

Press Release

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Retrospective 2001: Fritz Lang and the world premiere of a newly reconstructed version of "Metropolis"

"He was a true master. Feared for his temperament and his absolute devotion to directing, he kept both himself and his team in a state of constant agitation. He was the incarnation of perfectionism." With these words Robert Siodmak describes his director colleague Fritz Lang, to whom the Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin is dedicating its coming Retrospective.

The newly reconstructed film classic "Metropolis" will be premiered at the Berlinale-Palast as one of the main attractions of the Retrospective. This new version was commissioned by the Murnau-Stiftung and the Bundesarchiv. ZDF/Arte have become involved in the event: they are sponsoring a new film score by Bernd Schultheis, the world-renowned composer for silent films and electronic music. The Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin conducted by Frank Strobel will perform the new score during the festival.

"With this Retrospective our festival is emphasizing a superb achievement in film history", Festival Director Moritz de Hadeln states, "and honoring a director whose success story began here in Berlin."

Fritz Lang was born in Vienna in 1890 and died in Los Angeles in 1976. Not only was he a great German and American director, but also a man who loved to embellish his legend, molding our image of him and his life. Wanting to keep a low profile privately, he launched his own public image all the more emphatically.

During the Weimar Republic, Fritz Lang scored his first great hits, which were seismographic readings of political and social changes. In 1933 he left Nazi Germany, emigrating in 1934 via France to the USA. Many of his American films were also politically inspired, revolving around involvement and guilt. They were marked by an "anti-utopian fatalism", and dealt with the presence of National Socialism and war. After World War II, Fritz Lang attempted a comeback in Germany. In France he was recognized early on as one of the most influential representatives of *Autorenkino*.

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The Retrospective of the Berlinale 2001, conceived and organized by the Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek, will present all surviving films by Fritz Lang. Many of these have been reprinted, restored and/or reconstructed. The Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin and the Filmmuseum Berlin has again won the support of international archives for this event. During preparations for the Retrospective, hitherto unknown material was discovered, including the original negatives from a number of Fritz Lang's German films. It is now possible to screen many of his masterpieces in a picture quality of unprecedented excellence, making Fritz Lang's perfectionism all the more evident.

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In Germany, the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Filmmuseum München, Deutsche Filminstitut and KirchMedia are major contributors to this project. The Academy Film Archive, Twentieth Century-Fox, Sony and Warner Bros. are also participating in the presentation of Fritz Lang's American films.

On the occasion of this Retrospective, Jovis Verlag is publishing an opulent trilingual monograph on the director: it presents his life and work in illustrations and original documents. Due to fortunate circumstances over the past two years, many documents once believed lost have been discovered in Fritz Lang's estate. They have been examined and analyzed for the first time, shedding new light on the life and work of Fritz Lang. It is now time to reevaluate this extraordinary man who has made such a great contribution to film history.

The Filmmuseum Berlin is preparing a Fritz Lang exhibition due to open with the Retrospective in February. Like the Retrospective itself, it will subsequently tour to Vienna, Los Angeles and Paris.

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