



Press Release

Reconstructed Original Cut of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* to Celebrate its Premiere at the Berlinale 2010

Fritz Lang's original cut of *Metropolis* from 1927 will return to the screen at the 60th Berlin International Festival in 2010. At a gala presentation in the Friedrichstadtpalast on 12 February 2010, the classic silent film - reconstructed and restored by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Foundation - will celebrate its premiere 83 years after the original version had its world premiere. Based on the original score by Gottfried Huppertz, the screening will be accompanied by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin under the direction of conductor Frank Strobel. Minister of State and Commissioner for Cultural and Media Affairs Bernd Neumann will attend the event.

Parallel to the Berlinale, the film will be premiered on 12 February in the Alte Oper in Frankfurt am Main; the music for this screening will be performed by the Staatsorchester Braunschweig under the direction of Helmut Imig.

For decades crucial scenes from the film - whose restoration in 2001 led to it being the first film recognized as belonging to the UNESCO World Documentary Heritage - were considered lost. Due to the sensational discovery of a 16-mm negative in Buenos Aires in 2008 and its current restoration, *Metropolis* can now be shown in its almost completely restored - more than 30 minute longer - original version.

"Just about no other German film has inspired and influenced film history as greatly as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. We are especially pleased and honored to be able to present the reconstructed original cut of this legendary and seminal film classic at the festival's 60th anniversary," says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick.

The restoration and reconstruction of *Metropolis* is currently one of the world's most important film restoration projects. It is being carried out by the Wiesbaden-based Murnau Foundation in cooperation with ZDF and arte, and the Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen (Berlin), and with the Museo del Cine Pablo C. Ducros Hicken (Buenos Aires). The original music by Gottfried Huppertz will be re-edited by the European FilmPhilharmonic / Die Film-Philharmonie GmbH. Restoration and re-screening are being funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the Gemeinnützige Kulturfonds Frankfurt Rhine-Main, by the Verwertungsgesellschaft für Nutzungsrechte an Filmwerken mbH, as well as the DEFA Foundation. Transit Film GmbH (Munich) will be in charge of

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Presse

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

Geschäftsführung:

Dieter Kosslick
(Intendant Internationale
Filmfestspiele Berlin),
Dr. Bernd M. Scherer,
Prof. Dr. Joachim Sartorius

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:
Bernd Neumann

Amtsgericht Charlottenburg
HGR Nr. 96 · HRB 29357
USt ID DE 136 78 27 46



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internationally distributing this most recent reconstructed version of *Metropolis*.

"*Metropolis* is a classic of film history and it set the standard for cinematic art worldwide. For this reason the UNESCO chose *Metropolis* to be the first film ever included in its "Memory of the World" register. It symbolizes the tradition and high quality of German film heritage, and its preservation is one of our top priorities. Which was why I felt it was very important to support the completion of *Metropolis* and in so doing close a huge gap in Germany's film heritage. The Murnau Foundation has thus received 200,000 euros in funding from the BKM to help restore the silent film classic *Metropolis*," states Minister of State and Commissioner for Cultural and Media Affairs Bernd Neumann.

Even today, *Metropolis* fascinates and affects contemporary film artists. The legend surrounding the film has also been kept alive by the fact that for decades, from a large number of sources, people had known about a longer version, but no prints of it could be found. Until footage - totaling some 30 minutes - was discovered in Buenos Aires, essential scenes from *Metropolis* were still missing, and this was the case even though a great deal of research had been conducted by generations of film historians and archivists. And so the restoration carried out just a few years ago by the Murnau Foundation and its former partners, and which presented *Metropolis* in unprecedented quality, remained incomplete.

This monumental film was first shortened a brief time after its premiere at the Berlin Ufa-Palast am Zoo on 10 January 1927. Approved by the Film Board, the 4189-meter-long version screened at this venue without success for four months; as a consequence, the Ufa withdrew the film and produced a much shorter version, 3241 meters in length, for release to movie theaters in the summer of 1927.

"The unwavering desire and unflagging efforts to restore what was believed to be Fritz Lang's lost original cut of *Metropolis* epitomize the Murnau Foundation's commitment to save and preserve our rich filmic heritage and make it accessible to the public. With the restoration and re-screening of *Metropolis* a dream has been fulfilled," comments Eberhard Junkersdorf, Supervisory Board Chairman of the Murnau Foundation.

Since being established 43 years ago, the Murnau Foundation has applied itself to saving and preserving a large portion of Germany's film heritage and making these outstanding cultural and film historical works accessible to the public. They range from the early days of motion pictures to the early 1960,



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i.e., 2000 silent films, 1000 talkies, and some 3000 short films (advertising, cultural and documentary films). In addition to *Metropolis*, they include some of the great classics of German cinema, such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*), *Die Nibelungen*, *The Blue Angel* (*Der Blaue Engel*), *Three Good Friends* (*Die Drei von der Tankstelle*), *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (*Münchhausen*), *Great Freedom No. 7* (*Große Freiheit Nr. 7*), and *Helden*.

Press Office
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