Berlin had seen battle fire and death and unbelievable amounts of blood. The soldiers who made it to Berlin were capable of doing anything. Did that apply to all of the soldiers? Definitely not.

Our judgment regarding the Russians' brutality sits deep even today. But we should deal with it because the contradictions in the Red Army were enormous, and because hundreds of thousands of these soldiers were not rapists and murderers. In order to understand those better, I wrote the first draft of the screenplay from the Russian viewpoint. Afterwards, I felt I could agree to the project with my extremely patient and trusted producer.

I was not as concerned with justice as he was. Given the historical complexity of the material, I couldn't even tell what that is. However, I am now extremely well aware of the events.

If you deal intensely with a time period, it starts to speak to you. We heard the laughter, insults, and speeches of the Russians. We smelled the schnapps; we witnessed their wildness and brutality. We knew what their expressive faces looked like long before we worked our way through the photographs of hundreds of Russian actors and approximately two thousand extras. At one point, a miracle happened. The period we were trying to comprehend stood right in front of us. Torn uniforms, unbridled joy, the thirst for revenge, and violence. The frightened looks on the women's faces who didn't know what was coming. The horribly bitter aftertaste of German deeds, and the unconditional will to survive.

One last word about the relationship between Anonyma and the major. From our research, I know that Anonyma might have had more emotional ties to the major than she revealed in her diary. However, she – like most of the women during those weeks – did not have any illusions. He was a Soviet, she was a German, and neither one of them moved one millimeter away from their mindset, from their origins. However she accepted this very foreign, idealistic and unpredictable man into her life.

Their story is the story of an attraction between enemies that grows stronger and stronger as time passes. They both knew that their relationship had no future, yet they tried to give everything to each other, everything the war had left them with, their eyes, their words, their breath, and their hearts. Is that love? Anonyma didn't call it that and if she had, perhaps she would have found another word for it.

Producer's Notes by Günter Rohrbach

COUNTLESS AND NAMELESS

This is the last great taboo of the Second World War. Until today there are no publications, no definitive work, no dependable numbers even from history scholars. Hundreds of thousands of women were raped during the last weeks of the war, especially in the eastern parts of Germany. Some estimates even speak of one or two million, but they are far from reliable. How could they be, since no one ever spoke about it in public, least of all the women themselves? Even among families there was something like a code of silence. The shame was as large as the pain, even, or especially, where children and husbands were concerned.

Journalists like Erich Kuby (“Die Russen in Berlin 1945“) and filmmaker Helke Sander shed the best light on the subject. Ms. Sander's motion picture “BEFREIER UND BEFREITE” (“LIBERATORS TAKE LIBERTIES“) came out in the early 90s, at the same time as the anonymous book. In addition to revealing many personal testimonies, it put figures, for the first time, on the appalling scope of events. It made it clear that the silent suppression of these events was completely scandalous. In men's wars, women have always been regarded as more or less natural spoils. Today this is termed “collateral damage.” Considering reports from the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan or Iraq, nothing has changed. Still, the scope of the 1945 rapes was extreme and unparalleled.

There are several reasons why these events remained taboo. The most important one is Germany's own guilt, which for years made it impossible to look at Nazi-era crimes in which Germans could regard themselves as victims. This stance was generally undisputed in post-war Germany. It is only in recent times that different points of view

have been permitted, but not always without criticism. One reason was that the perpetrators of these rapes were predominantly members of the Red Army, while the victims were citizens of the GDR. In the GDR it was not politically correct to tarnish the liberators' reputation.

Last but not least, the women themselves prevented an examination of these events because they were not interested in confronting once again what they, in spite of everything, regarded as their own shame.

But every time the mass rapes of the Berlin women in 1945 were brought up, the reference was always the diary by Anonyma, published under the title "A Woman in Berlin." Until today it is the only authentic publication about WW2's mass rapes. It is symptomatic that the author, even decades after the event, refused to publish her name. We have respected her wish to remain anonymous even in death, although her name has by now been made known elsewhere. There have been attempts to discredit the authenticity of this document, none of them convincing. An expertise by Walter Kempowski finally disproved them.

Anonyma kept a diary from April 20 to July 22 1945 in Berlin and published these records, with guidance from her mentor, Kurt W. Marek (alias renowned author C.W. Ceram) for the first time in English in 1954. The book was an immediate success. After a dozen foreign editions, the book first appeared in Germany at the end of the 1950s and remained widely unnoticed. Too close was the distance, the wounds still too fresh. Everybody was busy trying to erase the WW2 from Germany's collective memory. Still there was not only the content but also the tone in which Anonyma handled her experiences. It is free from maudlin sentimentality, victim's pathos or appeals to pity. Anonyma paints these weeks of horror with a self-assurance and an objective coolness typical of Berlin women. She refused to be brought down, like so many women with a strong will to survive. And she had no qualms about prostituting herself when the necessities of survival demanded it. It was her willingness to do what seemed impossible, to bravely ignore the laws of the bourgeois morals, and then to write about it defiantly that outraged her contemporaries in 1950s Germany. Their idea of a "German Woman" accepted nothing short of sacrifice, if necessary, until the end.

When in 2003 Hans Magnus Enzensberger published the book in his "Andere Bibliothek," the reaction was overwhelmingly positive and immediately made the bestselling lists with new editions in many countries to follow.

I tried to secure the rights at once but the woman who held the rights, a friend of the late "Anonyma" and widow of Kurt W. Marek, first refused permission. It took a while to convince her. In the meantime, there had been many requests for the film rights, in Germany and abroad including the USA.

The film confronts the issue in all its complexity, that is, it does not tell a victim' story. It doesn't gloss over who were the aggressors and the perpetrators. It is not a film about poor German women and evil Russian soldiers, yet it does not shun the hard facts. This fine balance is possible because Anonyma herself had bravely decided not to become a victim. She also gave us the chance to avoid what usually happens in German films, which is to dissect the protagonists from the political context of Nazi Germany and absolve them from their ideological guilt. We have addressed the problem that Anonyma was part of the system. "Was I myself for it? Or against it?" she writes in her diary.

“Either way, I was in the thick of it and breathed the air around us, that tainted us all, whether we wanted or not.” She was a journalist, which didn't give her much opportunity to escape the demands of those who ruled. She wrote texts the way they were written in those days, even by journalists who later represented the democratic spirit of the Federal Republic.

We also tried to give justice to the Russian soldiers. For the most part, they were simple farmers who had been promised this rich Germany as atonement for their sufferings. No other people had sacrificed so much. Of the 50 million dead in WW2, more than half were citizens of the Soviet Union.

The film is framed by the rapes and by a group of assertive and brave Berlin women who deal with them. At its core however is the dramatic story of two human beings who are enemies and develop strong feelings for one another. We used the observations of the diarist, but allowed ourselves to transcend them. “War changes the words,” Anonyma tells her protector. “Love is not what it used to be.” When her husband Gert returns at the end, we witness the true drama of this story. The women, for the most part, managed to bravely endure their traumas. It was the men who could not.

Interview with Nina Hoss

How would you describe the character of Anonyma?

This woman had traveled all over the world, she had lived in Moscow, France, and England, she had studied art, history, and foreign languages, she was a photographer and a journalist – in other words, she was a very intelligent person. I was interested in the question of her relationship to the regime. Was she a fascist, or wasn't she? When I read the diary, it sounds to me as if she loved her country. She was a nationalist, and I think she never asked questions or tried to get more information. She went with the flow, she let herself get carried away by this wave and by the euphoria that was everywhere. Therefore, you have to see it as conflicting. That is the one side of things. On the other side she is, to me, a very pragmatic woman. A woman who is not afraid to work and get her hands dirty, and who also finds a way to survive during the last days of the war. I think a decisive factor in her survival was that she was a journalist and she kept a diary. When you write down what you've experienced, you create a distance between the events and yourself, and this distance enables you to deal with the events better. Whether she was writing the diary for her husband, for future generations, or just for herself, I think this was her way to immediately get rid of what she experienced, to put it in some form of words or art, and thus to find a way around it.

She is a very complex character. She is sensitive and vulnerable at the same time, but her actions display a huge amount of courage and self-awareness...

It's exactly this combination of courage and vulnerability that stirred my interest in the character. I tried to show the deep wounds she had suffered, but also to show the hard shell she puts on to protect herself, and her acts of courage. She's someone who takes risks, someone who, for example, walks through that crowd of Russian soldiers and asks to see their commander – a situation where anybody else would have died from fear.

The Russian officer Andrej also seems to be impressed by Anonyma's self-awareness.

Yes, her courage and the way she carries herself makes him interested in her. Her first thought is that this man, with his impressive physical appearance, can keep all the other soldiers away from her. At the same time, there is the moment when she realizes she's misjudged him because she had been influenced by the Nazi propaganda during the last days of the war meant to strike fear in the German population, to make them fear the Russians, the monsters, beasts and rapists. Suddenly she encounters someone who's read a lot of books and studied at a university, someone who plays Schubert on the piano and has nothing at all to do with the image of a simple Russian farmer.

A very tender relationship between the two of them develops in this exceptional situation. What is so special about their relationship?

Just like Anonyma, this man has lost everything, his wife was killed in the war, and when these two very lonely persons meet, they are two individuals struggling with themselves and trapped in an exceptional situation. Their worlds have crumbled, the war is over, and Andrej transforms from a soldier into a person. His transformation also occurs because of her, because he becomes involved with her; she excites him, and he can't quite understand her. He tries to get closer to her, and in the process discovers himself. The hard shells both of them have put on start to crack, and that's why they suddenly get very intimate with each other. I think this is also absorbing because it's told in such a thoughtful way. What happens when two people feel something they thought they were not even capable of feeling?

What was the biggest challenge this role presented to you?

To play someone in such an exceptional situation, someone who's struggling to survive in an environment where none of the values we know today are valid. Where you're only thinking about survival, where values are forgotten and there are no rules. How do people deal with this, when do they unite and stand together, and when do they deceive one another? When do they help each other, and when do they not?

Biographies

Max Färberböck (Writer/Director)

A graduate of the School of Film and Television in Munich (HFF), he went on to work in theater including stage productions in Heidelberg, Cologne, Italy and Argentina, before he started his television career with directing three episodes of "Der Fahnder" (1990). He wrote and directed the television films "Schlafende Hunde" (1992) and "Einer zahlt immer" (1993) acclaimed by critics and audiences, and created the 1993 television series character of "Bella Block." He directed two episodes of the series: "Die Kommissarin" (1994), for which he received the Adolf Grimme Award in Gold, and "Liebestod" (1995).

"AIMÉE & JAGUAR" (1999) was Färberböck's debut as a film director, and became an international hit. Produced by Günter Rohrbach, it was the Opening Night film of the 1999 Berlin International Film Festival and was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film. The film's lead actresses, Juliane Köhler und Maria Schrader, received the Berlin Film Festival's Silver Bear, the Bavarian Film Award, and the German Film Award for Best Actresses. "Jenseits," a television film Max Färberböck

directed two years later, won the SWR Television Award in 2001 and was awarded two Golden Nymphs at the Monte Carlo International Television Festival. Färberböck's second feature "SEPTEMBER" was selected in the 2002 Cannes International Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section and dealt with the aftermath in Germany of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Nina Hoss (Anonyma)

One of Germany's most acclaimed young actresses, Nina Hoss was born in Stuttgart and studied at the Ernst Busch School of Acting in Berlin. During her studies, she was already performing in theatres and made her screen debut in Josef Vilsmayer's "AND NOBODY WEEPS FOR ME" (1996). She soon had her first success with the lead role in Bernd Eichinger's "A Girl called Rosemary" (1996). After graduation she joined the Deutsches Theater Berlin ensemble where she gave many acclaimed performances in plays including "Emilia Galotti", "Faust II", "Minna von Barnhelm" and "Medea".

Ms. Hoss has since become a star both on stage and in film. She has starred in films including Ottokar Runze's "THE VOLCANO" (1999); Doris Dörrie's "NAKED" (2002); Hermine Huntgeburth's "THE WHITE MASSAI" (2005); Oskar Roehler's "ELEMENTARY PARTICLES" (2006); Nicolette Krebitz's "THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST" (2007); Christian Petzold's "Something to Remind Me" (2001), "WOLFSBURG" (2003) and "YELLA" (2007). Ms. Hoss was awarded the Adolf Grimme Award 2003 for her performance in "Something to Remind Me" and the Adolf Grimme Gold Award for her performance in "WOLFSBURG". Her performance in "YELLA" earned her the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin and the German Film Award (German Academy Award). Ms. Hoss's latest film is Christian Petzold's JERICHO.

Evgeny Sidikhin (Andrej)

A star of Russian cinema, Evgeny Sidikhin was born in St. Petersburg, and graduated from the School of Music, Theater and Film. His first theater engagement was at the acclaimed music theater Lensovet in St. Petersburg. His first screen role was in Nikolaj Stambula's BEYOND THE FINAL LINE (1991) and followed with roles in Dimirij Shinkarenko's THE COUNTESS (1991); Alexeil Uchitel's MANIA OF GISELLE (1995); and ANTIKILLER by Yegor Konchalovsky.

Irm Hermann (the widow)

Irm Hermann was part of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's inner circle since the mid-1960s. She acted in eighteen of his films, including "KATZELMACHER" (1969); "THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT" (1972); and "FONTANES EFFI BRIEST" (1972). She received the German Film Award in 1971 for her lead role in "HAENDLER DER VIER JAHRESZEITEN" (1971). She played Else Gebel, Sophie Scholl's cell mate in Percy Adlon's "LAST FIVE DAYS" (1982) in a performance for which she received her second German Film Award. Other roles include performances in "WOYZECK" (directed by Werner Herzog, 1976); "THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN" (directed by Hans W. Geissendörfer, 1981); "PAPPA ANTE PORTAS" (directed by Vicco von Bülow, 1991); Herbert Achternbusch's "HADES" (1994), "PARADISO – SEVEN DAYS WITH SEVEN WOMEN" (directed by Rudolf Thome, Silver Bear Award at the Berlinale in 2000), "MY BROTHER IS A DOG" (directed by Peter Timm, 2004) and "THE MAN FROM THE EMBASSY" (directed by Dito Tsintsadze, 2006).

August Diehl (Gerd)

One of Germany's most popular young actors, August Diehl was born in Berlin in 1976, and he is a graduate of the Ernst Busch School of Acting. His first theater engagement was at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, which he followed with roles at theatres in Hamburg and Vienna. His screen debut was in Hans-Christian Schmidt's "23" (1997), in a performance which earned him the Bavarian Film Award for Best Newcomer and the German Film Award (German Academy Award). Mr. Diehl starred in Rainer Kaufmann's "COLD IS THE BREATH OF EVENING" (1999); Hans-Christian Schmidt's "DISTANT LIGHTS" (2003); Achim von Borrie's "LOVE IN THOUGHTS" (2003); Volker Schlöndorff's "THE NINTH DAY" (2004); Michael Glawogger's "SLUMMING" (2005); Margarethe von Trotta's "I AM THE OTHER WOMAN" (2006); and "DR. ALEMÁN" (2008) by Tom Schreiber, and Heinrich Breloer's "DIE BUDDENBROCKS". He is best known to US audience for his role as the Communist prisoner in Academy Award Winner for Best Foreign Language Film "THE COUNTERFEITERS" (2007) by Stefan Ruzowitzky.

Juliane Köhler (Elke)

Juliane Köhler (born 1965) studied acting in New York. She has been performing on German stages since 1988, and is currently a member of Munich's Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel ensemble. She made her screen debut in Lars Becker's 1993 film "SCHATTENBOXER" and her film breakthrough was Max Färberböck's 1999 "AIMÉE & JAGUAR". With her co-star Maria Schrader she was awarded the Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin's Silver Bear, as well as the German Film Award (German Academy Award) and the Bavarian Film Award. She starred in Caroline Link's 1999 "ANNALUISE & ANTON" and Ms. Link's 2001 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film "NOWHERE IN AFRICA." Her other films include "MY FIRST MIRACLE" (2002) by Anne Wild; Oliver Hirschbiegel's Academy Award nominated "THE DOWNFALL" (2005); "ADAM RESURRECTED" by Paul Schrader (2007); "MONDKALB" by Sylke Enders, 2007; "EFFI" by Hermine Huntgeburth (2007) and Costa-Gravas's latest film "EDEN IS WEST" (2009).

Jördis Triebel (Bärbel Maltaus)

Born in Berlin in 1977 Jördis Triebel studied at the Ernst Busch School of Acting. She started performing at the Schauspielhaus Bremen, where in 2002 she was awarded the Kurt Huebner Theater Award. Her screen debut was in "EMMA'S BLISS" (directed by Sven Taddicken) for which she was nominated for a German Film Award as Best Actress in 2007. Ms. Triebel's latest role is in Matthias Glasner's new film "THIS IS LOVE."

Rüdiger Vogler (Eckhart)

After studying acting at the Heidelberg School of Acting and a six-year engagement at the Theater am Turm in Frankfurt, Rüdiger Vogler (born 1942) gained international fame as a screen actor in numerous films by Wim Wenders. His screen debut was in Wender's "THE GOALIE'S ANXIETY AT THE PENALTY KICK" (1971); there followed roles in "ALICE IN THE CITIES" (1974); "KINGS OF THE ROAD" (1976); "UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD" (1991); "FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE!" (1993); and "LISBON STORY" (1995). In addition, he performed in Margarethe von Trotta's "THE GERMAN SISTERS" (1981); Stefan Ruzowitzky's "ANATOMY" (1999); István Szabó's "SUNSHINE – EIN HAUCH VON SONNENSCHNEIN" (2000); the French film "LASS DAS SEIN" (2004) directed by Luc Bondy, "DER BRIEF FUER DEN KOENIG" by Pieter Verhoess (2007) and Hermine Huntgeburth's "EFFI."

Günter Rohrbach (Producer)

After receiving his doctorate in German and philosophy, Günter Rohrbach started his career as a film critic. In 1961 he started working at the German broadcaster WDR, where he was named head of television film production (1965) as well as head of entertainment shows (1972). From 1979 to 1994, he was managing director of Bavaria Film in Munich and since 1992 department head and honorary professor at the School of Film and Television (HFF) in Munich. Two years later he started his own production company. In addition to numerous TV movie productions, Günter Rohrbach has produced over 40 theatrical films and received a multitude of awards including several German Film Awards and Bavarian Film Prizes, the Adolf Grimme Award, and two Golden Cameras. He was a producer and several Academy Award and Golden Globe nominated films.

Among his productions are Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ" (1980); Wolfgang Petersen's "DAS BOOT" (1981); Peter Zadek's "THE ROARING FIFTIES" (1982); Hajo Gies' "SCHIMANSKI - ZAHN UM ZAHN" (1985); Dominik Graf's "THE CAT" (1987) and "THE INVINCIBLES" (1994); Peter Timm's GO, TRABI, GO (1991); Helmut Dietl's SCHTONK! (1992); Rainer Kaufmann's "THE PHARMACIST" (1997) and "COLD IS THE BREATH OF EVENING" (1999); Jan Schütte's "FAT WORLD" (1998); Max Färberböck's "AIMÉE & JAGUAR" (1999); and Hermine Huntgeburth's "THE WHITE MASSAI" (2005) and "EFFI" (2008).

Since 2003, he has shared the presidency of the German Film Academy with Senta Berger.

ZBIGNIEW PREISNER (Original Score)

Zbigniew Preisner is one of the most outstanding film composers of his generation. For many years Preisner enjoyed a close collaboration with the director Krzysztof Kieslowski and his scriptwriter Krzysztof Piesiewicz. His scores for Kieslowski's films *Dekalog*, *The Double Life of Veronique*, *Blue*, *White*, and *Red* have brought him international acclaim. Preisner has scored many international feature films including Hector Babenco's *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, Louis Malle's *Damage*, Agnieszka Holland's *The Secret Garden*, Charles Sturridge's *Fairytale: A True Story*, and Claude Miller's *A Secret*. Preisner currently lives in Poland and Switzerland.