



News

10 world premieres, stars and new talents - the *Competition* selection for the Berlinale 2003 is complete

The selection for the *Competition* programme of the 53rd Berlin International Film Festival has been concluded. A total of 22 films will compete in the Berlinale-Palast for the Golden and Silver Bears. Alongside five films to be shown out of *Competition*, a number of special screenings will complement the Official Programme. There will also be two gala screenings, *Lola* in honour of Anouk Aimée and *Tokyo Monogatari (Tokyo Story)* on occasion of the retrospective for Yasujiro Ozu's 100th birthday. The *Competition* programme includes 10 world premieres.

Competition programme

With the Chinese-German co-production *Mang Jing (Blind Shaft)*, documentary film director Li Yang has completed his first feature film. His *Competition* entry depicts daily life in an opencast coal mine in Northern China. Li Yi Xiang, Wang Shuang Bao and Wang Bao Qiang play the leading roles.

The world premiere of the Chinese film *Zhou Yu de huoche (Zhou Yu's Train)* by Sun Zhou will screen out of *Competition*. It tells a love story set in the north of China. International star Gong Li and Tony Leung play the protagonists.

Director Isabel Coixet will present her Spanish-Canadian co-production *My Life Without Me* in *Competition*. Faced with a fatal illness, a young woman re-examines her life. Sarah Polly, Amanda Plummer, Deborah Harry and Jessica Amlee star in the film.

Great Britain is represented in the *Competition* by Michael Winterbottom's *In This World*. The film deals with the destiny of a young Afghan emigrant, a destiny that stands for the sufferings of thousands of war refugees. Jamal Udin Torabi, Enayatullah and Imran Paracha play the principle characters.

Pieter Kramer's second film *Ja zuster, nee zuster (Yes Nurse, No Nurse)* from the Netherlands will have its international premiere in *Competition*. This musical comedy is based on a successful Dutch TV series from the 60s. The actors are Loes Luca, Paul de Leeuw and Paul R. Kooij.

The Australian entry *Alexandra's Project* by Rolf de Heer will also be screening as a world premiere in *Competition*. This famous independent filmmaker has staged a claustrophobic thriller about married couples. It features Gary Sweet, Helen Buday and Bogdan Koca.

**Internationale
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Berlin**

Potsdamer Platz 11
10785 Berlin

www.berlinale.de

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News

Special screenings during the Official Programme

Danish Dogma filmmaker Thomas Vinterberg has set his first English-language production in New York. Screening out of *Competition*, *It's all about Love* is a genre mix, combining a love story, thriller and science fiction. Joaquin Phoenix, Claire Danes and Sean Penn play the leading roles.

For her film *Italian for Beginners*, Danish director Lone Scherfig won the Silver Bear at the Berlinale 2001. In *Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself*, she evolves the tale of a man in Scotland who is weary of life into a subtle comedy. Jamie Sives, Adrian Rawlins and Shirley Henderson co-star in this film, which is running out of *Competition*.

Marceline Loridan-Ivens, widow of documentary pioneer Joris Ivens, reconstructs the story of her own deportation to Auschwitz in her feature film debut *La petite prairie aux bouleaux (A Birch Tree Meadow)*. The leading role is played by Anouk Aimée, who will be this year's guest of honour at the Berlinale. The festival's screening of *La petite prairie aux bouleaux* is a world premiere.

In honour of this year's president of the International Jury, Atom Egoyan, the Berlinale will show the Canadian director's latest film in a special screening. *Ararat* portrays the genocide committed on Armenians after World War One, and weaves the present lives of Canadians of Armenian descent into these historical events. Arsinée Khanjian, David Alpay and Charles Aznavour co-star in the film.

In the German-Belorussian co-production *Babij Jar*, American director Jeff Kanew tells the tragic story of two families who desperately attempt to survive the Holocaust. In 1941, SS troops killed more than 33,000 people in the massacre of Babij Jar at the outskirts of Kiev. Artur Brauner, one of Germany's most prominent film producers and in whose honour *Babij Jar* is being presented, has turned here to this little-known chapter of history. The main characters are played by Barbara de Rossi, Michael Degen and Axel Milberg.

Inspired by six Anton Chechov short stories, Michael Meredith depicts in *Three Days of Rain*, his directing debut, everyday conflicts in the lives of ordinary people. The characters are all faced with drastic changes. Don Meredith, Michael Santoro, Joey Bilow and Peter Falk perform in this US production, which is being presented by Wim Wenders.

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