



Press Release

Berlin International Film Festival Congratulates Kurt Maetzig on 100th Birthday

On January 25, 2011, Berlin-born director Kurt Maetzig is celebrating his 100th birthday.

Kurt Maetzig was a pioneer of German post-war cinema and one of the most important figures in the history of DEFA film studios. He not only co-founded the DEFA but was also its first artistic director as well as in charge of the weekly newsreel *Der Augenzeuge*. In 1954 he became the first president of the newly established GDR film academy in Babelsberg.

Maetzig's debut feature was *Ehe im Schatten* (1947), in which he denounced Nazi anti-Semitism shortly after the war. It became one of the most successful German films of the post-war era. A number of other films he made also addressed the recent history of the times: for instance, *Die Buntkarierten* (1948/49) and *Rat der Götter* (1949/50). *Das Kaninchen bin ich* (1965/66), which took a critical look at circumstances in East Germany, triggered a wave of censorship measures: due to the disputes on cultural policies that followed, almost an entire year of DEFA productions was banned. It was not until after the fall of the Wall that these films were released.

Kurt Maetzig was a talented, versatile filmmaker who constantly tried out new genres. In all, he directed some twenty feature films.

In a special screening at Zeughauskino on February 12, 2011, the Berlinale will pay tribute to Kurt Maetzig by showing the social comedy *Vergeßt mir meine Traudel nicht* (1957), featuring Eva-Maria Hagen in the title role. Following the film, Kurt Maetzig will talk with Ralf Schenk about his life and work.

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