

21-27 JANUARY, 2011

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New Films

from Germany, Austria and Switzerland

January 21-27, 2011

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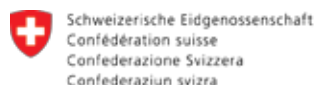


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Mähler on the Couch © Percy Adlon

Co-presented by the Goethe-Institut in Washington, the Austrian Embassy and the Embassy of Switzerland, with support from german-films



Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA



A German Wave, Focused on Today

- *New York Times*

Looking over the titles in this, the 19th annual edition of Film | Neu, two themes immediately present themselves: history and genre. The opening night film, Germany's 2011 Oscar nominee, sets the pace, with producer-director-writer Feo Aladag's internationally lauded *WHEN WE LEAVE* charting the troubled emancipation of a German-born Turkish woman from the bonds of tradition. In a similar vein, the determined young man in Johannes Naber's *THE ALBANIAN* finds that social justice in Germany is a battle hard fought and often lost.

Also on a voyage of discovery is fledgling filmmaker Jan Raiber, whose search for *ALL MY FATHERS* leads to a documentary of uncommon intimacy and historical urgency. The inimitable Percy Adlon, he of *BAGDAD CAFÉ* fame, imagines what really happened when a cuckolded composer asked Sigmund Freud for help in the atypically mischievous Austrian-German biopic *MAHLER ON THE COUCH*.

No less than the president of Switzerland could also use some help, and no less a screen icon than Bruno Ganz brings him to life in *THE DAY OF THE CAT*, adapted with wit and melodramatic flair from the immensely popular Swiss novel. Another historical adaptation comes in the form of the nostalgia-drenched *BERLIN, BOXHAGENER PLATZ*, in which a young boy in 1968 East Berlin helps solve a neighborhood murder mystery.

The two themes meet head on in a pair of suspenseful thrill rides. In director Bettina Oberli's white-knuckle German-Swiss co-production *THE MURDER FARM*, a young woman visiting her village from the big city is drawn into an unsolved slaughter years before, while a long-dormant serial killer appears to have struck again even as he lives anonymously among the families of his victims in young writer-director Baran bo Odar's tense ensemble thriller *THE SILENCE*.

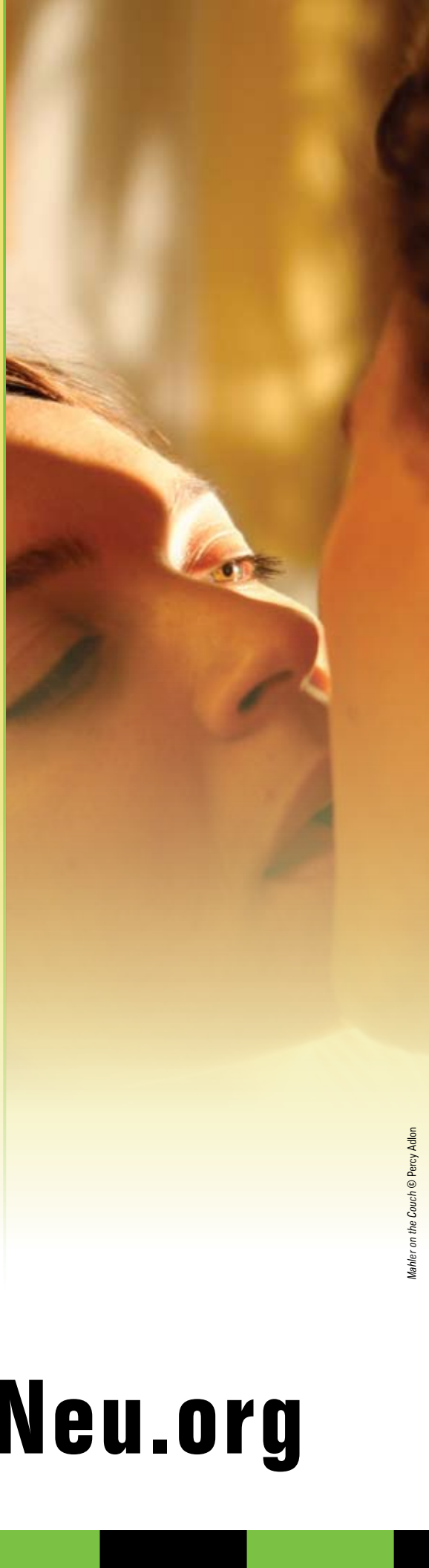
Another impressive crime drama is Thomas Arslan's hard-boiled *IN THE SHADOWS*, in which an ex-con with a knack for precision in both his life and his work finds his world closing in as he plans an armored car heist in Berlin.

Every rule has an exception, and this group's could well be the surprise German box office hit *VINCENT WANTS TO SEA*, a deft tragicomedy in which writer-actor Florian David Fitz stars as a Tourette sufferer on a road trip to Italy with his mother's ashes tucked in his pocket.

There's something for everyone among these 10 films, reflecting as they do the exciting current times in the German, Austrian and Swiss film industries.

Eddie Cockrell is a film critic and consulting programmer who lives in Sydney, Australia and Wheaton, Maryland.

www.FilmNeu.org





When We Leave

The Silence © Bavaria International

OPENING

Friday, January 21, 7 pm

Friday, January 21, 10 pm

Germany's 2011 Oscar® Nominee

When We Leave (Die Fremde)

Germany, 2010, color, 119 min., 35mm,
Turkish and German with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Feo Aladag **Producers:** Feo Aladag, Zueli Aladag **Cast:** Sibel Kekilli, Derya Alabora, Settar Tanrioegen, Nizam Schiller, Tamer Yigit, Serhad Can, Almila Bagriacik, Florian Lukas.

Sales: Cinepool (Munich).

**Discussion with director and writer
Feo Aladag follows the first screening.**

Imprisoned in a loveless marriage in Istanbul, German-born Umay (Sibel Kekilli, star of Fatih Akin's HEAD-ON) is determined to make a better life for herself and her five-year-old son. Fleeing with the boy to her family in Berlin, she is distressed to discover her family sides with her husband, bound to tradition when it is emancipation that she wants—and needs. “Once a whore, always a whore,” Umay says, but she’s far from resigned to her fate. Actress-turned-filmmaker Feo Aladag was inspired to write and direct this powerful film after participating in an Amnesty International campaign spotlighting violence towards women. At once gritty and humanistic, Umay’s story—brought vividly to life by a magnificent actress in a thrilling performance—is both timely and affecting.

Among the most lauded of German films in recent years, WHEN WE LEAVE has also been selected to represent Germany in the foreign film Oscar race. Film|Neu is proud to showcase this important work as the opening night feature. —Eddie Cockrell

Feo Aladag (b: 1972, Vienna, Austria) trained as an actress in London and Vienna, completing at the same time a Masters in psychology and journalism. While acting in numerous film and television productions she continued her studies, and also maintained a successful career as a scriptwriter and commercials director. In 2005 she founded the production company Independent Artists, responsible for her debut feature, WHEN WE LEAVE. ■



© Independent Artists Filmproduktion

The Albanian © Aktis Film International GmbH

In the Shadows © Aktis Film International GmbH

When We Leave

“...one of the best movies I have ever seen”

- The Huffington Post

Saturday, January 22, 12:30 pm
Sunday, January 23, 6:30 pm

The Silence (Das letzte Schweigen)

Germany, 2010, color, 119 min., 35mm,
German with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Baran bo Odar, from the novel by Jan Costin Wagner **Producers:** Frank Evers, Jörg Schulze, Florian Schneider, Maren Lütjehje **Cast:** Ulrich Thomsen, Wotan Wilke Möhring, Sebastian Blomberg, Katrin Sass, Burghart Klausner, Karoline Eichhorn.

Sales: Bavaria Film International (Geislagsteig).

In an expansive field of summer wheat, deep in 1986 Thuringia, caretaker Peer Sommer (Ulrich Thomsen) rapes and murders a young girl in front of the tremulous Timo (Wotan Wilke Möhring), who does nothing to intervene. Neither man is ever caught. Twenty-three years later, when an 11-year-old girl goes missing in the same field, nearly a dozen townspeople, cops and families among them, are drawn into the mystery. Immensely talented writer-director Baran bo Odar (UNDER THE SUN) immediately tips his hand about what THE SILENCE is and isn't. Less a procedural than a psychological portrait of a rural community and the delicate social fabric that holds it together, this shattering thriller was influenced by American westerns as well as Bong Joon-ho's 2003 Korean caper MEMORIES OF MURDER. Anchored by strong performances and the exquisite wide-screen photography of Nikolaus Summerer, in the end the enticingly hot summer of THE SILENCE cannot mask the realities of a bitterly cold world. —Eddie Cockrell

Baran bo Odar (b: 1978, Olten, Switzerland) graduated from Munich's Academy for Film & Television in 2005. He interned with Doris Dörrie on NAKED, and has worked extensively in the commercial industry while directing short films. His feature debut was the 60-minute UNDER THE SUN (2006), which won the best cinematography prize at Slamdance. He is currently in pre-production on a new feature, PLUS 6 HOURS. ■

Saturday, January 22, 3 pm
Sunday, January 23, 9 pm

East Coast Premiere

The Albanian (Der Albaner)

Germany/Albania, 2010, color, 104 min., 35mm,
Albanian, German and English with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Johannes Naber **Producer:** Boris Schönfelder **Cast:** Nik Xhelilaj, Xhejlane Terbunja, Ivan Shvedoff, Amos Zaharia, Stipe Erceg.

Sales: Aktis Film International (Leipzig).

Handsome and earnest young Arben (Nik Xhelilaj) is frustrated to discover upon returning to his Albanian village from six months working in Greece that after visa costs and other tariffs he's only earned a bit over three thousand dollars. What's more, the woman he wants to marry, Etleva (Xhejlane Terbunja), has not only been promised to another man for more than three times that amount, but is pregnant by Arben as well. So it's off to Berlin, and a series of hard lessons about success and survival in a world where human life has become a commodity. Winner of the leading actor and special jury prizes at the Moscow festival, in addition to the audience award in Geneva, THE

ALBANIAN is a confident, immersive first feature that joins a growing list of films—including Christian Schmid's DISTANT LIGHTS, Jan Hřebejk's UP AND DOWN—that comprise a chorus of outrage over this sad, scandalous condition. —Eddie Cockrell

Johannes Naber (b: 1971, Baden-Baden) studied philosophy and Indian philology at the Freie Universität Berlin, and cinema at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy. He has made short films and documentaries; THE ALBANIAN is his fiction feature debut. ■

Saturday, January 22, 5:30 pm
Monday, January 24, 9 pm

In the Shadows (Im Schatten)

Germany, 2010, color, 85 min., 35mm,
German with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Thomas Arslan **Producers:** Florian Koerner von Gustorf, Michael Weber **Cast:** Mišel Matičević, Karoline Eichhorn, Uwe Bohm, Rainer Bock, David Scheller, Peter Kurth, Hanns Zischler. **Sales:** Peripher (Berlin).

Newly released from prison, taciturn career criminal Trojan (Mišel Matičević) immediately runs afoul of the crime lord that put him there, even as he plans a fresh armored car heist with the help of former flame Dora (Karoline Eichhorn). When he attracts the interest of ruthless and corrupt cop Mayer (Uwe Bohm), his instinct for trouble becomes his greatest asset.





All My Fathers © LOBOCITO Film Berlin

Among the most exciting and consistently interesting German directors of the last 15 years, Thomas Arslan has indulged his self-described “excessive” fondness for crime fiction—“a genre I particularly love,” he told one interviewer—with a superlative underworld procedural that “connects the abstract genre pattern with specific, more documentary views of today’s Berlin.” Narratively precise and superbly photographed by Reinhold Vorschneider (Maria Speth’s *MA-DONNAS*) with the exciting new Red One digital camera, *IN THE SHADOWS* is cut from the same dark silk as William Friedkin’s *TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.* and Michael Mann’s *HEAT*. Yes, it’s that good. —Eddie Cockrell

Thomas Arslan (b: 1962, Braunschweig) lived in Essen and Ankara before completing high school in the former. He graduated from Berlin’s German Film and Television Academy (dffb) in 1992. His films include the celebrated trilogy of Turkish life in Berlin—*BROTHERS AND SISTERS* (1996), *DEALER* (1999) and *ONE FINE DAY* (2001)—as well as the documentary of his travels through Turkey, *FROM FAR AWAY* (2006) and the dramatic feature *VACATION* (2007). ■

Saturday, January 22, 7:45 pm
Sunday, January 23, 2:30 pm

Vincent Wants to Sea (Vincent will Meer)

Germany, 2010, color, 95 min., 35mm,
 German with English subtitles

Director: Ralf Huettner **Screenplay:** Florian David Fitz **Producers:** Harald Kuegler, Viola Jaeger

Cast: Florian David Fitz, Karoline Herfurth, Johannes Allmayer, Heino Ferch, Katharina Mueller-Elmau.

Sales: Beta Cinema (Oberhaching).

Actors rarely get to write themselves juicy leading roles, but when they do—think Matt Damon and Ben Affleck’s *GOOD WILL HUNTING*, or Sly Stallone’s *ROCKY*, or anything by and with Chaplin, Welles or Woody Allen—the results can break free of genre conventions to provide their creators with transcendent parts. Such is the case with Florian David Fitz, who wrote and stars in this tragicomic road movie about a young man with Tourette syndrome who escorts his mother’s ashes from Germany to the Italian coast. Warehoused in a private institution by his blustery politician father (Heino Ferch), Vincent (Fitz) enlists anorexic dooper Marie (Karoline Herfurth) and obsessive-compulsive roommate Alex (Johannes Allmayer) to drive him over the Alps, pursued

by the odd couple of dad and combustible clinic head Dr. Rose (Katharina Mueller-Elmau). *VINCENT WANTS TO SEA* proved a must-see, spending more than three months near the top of the German box office. —Eddie Cockrell

Ralf Huettner (b: 1954, Munich) graduated from the University of Television & Film in Munich in 1985. His 1985 feature debut *DAS MAEDCHEN MIT DEN FEUERZEUGEN* won awards in Germany and overseas, and since then he has alternated between films for television and the cinema. ■

Saturday, January 22, 10 pm
Sunday, January 23, 4:30 pm

The Murder Farm (Tannöd)

Germany/Switzerland, 2009, color, 97 min., 35mm,
 German with English subtitles

Director: Bettina Oberli **Screenplay:** Petra Luschow, from the novel by Andrea Maria Schenkel **Producers:** Hejo Emons, Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel, Kristina Löbber **Cast:** Julia Jentsch, Monica Bleibtreu, Volker Bruch, Brigitte Hobmeier, Janina Stopper, Vitus Zeplichal, Lisa Kreuzer, Filip Peeters. **Sales:** The Match Factory (Cologne).

In 1922, at a remote Bavarian farmhouse some



Vincent Wants to Sea © Beta Films



The Murder Farm © Match Factory



Berlin, Boxhagener Platz © Aktis Film International



The Day of the Cat © Deutsche Kinematek

40 miles north of Munich, a half-dozen people were slaughtered in a single night. In 2006 Andrea Maria Schenkel's novelization drew comparisons to Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood" for suspense and depravity. Director Bettina Oberli, whose last film was the charming comedy LATE BLOOMERS, creates a palpable sense of rural foreboding from Petra Lüschow's script, which itself rather astutely creates a central character not in the book for structure and momentum. Arriving for her mother's funeral in the adjacent village some two years after the carnage, young nurse Kathrin (Julia Jentsch) is drawn into the legend of the tragedy, which is depicted in parallel crosscutting through the eyes of an unstable drifter. The last film of the great German actress Monica Bleibtreu, THE MURDER FARM—not to be confused with a different take on the subject, KAIFECK MURDER—walks the knife edge between mystery and horror on a smart, dark, unsettling genre journey. —Eddie Cockrell

Bettina Oberli (b: 1972, Interlaken, Switzerland) studied film and video at the School of Art and Design Zurich (HGKZ), graduating with a degree in directing. She assisted Steve Buscemi on a Lou Reed video and Hal Hartley on the film HENRY FOOL before making her own first feature, NORTH WIND (2004). Her second film, the small-town comedy LATE BLOOMERS (aka LITTLE PARIS), was the 2006 Swiss box office champion, a substantial hit in Germany and a featured title in Film | Neu 2007. ■

Sunday, January 23, 12:30 pm
Monday, January 24, 7 pm

All My Fathers (Alle meine Väter)

Germany, 2010, color and B&W, 89 min., DigiBeta, German with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Jan Raiber **Producer:** Janine Wolf. **With:** Jan Raiber, Kristina Raiber, Jürgen Raiber, Uwe Hennig **Sales:** LOBOCITOfilm Berlin

In documentary, as in drama, story is everything. And a few years back, then-28-year-old aspiring filmmaker Jan Raiber unwittingly stum-

bled across quite a tale: his own. With the blessing of bubbly mom Kristina and loving stepfather Jürgen, Raiber tracks down his biological father Uwe, who had married Kristina in a rushed union of convenience in the former GDR. Upon further reflection, however, Kristina has one more surprise: though he'd paid child support for 18 years, the unwitting Uwe isn't Jan's dad either. Navigating the resulting moral hornet's nest with a string of bold decisions, Raiber forces a denouement of unguarded, cumulatively devastating emotional moments. "The film is simply about a guy running around in search of his father," Raiber despairs at one point, "but I'm not interested in that now, that's the problem." A film of rich cultural metaphor and immense artistic courage, ALL MY FATHERS may be great personal filmmaking by accident, but it's still great personal filmmaking. —Eddie Cockrell

Jan Raiber (b: 1980, Nordhausen, Thuringia) grew up in Leipzig and performed in youth theater groups. He trained as a film and video editor in Berlin, Leipzig and Halle from 1999-2002 and began working as an assistant director in 2003. In 2005 he took up studies in directing as the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy in Ludwigsburg, the production entity behind ALL MY FATHERS. ■

Tuesday, January 25, 6:30 pm
Tuesday, January 25, 9:15 pm

US Premiere

Berlin, Boxhagener Platz (Boxhagener Platz)

Germany, 2009, color, 102 min., 35mm, German with English subtitles

Director: Matti Geschonneck **Screenplay:** Matti Geschonneck, Torsten Schulz **Producers:** Jakob Claussen, Nicole Swidler, Uli Put **Cast:** Gudrun Ritter, Michael Gwisdek, Samuel Schneider, Meret Becker, Jürgen Vogel. **Sales:** Aktis Film International (Leipzig).

Discussion with director Matti Geschonneck follows both screenings.

It is 1968, and the eponymous East Berlin neighborhood is far removed from the winds of counterculture change swirling in the west. To escape the constant bickering of his parents, hairdresser Renate (Meret Becker) and Communist cop Klaus-Dieter (Jürgen Vogel), young Holger (Samuel Schneider) spends a lot of time with his Oma (Gudrun Ritter), a widow five times over who is currently being courted by intellectual pensioner Karl (Michael Gwisdek) and corpulent fishmonger Winkler (Horst Krauze). When the latter is found dead in his shop and Klaus-Dieter exhausts official enquiries, the boy decides to conduct his own investigations. Co-adapted by novelist and filmmaker Torsten Schulz from his 2004 novel and filmed on a lovingly recreated set at the Babelsberg Studios, BERLIN, BOXHAGENER PLATZ thrums with an unforced verisimilitude and courses with the political and social undercurrents of that unique time and place. Determined to avoid nostalgia, director Matti Geschonneck has made a resonant tragicomedy from the most delicate of subjects. —Eddie Cockrell

Matti Geschonneck (b: 1952, Potsdam) trained as a filmmaker at Moscow's Eisenstein Institute. He has been a prolific director of television films and series since the early 1990s. BERLIN, BOXHAGENER PLATZ is his second feature film, following MÖBIUS (1993). ■

Wednesday, January 26, 7 pm
Wednesday, January 26, 9 pm

US Premiere

The Day of the Cat (Der große Kater)

Germany/Switzerland, 2010, color, 89 min., 35mm, German with English subtitles

Director: Wolfgang Panzer **Screenplay:** Claus P. Hant, Dietmar Güntsche, from the novel by Thomas Hürlimann **Producers:** Dietmar Güntsche, Wolfgang Behr, Claudia Wick, Benito Müller, Wolfgang Müller **Cast:** Bruno Ganz, Ulrich Tukur, Marie Bäumer, Christiane Paul, Edgar Selge, Justus von Dohnányi. **Sales:** Aktis Film International (Leipzig).





The Day of the Cat © Deutsche Kinematek



Mahler on the Couch © Percy Adlon

Reception with Swiss treats between the two screenings.

On December 4, 2010, The European Film Academy presented their Lifetime Achievement Award to Swiss cultural icon Bruno Ganz, whose lengthy and impressive filmography includes Wim Wenders' *WINGS OF DESIRE* and Oliver Hirschbiegel's *THE DOWNFALL*. To celebrate this well-deserved honor, Film | Neu is proud to present the Bavarian Prize-winning adaptation of *The Big Cat*, famous Swiss author Thomas Hürlimann's satirically autobiographical 1998 debut novel. A roman a clef inspired by a pivotal moment in the life of his father, the late Swiss president Hans Hürlimann, the star-studded and unapologetically melodramatic action follows the last two days in the term of a Swiss leader (Ganz), as conspirators close to him plan his ouster during the state visit of the Spanish president—even as his youngest son lies dying in hospital. "We're not philosophers," says devoted confidante Dr. Stotzer (Ulrich Tukur), philosophically. "We're men of action." And so is *THE DAY OF THE CAT*, a film that will resonate with the Swiss as well as political junkies the world over. —Eddie Cockrell

Wolfgang Panzer (b: 1947, Munich) grew up in Turin and Lausanne. While living in the former he studied Romance languages and literature, followed by sociology and journalism in Fribourg. After working as reporter and editor at Swiss Television, he returned to Munich to

study at the University of Television and Film (HFF). Since 1978 he's worked as a freelance author, producer and director. ■

Thursday, January 27, 6:30 pm
Thursday, January 27, 9 pm

Mahler on the Couch (Mahler auf der Couch)

Austria/Germany, 2010, color, 98 min., 35mm, German with English subtitles

Directors/Screenplay: Percy Adlon, Felix Adlon

Producers: Eleonore Adlon, Burkhardt Ernst, Constantin Seitz **Cast:** Barbara Romaner, Johannes Silberschneider, Karl Markovics, Friedrich Mucke, Lena Stolze. **Sales:** StudioCanal (Paris).

Discussion with music critic Ted Libbey follows the first screening.

"Percy Adlon, who delighted audiences with *BAGDAD CAFÉ* and *SUGARBABY*, is back in rare form with *MAHLER ON THE COUCH*. Mahler is none other than the great turn-of-the-century composer Gustav Mahler; the couch belongs to no less than Sigmund Freud, whom the freaked-out maestro, desperate for help, tracks down in Holland after discovering that his beloved wife Alma has had an affair with the young architect Walter Gropius. Adlon's passionate and witty film, which he co-wrote and directed with his son Felix, is a portrait of the fascinating, fevered,

and doomed marriage between these two powerful partners. The headstrong Alma—played by the fiercely sensual Barbara Romaner—both worships her much older lover and chafes under his domination. Avoiding stuffy biopic conventions, *MAHLER ON THE COUCH* honors the complexity and humanity of both of its tormented lovers, keeping our sympathies in a constant state of flux."

—David Ansen, 2010 Los Angeles Film Festival

Percy Adlon (b: 1935, Munich) studied art and theater history, German literature, acting and singing at his hometown's Ludwig-Maximilian University. Initially an actor, he became a documentarian in 1970. His features include *CELESTE* (1981), *ZUCKERBABY* (1985), *BAGDAD CAFÉ* (1987), *ROSALIE GOES SHOPPING* (1989), *SALMONBERRIES* (1991), *YOUNGER & YOUNGER* (1993) and the documentaries *THE GLAMOROUS WORLD OF THE HOTEL ADLON* (1996) and *KOENIG'S SPHERE: THE GERMAN SCULPTOR FRITZ KOENIG AT GROUND ZERO* (2001).

Felix Adlon (b: 1967, Munich) attended Ithaca College. After assisting his father on *BAGDAD CAFÉ*, he wrote *SALMONBERRIES* and *YOUNGER & YOUNGER* before striking out on his own as writer/director with the romantic comedy *EAT YOUR HEART OUT* (1999). ■

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