



News

Kinderfilmfest 2003

With 14 full-length feature films und 16 short films, the programme of the 26th *Kinderfilmfest* of the Berlin International Film Festival will rank among the largest in its history. Four world premieres and six debut features will again substantiate the festival's national and international appeal.

For the opening at 4 p.m. on February 7, 2003, the Danish film *Someone like Hodder (En Som Hodder)* will screen in the presence of director Henrik Ruben Genz and the film's two leads, Frederik Christian Johansen and Anders Lunden Kjeldsen. One night a fairy instructs a nine-year-old boy to save the world, and although he believes there would be much better candidates for the job, Hodder accepts the challenge. The novel of the same name by Bjarne Reuter won the Prize for Young People's Literature in Germany in 2000.

A second Israeli contribution compellingly depicts daily life in a society marked by upheaval. In *Under Water (Abba Shahor Lavan)* by Eitan Londner, fourteen-year-old Michal puts all her energies into meeting her father again, who at this point in time is living the life of an orthodox Jew. Michal begins, however, to question his strong persuasions, and immediately senses the person she needs underneath them.

Also the heroes in Imanol Uribe's film *Carol's Journey (El Viaje de Carol)* have to learn to cope with the complicated world of the adults around them. In the final stages of the Spanish Civil War, a girl experiences how much security friendship can give her at such times. This story is particularly convincing due to the outstanding performances by Clara Lago and Juan José Ballesta, who will both be guests of the *Kinderfilmfest*.

Pelle the Police Car (Pelle Politibil) is a spirited comedy by Norwegian director Thomas Kaiser. Maria is just about ready to give up hunting for the thief of her new bicycle. But then what she has longed for most comes true: Pelle, a genuine talking police car, suddenly appears in her room and offers to help her.

In Wallah Be (Kald mig bare Aksel), Danish director Pia Bovin portrays life in the suburbs from the endearing perspective of a ten-year-old boy. With impartial curiosity, Axel turns communication between different cultures into a playful experiment. Out of admiration for the cool Muslim kids in his neighborhood, he decides to become a Muslim himself.

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The Dangerous Lives Of Altar Boys, Peter Care's directing debut, stands out for the intense interaction between its adolescent actors and their adversary. As Sister Assumpta, international star Jodie Foster, who also co-produced this provocative film from the USA, gives a superb performance. Real and animated sequences blend to whisk the audience off on a wild roller-coaster ride of emotions.

In his latest work *The Boy Who Wanted to be a Bear (Drengen der ville gore det umulige)*, Jannik Hastrup, the Danish grand master of animated film, allows us a look at the drama of living in eternal ice. With an unmistakable hand, he depicts this archaic tale about an unforgettable meeting between man and beast.

Immersing audiences into universes of little creatures and teeny-weeny ones, the programme of short animated films will address our youngest viewers. *Firefly (Jàotarpìòs)* has to cope with a loose connection, *The Elephant And The Snail (De Olifant en de Slak)* have to deal with the consequences of a fateful encounter and *Pipsqueak Prince (Le Trop Petit Prince)* has difficulties with spring cleaning.

In the first of the two short film programmes, audiences will become acquainted with three different worlds during turbulent events: Abbie keeps a lighthouse going during torrential floods, David has to learn to accept his difficult mother, while Simon and Rosh are no longer able to keep their emotions at bay. Almost wordlessly but in impressive pictures, the second programme section portrays quiet moments and gentle encounters between children from different cultural regions. With *Afternoon In Siedlisko (Nachmittag in Siedlisko)*, German director Anne Wild will present a short film at the *Kinderfilmfest* for the second year running.

Thanks to the support of FOX KIDS, the *Kinderfilmfest*'s new partner, most of the young leading actors will again be able to come to Berlin - a fantastic and exciting chance to meet their audiences. As Christophe Erbes, manager of Fox Kids Germany states: "As partners, we are very proud to play an active role in the Berlinale and the *Kinderfilmfest*, for instance, with children reporters on location, and on our TV and Internet platforms. As successful children's entertainment brand, good films have a very special status for us."

This year, for the first time, the programme of supporting events will include a public discussion between the international jury of film professionals and the young journalists from the Internet platform www.Kinderfilmfest.net.

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