

Press Release



Live Spectacle in the Forum: Isabella Rossellini as Narrator of Guy Maddin's *Brand Upon the Brain!* in the Deutsche Oper Berlin

With the European premiere of Guy Maddin's *Brand Upon the Brain!* and the performance by Isabella Rossellini in the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Berlinale *Forum* this year presents a unique cinema experience: Maddin's experimental silent movie will be performed as a live spectacle with an orchestra, a castrato's voice, and foley artists that will bring the sound effects to life. Isabella Rossellini, who has already worked with Maddin several times, will guide the audience through the film as narrator.

This unusual event is made possible by Volkswagen, which, as a partner of the Berlinale for many years and as a theatre season partner of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, will provide its own orchestra for the performance, which will be held in the presence of Guy Maddin.

In *Brand Upon the Brain!*, after years of wandering, the protagonist Guy returns to the site of his childhood, the mysterious lighthouse island Black Notch. The film is full of original cinematic ideas. Shot as a silent movie, it makes use of intertitles and operatic gestures. It is a film about remembered childhood, a family drama bound up with elements of Expressionist horror movies and "Grand Guignol" reveries.

Guy Maddin is considered one of Canada's most individualistic filmmakers. The opulent oeuvre of the "antiquarian avant-gardist" (The New York Times) unites elements of film noir and Surrealism, melodrama and American pop culture. With his bizarre debut film *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) and *Archangel* (1990), which was also shot in the style of a silent movie, the director took on cult status. In his film *The Saddest Music in the World* (2003), currently being shown in German movie theaters, Isabella Rossellini plays a brewery owner with artificial legs made of glass who, in faraway Winnipeg during the Great Depression, stages a competition for the world's saddest music. In 2006 Maddin's collaboration with Isabella Rossellini *My Dad Is 100 Years Old* was presented in the *Berlinale Special*. The film is an homage to the actress' father, the Italian film director Roberto Rossellini.

The one-time live performance of *Brand Upon the Brain!* will be held at 9:30 p.m. on February 15, 2007 in the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Tickets, uniformly priced at 18 euros, will be available from January 8, 2007 on at the ticket window of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, at www.deutscheoperberlin.de, at all EVENTIM advance sales offices, and at the sales office of the Berliner Festspiele. From February 6, 2007 on, tickets will also be available at all the advance sales offices of the 57th International Film Festival Berlin and at www.berlinale.de.

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Press Office

Potsdamer Straße 5
10785 Berlin

Tel. +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 707

Fax +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 799

press@berlinale.de

www.berlinale.de

Ein Geschäftsbereich der
Kulturveranstaltungen des
Bundes in Berlin (KBB) GmbH

Management:

Dieter Kosslick

(Intendant Internationale
Filmfestspiele Berlin),

Dr. Thomas Köstlin

(Kaufmännischer Geschäftsführer),

Dr. Bernd Scherer,

Dr. Joachim Sartorius

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:

Bernd Neumann

Handelsregister: Amtsgericht

Charlottenburg Nr. 96 HRB 29357

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