

Press Release



Berlinale *Retrospective* 2009 70 mm - Bigger than Life

By focussing on 70-mm films, the *Retrospective* of the 59th Berlin International Film Festival will devote itself to the powerful visuals of wide-gauge film.

Twice as wide as standard 35-mm film, it is the adequate format for monumental works: screen epics, adventure and science fiction films, Westerns, musicals, as well as magnificent panoramas of nature and intimately beautiful close-ups. The high resolution, sharp picture and colour quality of these large-format images join forces with the tremendous excellence of the sound. During Hollywood's financial crisis in the mid 1950s, 70-mm film was especially important as a technical innovation with which television could not compete. For wide-gauge film, with its visual and audio brilliance, is only able to come into its own in the cinema. The Berlinale *Retrospective* will concentrate on "real" 70-mm films that were originally shot on 65-mm or 70-mm negative film and then printed on 70-mm film for the screen.

"The *Retrospective* is also an homage to large film palaces, though only a few have survived. Which is why we are particularly delighted to have the Kino International as a venue. It opened in 1963 and was the third 70-mm cinema in the GDR. We are also pleased with the new prints that are now - thanks to their restoration by several large studios - available in their original format," remarks Rainer Rother, head of the *Retrospective*.

The *Retrospective* will present a total of 22 programmes from the USA, the Soviet Union and Europe. This includes classics like Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1961-63) in Todd-AO, David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1961/62) in Panavision Super 70 and William Wyler's *Ben Hur* (1959) in Camera 65; but also new discoveries like the Soviet production *Dnevnye zvozdy* (*The Stars of the Day*), directed by Igor Talankin in 1966 and based on motifs from Olga Bergholz's autobiographical book of the same name. In addition to the first Sovscope-70 film, Julija Solnceva's *Povest' plamennykh let* (*The Story of the Flaming Years*, 1960/61), there will be two other films from the USSR in the programme: Sergei Bondarchuk's screen adaptation of Tolstoy's *Voyna i mir* (*War and Peace*, 1962-67) and Samson Samsonov's *Optimisticheskaya tragediya* (*The Optimistic Tragedy*, 1963). The *Retrospective* is screening the probably most remarkable of the seven feature and three documentary DEFA 70 films ever produced: *Goya* (1969-71)

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by Konrad Wolf, a portrait of manners based on Lion Feuchtwanger's novel. Franklin J. Schaffner's *Patton* (1968-70) in Dimension 150, a biographical film about perhaps the most celebrated U.S. general of the Second World War, and Stanley Kubrick's seminal work *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1965-68) in Super Panavision 70 will also be screened. Opulent musicals, like Robert Wise's und Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* (1960/61) in Super Panavision 70, as well as Robert Wise's classic *The Sound Of Music* (1964/65) in Todd-AO, and Gene Kelly's *Hello, Dolly!* (1968/69), also in Todd-AO, will complete the programme.

"It will be a feast for the eyes. 70-mm films are not just known for their rich colours and splendid visuals, but also for the incomparable sound experience that gives viewers a sense of being there live. Film musicals from the 1960s also used these effects impressively. I'm delighted we'll be able to provide Berlinale audiences with such a spectacular cinema event," says Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick.

The *Retrospective* will be presented at the Kino International and the Cinestar 8 at Potsdamer Platz. For these festival screenings, the Kino International will be specially fitted out with a combination of tried-and-tested projection technology and new digital equipment. Hence, this theatre, so steeped in tradition, will offer the optimum in visual and audio experience. On the large curved screen, new, elaborately restored 70-mm prints will radiate alongside precious unique prints from archives. The *Retrospective* film programme (a complete list will be released in late December) will be accompanied by a series of events, with lectures by experts and talks with people from film. The book for the *Retrospective* - with an essay ("The History of Wide-Gauge Film") and a glossary by Gert Koshofer - will be published in a bilingual edition (German/English) by Bertz + Fischer, a Berlin publishing house. It gives a complete survey of the 70-mm productions made in the USA, Europe and the Soviet Union and presents contemporary reviews and extensive filmographic information on the films screening in the *Retrospective*. Once again, the Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen is responsible for both the *Retrospective* and the publication.

Press Office
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