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World premieres, stars, master directors and new discoveries in the Berlinale *Competition*

19 films from Europe Asia, USA and Africa have already been confirmed for the *Competition* programme of the 53rd Berlin International Film Festival.

There will be three world premieres from Germany in the *Competition*:

Wolfgang Becker's *Good bye, Lenin!* presents a tragicomic farce about people and systems. German Film Award-winners Daniel Brühl and Katrin Saß co-star in this film.

Oskar Roehler's love story *Der alte Affe Angst (Angst)* describes the sensitive relationship of a couple who are confronted with the problems of death and deceit. The film features Marie Bäumer, André Hennicke and Vadim Glowna.

In *Lichter (Distant Lights)*, Hans-Christian Schmid tells five interwoven tales about his protagonists' fears, existential problems, longings and hopes in the area along the German-Polish border. The cast includes August Diehl, Herbert Knaup, Devid Striesow and Maria Simon, among others.

Rezervni Deli (Spare Parts) from Slovenia will be a world premiere. Director Damjan Kozole depicts how unscrupulous smugglers exploit desperate refugees. Peter Musevski, Aljosa Kovacic and Aleksandra Balmazovic play the leading roles.

To date Italy will be participating in the *Competition* with the film *Io non ho paura* by Academy Award-winner Gabriele Salvatores. From the perspective of its adolescent characters, he examines with psychological interest their relationship with the adult world. Aitana Sanchez-Gijon, Diego Abatantuono, Dino Abbrescia and young amateur actors have been cast in the main roles.

France has three films in the *Competition*:

In *La Fleur du mal (The Flower of Evil)* Claude Chabrol portrays a seemingly well-established upper middle-class family whose long concealed guilt catches up with it. The film features Nathalie Baye, Benoit Magimel, Suzanne Flon and Bernard Le Coq.

Patrice Chéreau, who won the Golden Bear for *Intimacy* in 2001, will present the world premiere of his film *Son Frère* in the *Competition*.

**Internationale
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When one of two brothers, who have not had contact for years, becomes incurably ill, they become close again. Bruno Todeschini, Eric Caravaca and Maurice Garrel co-star in this tightly constructed work.

With the world premiere of *Petites Coupures*, Pascal Bonitzer presents a burlesque story about a notorious lady-killer. In his never-ending search for new women, he is in danger of losing his own life. Daniel Auteuil, Kristin Scott Thomas, Ludivine Sagnier and Jean Yann play the main characters.

The Senegalese director Moussa Sene Absa will show *Madame Brouette*, a Canadian-Senegalese co-production, in the *Competition*. The film depicts the struggle of a single mother in Dakar for her rights and independence. The leading roles are played by Rokhaya Niang, Aoubacar Sadikh Ba and Kadia.

The British contribution *The Hours* by 'Billy Elliot' director Stephen Daldry presents a study of three women from three different periods who have all been influenced by the works of Virginia Woolf. Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore and Nicole Kidman portray the principle characters. The film is based on Michael Cunningham's novel which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1999.

Alan Parker will present the world premiere of his US-British co-production *The Life of David Gale*. In the film, a declared opponent of capital punishment is sentenced to death for murder. Shortly before he is executed he recounts his version of what happened to a journalist. Kevin Spacey and Kate Winslet star in the film.

Four productions from the USA will be screened in the *Competition*:

Adaptation, Spike Jonze's first film since *Being John Malkovich*, ironically explores the creative process and the relation of reality and fiction in film. It features Nicolas Cage, Meryl Streep and Chris Cooper. Once again Charlie Kaufman wrote the screenplay.

Steven Soderbergh developed *Solaris* from Stanislaw Lem's famous novel, a work previously adapted for the screen by Andrei Tarkovski. The story takes place in a space station in a science-fiction-like future. Soderbergh focuses on the love between his protagonists and the question of how far people will go for a second chance. George Clooney and Natasha McElhone co-star in the film.

Hollywood star George Clooney can be seen a second time in the *Competition*: with the international premiere of *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, he will make his debut as a director. Again, the



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screenplay for the film was written by Charlie Kaufman, based on Chuck Barris' autobiography. It depicts Barris' path from a famous TV producer and moderator to a CIA agent and hired killer. Sam Rockwell, Drew Barrymore, Julia Roberts and George Clooney play the protagonists.

Spike Lee's *The 25th Hour* portrays a young man's last day before beginning a seven-year prison sentence. During his last night in freedom, which he spends with his friends, he reviews his life so far. Edward Norton plays the lead.

Japan will present grand master Yoji Yamada's most recent work: *Tasogare Seibei (The Twilight Samurai)* tells of a samurai in the 19th century who has to come to terms with a number of misfortunes and an unusual mission to kill. Hiroyuki Sanada plays the main character.

So far China's contribution to the *Competition* consists of Zhang Yimou's latest film, *Ying Xiong (Hero)*, by the makers of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. In this historical drama about love, jealousy, loyalty and intrigues, Zhang Yimou tries his hand for the first time at the martial art genre. The cast includes Jet Li, Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung Man Yuk.

The festival will open on February 6, 2003 with Rob Marshall's film version of the musical *Chicago* and will close, following the award ceremony on February 15, with a gala screening of Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*. Both films are running hors concours.

The selection of films for the *Competition* programme will be completed by mid-January.

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