

Press Release



Berlinale Classics 2016:

Fritz Lang's *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* - world premiere of the digital version

On February 12, 2016, a special silent film and music highlight awaits festival audiences: The first digitally restored version of Fritz Lang's *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* will be presented at the 66th Berlin International Film Festival as part of the *Berlinale Classics* programme.

The restoration of the 1921 film classic to a new, high-resolution digital form (2015/2016) by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in Wiesbaden was curated and carried out by art restorer Anke Wilkening. The film was released in 1921 - but not in black and white. Using film tinting and toning, the film hit cinemas in colour. By re-creating the tints, the restorers were able to re-interpret *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* in excellent quality and give it new life.

The premiere of the digitised version on February 12, 2016 at Friedrichstadt-Palast will also be a music premiere: Freiburg-based composer Cornelius Schwehr was commissioned by ZDF/ARTE to create a new score for *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* that is commensurate with the film classic's diversity of style. Just as the film itself tells a "folk song in six verses" using technological tricks of modern cinema, composer Cornelius Schwehr combines music styles from Romanticism with the analytical style of contemporary music. His composition grants the images space, endowing them with the necessary ambiguity. The 70-member Berlin Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra (RSB), with celebrated conductor Frank Strobel at the podium, will accompany the premiere with this new score. Frank Strobel and the RSB last performed at the Berlinale in 2012 when Sergej Eisenstein's *October* was presented.

"Fritz Lang is one of the greatest German directors, and I'm especially pleased that our audiences will have the opportunity to discover his first masterpiece *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* in new digital brilliance - and with an equally brilliant musical accompaniment," comments Rainer Rother, director of the *Retrospective* programme and artistic director of Deutsche Kinemathek.

The digital restoration of *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation was made possible with the support of Bertelsmann, and with funds from the digitisation initiative by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and through the support of the development association "Freunde und Förderer des deutschen Filmerbes e.V." (Friends and Associates of

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Press Office

Potsdamer Straße 5
10785 Berlin

Phone +49· 30· 259 20· 707
Fax +49· 30· 259 20· 799

press@berlinale.de
www.berlinale.de

Ein Geschäftsbereich der
Kulturveranstaltungen des
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Management:

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Amtsgericht Charlottenburg
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German Film Heritage). The material basis used for the digital restoration of the film is a 35mm black-and-white duplicate negative from the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Individual shots were taken from a black-and-white copy from the Cinémathèque de Toulouse. The intertitles are reconstructions from the Munich Film Museum, using “blitz titles” from a copy in the Gosfilmofond of Russia in Moscow as the foundation. Missing titles were reconstructed and supplemented with the help of material from the Národní filmový archiv, Prague and the Cinémathèque Royale, Brussels. The lost film tints of individual scenes were simulated using contemporary distribution copies from other Decla productions from the same period. The scan and digital image reconstruction in 2K resolution were completed by L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna.

The digitally restored version has a running time of 98 minutes and will celebrate its television premiere on February 15, 2016 on ARTE.

The presentation of *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* at *Berlinale Classics* is a cooperation of the Berlin International Film Festival, the Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen, the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, ZDF/ARTE and the Berlin Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra (RSB), under the direction of Frank Strobel.

There will be limited access for press at the recording of the score for *Der müde Tod (Destiny)* by the RSB, under the direction of Frank Strobel, on December 7, 2015. Please send your inquiries to: Dr. Jantje Röller, jroeller@amphitryon-media.de, or Maria Severini, mseverini@amphitryon-media.de.

Media requests regarding Frank Strobel can be sent to Dr. Jantje Röller, jroeller@amphitryon-media.de. For press inquiries regarding the Berlin Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra (RSB), please contact Christina Gembacza, presse@rsb-online.de.

Press Office
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