

Press Release

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First World Premieres in the Berlinale Competition 2002

The first half of the Competition program for the 52nd Berlin International Film Festival (6 – 17 February 2002) is now certain and includes films from the USA, Europe and Asia. Among these first 14 entries, there will be seven world premieres. Screenings to select the remaining Competition films for the Berlinale 2002 will continue into late January.

The young US director Wes Anderson will take part in the Competition with his film *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Tragedy and comedy combine in Anderson's droll story of a family. Gene Hackman, Anjelica Huston, Gwyneth Paltrow and Ben Stiller play the remarkable members of this family.

Another US Competition entry is *Monster's Ball* by Swiss-born director Marc Forster. Set in the South, this gloomy drama about hate and racism features Peter Boyle, Billy Bob Thornton and Halle Berry.

Robert Altman's English-American-German co-production *Gosford Park* will be shown in a special out-of competition screening. Emily Watson, Kristin Scott-Thomas, Alan Bates and Helen Mirren play roles in this historical drama about a mysterious murder at an English country estate in the 30s. *Gosford Park* is Altman's first production in England.

So far two Asian films have been invited to participate:

Chinese director Zhang Yimou is taking part in the Berlinale's Competition program for the third time. Running out of competition, *Happy Time* portrays the odyssey of an older man on his quest for love and happiness. Zhao Ben-shan and Dong Jie play the leading roles.

From Korea, *Na-Bbun-Nam-Ja* (Bad Guy) – internationally celebrated director Kim Ki-duk's most recent film – will be participating in the Competition. *Bad Guy* depicts the fatal encounter between a gang leader in the red light district and a young woman college student. This film stars Cho Jae-Hyun and Seo Won.

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Once again European cinema will be well represented:

From Denmark, the world premiere of *Små Ulykker* (Minor Mishaps) is running in the Competition. The young director Annette K. Olesen tells of the big and small mishaps in a family who despite all differences works things out. Olesen has cast Jorgen Kiil, Vigga Bro and Maria Würgler Rich in her film.

French grand master Bertrand Tavernier will be presenting *Laissez-Passer* in the Competition. He examines the story of “Continental”, a German film production company, which produced French films during the occupation in Paris. His protagonists are torn between active resistance and docile submission to the regime. Jacques Gamblin, Denis Podalydès and Marie Gillain play the leading roles in this tragicomic story.

The Competition will also present the world premiere of Otar Iosseliani’s *Lundi Matin*. The film tells the tale of a factory worker in the French provinces, who one day breaks out of the daily drudgery of work and family life, and takes off on a journey. Jacques Bidou, Arrigo Mozzo and Anne Kravz-Tarnavsky co-star in this film.

With the world premiere of *8 Femmes*, French director François Ozon is participating for the second time in the Berlinale Competition. Based on Robert Thomas’ stage play, Ozon has created a dramatic comedy about the mutual suspicions and recriminations after a murder in a large family. His cast includes France’s most famous actresses: Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Huppert, Emmanuelle Béart, Fanny Ardant, Virginie Ledoyen, Danielle Darrieux, Ludivine Sagnier and Firmine Richard.

Constantin Costa-Gavras’ *Amen.* is also adapted from a work of literature. Based on Rolf Hochhuth’s sensational stage play “Der Stellvertreter” (The Deputy), Costa-Gavras addresses the topic of the concordat which was reached between the Catholic Church and the Nazi regime. The Competition is presenting the world premiere of *Amen.*, featuring Ulrich Tukur, Mathieu Kassovitz and Ulrich Mühe in the leading roles.

Moral questions of guilt and docile submission to National Socialism are also the focus of Istvan Szabó's *Taking Sides*, which is being screened out of competition. Szabó portrays the investigations in the denazification proceedings for conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler who, on the one hand, had supported Nazi cultural propaganda while, on the other, had aided individuals persecuted by the regime. The film features Harvey Keitel, Stellan Skarsgård and Moritz Bleibtreu.

In addition to Tom Tykwer's film *Heaven*, which as announced earlier will open the Berlinale, another German film will present its world premiere at the Competition: Dominik Graf's *Der Felsen* (A Map of the Heart) recounts the tale of a woman who after a painful separation loses her hold on everything, her very existence evolving into a dangerous balancing act. Karoline Eichhorn, Peter Lohmeyer and the young actor Antonio Wannek co-star in this film.

Wim Wenders' documentary film *Viel Passiert – Der BAP Film* will be shown as a world premiere at a special out-of competition screening. Wenders takes movie-goers off on a voyage in time to the most important stations in the career of this famous Cologne rock band.

4 January 2002