DIRECTED BY SIMON VERHOEVEN

NIGHT LIFE

One Night. One Date. Anything can happen...
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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Bartender Milo (Elyas M’Barek) meets the woman of his dreams Sunny (Palina Rojinski) in a fateful moment and arranges to go on a date. Everything seems to be running smoothly, but when Milo’s chaotic friend Renzo (Frederick Lau) turns up, the romantic evening escalates into an absolutely mad chase through Berlin’s nightlife pursued by some underworld thugs. However, nothing will shake Milo and Sunny’s love if they can survive this date...

PRESSNOTE

They are among the most distinguished, popular and successful German actors: With Elyas M’Barek, Palina Rojinski and Frederick Lau, three top stars have taken the leading roles in Nightlife, the new comedy by Simon Verhoeven. The team behind it already released Welcome to Germany (Willkommen bei den Hartmanns), the most successful German film of 2016 with almost 3.9 million theatrical admissions: director Simon Verhoeven, the producers Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann and Warner Bros. as distributors. It is the fifth collaboration in this constellation since Men in the City (Männerherzen), which attracted more than 2.3 million admissions in 2009. Elyas M’Barek, Palina Rojinski and Simon Verhoeven are already a well-rehearsed team (Men in the City, Welcome to Germany) now with the perfect addition of Frederick Lau. The authentically Berlin locations occupy the fourth main role, during the day and of course at night. Nightlife is a production by Wiedemann & Berg Film (producers: Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann) in co-production with Sentana Film (co-producer: Simon Verhoeven) and with SevenPictures Film GmbH (co-producer: Stefan Gärtner). Warner Bros. Pictures launched the comedy in German theatres on February 13, 2020. Nightlife was funded by the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, the Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) and the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern.

ABOUT THE CAST

ELYAS M’BAREK

Milo

Elyas M’Barek was born in Munich in 1982. He gained his first professional experience in cinematic acting when he was still in school and later as the leading actor in Florian Gaag’s festival hit Wholetrain (2006). His role as Cem Öztürk in the critically and publicly acclaimed, award-winning TV series Türkisch für Anfänger (2005 to 2008) became his breakthrough (German TV Award and Adolf Grimme Award for the Actor Ensemble). Elyas M’Barek has been in films directed by Simon Verhoeven’s Men in the City (Männerherzen) (2009) as well as a Bernd Eichinger production, named Zeiten ändern dich in which he embodies the young scandal-rapper Bushido. He amused 1.8 million cinema visitors as Matthias Schweighöfer’s best friend in box office hit What a Man
(2011). In 2012 he continued the successful collaboration with director Bora Dagtekin in Türkisch für Anfänger the movie. In 2013, he gave a convincing performance in the tragic comedy Partly Sunny (Heiter bis Wolkg) and was awarded the Jupiter Film Award for his performance. In the same year he also appeared in the international production The Physician (Der Medicus), which was the second most successful film of 2013 in Germany. Elyas M’Barek has been the most successful actor in Germany since his role as Zeki Müller in Suck Me Shakespeeer (Fack Ju Goethe) (2013), which delighted over seven million cinema visitors in Germany and whose sequels in 2015 and 2017 were among the most popular German films of the year. Who Am I – Kein Systerm ist sicher and Männerhort were the 2014 box-office successes, and that same year he lent his voice to the bear in Paddington and Paddington 2. In 2015 M’Barek delighted not only his co-stars, but also the audience in Traumfrauen. This was closely followed in 2016 by the equally successful collaboration with director Simon Verhoeven in his award-winning comedy Welcome to Germany (Willkommen bei den Hartmanns). He continued onto major roles in Marc Rothemund’s This Crazy Heart (Diese bescheuerte Herz) (2017), Marco Kreuzpaintner’s political thriller The Collini Case (Der Fall Collini) (2019) and most recently in the sensational success of director Bora Dagtekin, Das perfekte Geheimnis (2019).

FREDERICK LAU

Renzo

Born and raised in Berlin, Frederick Lau (1989) is a Berliner through and through. Before he began his acting career, the two-time winner of the German Film Award worked as an athlete, where his career entailed a Berlin-wide judo championship title and becoming German champion with his youth ice hockey team. He made his film debut at the age of ten in the TV series Achterbahn. Andreas Dresen cast him in the television drama The Policewoman (Die Polizistin) (2000), followed by a cinematic leading role in the Der Brief des Kosmonauten (2001) and the children’s films The Flying Classroom (Das fliegende Klassenzimmer) (2003) and Bibi Blocksberg und das Geheimnis der blauen Eulen (2004). Lau was honored his first German Film Award for Best Supporting Actor and the Undine Award for Best Young Actor for his performance in Dennis Gansel’s The Wave (Die Welle) (2008). In 2009 he played in Philip Koch’s Picco, which screened in Cannes and was awarded at the Max Ophüls Festival. Lau received the Grimme Prize and the 2011 Bavarian TV Award for his leading role in Hermine Huntgeburth’s Neue Vahr Süd. His first collaboration with Bora Dagtekin was in 2012 for Türkisch für Anfänger. He continued onto starring in Ummah – Unter Freunden (2013), Philipp Leinemann’s Wir waren Könige (2014) and Anika Decker’s Traumfrauen (2014). Lau attracted rave reviews in Sebastian Schipper’s 2015 Berlinale hit Victoria - his role brought him his second German Film Award, this time as Best Actor. In 2016 Lau worked with Philip Koch again in Outside the Box, then in the remake of the fairy tale Heart of Stone (Das kalte Herz) and the comedies Scrappin’ (Schrotten!), Wie Männer über Frauen reden and Karoline Herfurth’s directorial debut Text Four You (SMS für dich).

In 2017 he not only appeared in the well-known TV series 4 Blocks, but also in Markus Goller’s Simpel, Robert Schwentke’s Der Hauptmann and in Govinda Van Maele’s Gutland. Most recently,
Frederick Lau played in Detlev Buck's *Wuff – Folge dem Hund* (2018), Karoline Herfurth's *Sweethearts* (2019), Tim Trachte's *Dem Horizont so nah* (2019) and, in Bora Dagtekin's *Das Perfekte Geheimnis* (2019) together with Elyas M'Barek and lastly he lent “Buddy” his voice in *Pets 2*. The films *Generation Beziehungsunfähig* by Helena Hufnagel, the historical drama *Der Fuchs* and Oliver Rih's comedy *Alles kann, nichts muss* are in the making. For Pantaflex, he and Kida Khodr Ramadan are jointly shooting the film *Roccos Reise*, entirely on an iPhone.

**PALINA ROJINSKI**

*Sunny*

In 2009, Palina Rojinski was hired by MTV just after her cinematic debut in Men in the City (Männerherzen) (2009) the year before. She co-hosted the format "MTV Home" and, from 2011 onwards, worked as a presentor at Viva. In addition, Palina Rojinski worked on the “neoParadise” program on ZDFneo.

Her collaboration with Simon Verhoeven successfully continued in 2010 with his prosperous sequel Men in the City 2 (Männerherzen und die ganz ganz große Liebe) as well as in 2016 with *Welcome to Germany* (Wilkommen bei den Hartmanns). In 2013 she played in the real-time series Zeit der Helden (German TV Award 2013 for Best Series) directed by Kai Wessel and in Florian David Fitz’s hit movie Jesus Loves Me (Jesus liebt mich). Afterwards she was in Anika Decker's comedy *Traumfrauen* (2015) together with Karoline Herfurth and Elyas M’Barek. Most recently, Wolfgang Groos’s *Granny Nanny* (Enkel für Anfänger) (2019) was released in German cinemas earlier this year. She lent her voice to the Hollywood productions *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (Wolkig mit Aussicht auf Fleischbällchen 2) (2013), *Hotel Transylvania 2* (2015) and *Early Man – Steinzeit bereit* (2018). Rojinski also appeared in the TV film *Weniger ist mehr* and in the Tatort episode “Die fette Hoppe”.

She won the German TV Award 2013 and the Bavarian TV Award 2014 as a jury member of the ProSieben show "Got to Dance". From 2013 she participated in the show "Circus HalliGalli", which won the German Comedy Award for Best Comedy Show. In addition, she hosted "The Big Surprise" and other formats on ProSieben and represented the ARD for the football World Cup in Russia. Palina Rojinski is also known as a DJ under the stage name Palina Power. She has had her own podcast since 2019 "Podkinski" on Spotify, which quickly became one of the most successful German podcasts.
ELYAS M’BAREK

Milo

On the character Milo
Milo is looking for his place in life. He got stuck in the nightlife, has been a bartender for far too long and realizes that it doesn’t fulfil him. A scene at the beginning of the film describes his situation well: On his way home from a one-night stand, early in the morning, he observes fathers and mothers bringing their children to school. He feels like an alien who is not part of this daytime world. It becomes painfully clear to him how much he would like to have a family and a regular working life. He reaches his limits because his friend Renzo has resigned himself to coming home drunk every night and is living a life clear of responsibility. A difference that puts their friendship to test. When he meets Sunny, he knows that she is worth it to immediately change his life for her.

The shooting
It was just great to shoot at authentic locations during the Berlin summer, and I think that translates into the film! The club scenes we shot are just really Berlin. Sometimes it was a bit difficult because people can be tough and have little patience when a film team blocks the sidewalk. But that’s what defines the city: it’s confrontational, everyone can do what they want, live their life - the film is a very good reflection of a big city like Berlin.

What the audience can expect
As with all good comedies, I hope that people can be touched by the story and laugh a lot at the same time. And be well entertained by a lot of action and shameless Berlin nightlife! I think the audience will experience lots of surprises and fun watching this film.

FREDERICK LAU

Renzo

On the character Renzo
Renzo is a good person, who is highly emotional and never enjoyed the safety and security of a stable family. The latter is one of his greatest wishes, even if he cannot admit this right away. The chaos of the streets and nightlife has been with him ever since his youth and he is constantly struggling with addiction in every way, but also makes great efforts to giving his life a purpose. He was in a relationship with a girlfriend whose son he treated like his own, and he strongly desires a family of his own as a counterweight to the night. He desires bicycle excursions, but is not yet able to transact this wish into reality. This changes in the course of the film. Renzo constantly acts upon his gut instinct, doesn’t think about the consequences of his choices, and so slips from one mess to the next. The most important relationship in his life is his friendship to Milo. Without Milo, Renzo would have little chance
of bailing himself out of his chaos. At the same time, Milo needs Renzo with his weird ideas, his daring, clumsy nature, and the genuine love and friendship that he gives.

*The shooting*
There were new highlights every day. The great thing about being an actor, is that you can do something you have never done before: race through the forest with a burning car, survive completely crazy game nights in dwarf and elf costumes...

*What the audience can expect*
This is the funniest film I've ever made! It surprises with the most absurd, wild plot twists, which are still believable. I think the audience will have a lot of fun!

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**PALINA ROJINSKI**

*Sunny*

*On the character Sunny*
Sunny is a strong, young woman, an original Berliner. She is the daughter of a restaurateur and therefore has a strong affinity to nightlife. She has built a successful career, but now longs for further purpose and a family. Her search for the right suitor proves to be a challenge, in Berlin and especially the industry she works in, as most men turn out to be unreliable Tinder hunters or in the midst of the “nightlife chaos”. That’s why she doesn’t want to start dating Milo, at first. She doesn’t trust him. In addition, she is about to leave for Atlanta, the epicenter of the music scene and a great professional opportunity.

What I like about Sunny, is that she truly is who she is and in turn searches for honesty. That’s why she keeps clashing with the current Zeitgeist. She misses the honesty in music, the honesty in dating - she has lost sight of reality in this Instagram world. She is vulnerable, romantic, can sometimes make naïve mistakes, but she is always proactive, courageous and confidently makes her own decisions. Simon created a cool, strong female role - thank you for that!

*The shooting*
This was the most amazing team, everyone was totally respectful to each other. The whole team was like a pirate family and the shoot was like a wild trip on the high seas; an adventure that we weathered together.

We got to shoot at the most sensational locations: in Mitte, where I live and was raised, near my old school path in Kreuzberg and in many other corners of the city. It was a real challenge not to laugh whilst filming the many absurd scenes, especially for us actors, as everyone behind the cameras was all smiles.

I’m especially grateful for our make-up artist Peter Bour, whose passion for make-up was infectious. I have never felt so comfortable and beautiful making a film, also thanks to our costume designer, Silke Faber’s outfit creations. An actresses’ appearance plays a significant role in making her feel good and confident. And that’s not vanity, just if the camera focusses closely on you and the image is then blown up on the big screen, it can be unsettling to think
about whether there are dark circles beneath your eyes or whether anything unflatteringly sticks out in the dress you’re wearing. Silke and Peter did an excellent job and made us all feel secure.

**What the audience can expect**

They are not ready for how hilarious this film is. But there are unexpected moments that are surprisingly intense and hard, that can terrify the viewer a little. I think it’s definitely a perfect date film - its great fun for men and women alike. In general, people should have more date nights at cinemas again! But it is also a film for groups of friends, for couples who have been together for a long time, for everyone actually. You come out feeling tipsy, with a refreshed kick and are left feeling ready to take on an adventure. It’s probably the most beautiful film I’ve ever made, definitely the coolest and funniest!

**ABOUT THE CREATORS**

**SIMON VERHOEVEN**  
*Director and Screenplay Author*

Simon Verhoeven was born in Munich in 1972. He began to gain practical experience in film as a set runner and video operator while he was still in school. At the age of 13 he wrote his first play, which was performed by the school theatre in his high school. Once he graduated high school, Simon Verhoeven went to the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in New York for a year, after which he completed a four-year script and directing course at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. For his short film *Nice meeting you*, he received a Lew Wasserman Award at the Festival of American Film Schools.

He financed his studies with odd jobs, music video directing and roles in various television films such as *Vino Santo* (1998, by Xaver Schwarzenberger), *Zerbrechliche Zeugin* (2000, director: Ben Verbong) and also American productions such as *Bride of the Wind* (*Die Windsbraut*, 2001, director: Oscar® award winner Bruce Beresford). Simon Verhoeven has appeared in over 30 cinema and television films. These include Sönke Wortmann’s *Das Wunder von Bern* (2002), Doris Dörrie’s comedy *Der Fischer und seine Frau* (2004) and *Girls on Top 2* (Mädchen, Mädchen 2 - Loft oder Liebe) (2003, with Diana Amft and Karoline Herfurth). In 2007 he took on a role in Bora Dagtekin’s hit series *Doctor’s Diary – Männer sind die beste Medizin*, and the following year he was the co-pilot Jürgen Vietor of the 1977 kidnapped "Landshut" in Roland Suso Richter’s award-winning TV film *Mogadischu* (ARD) and in 2008 he shot the ARD two-piece *The Sinking of the Laconia* (Laconia) by Uwe Janson.

After directing a few short films and music videos, Simon Verhoeven went onto his first feature film, the satirical comedy *100 Pro* (2001, with Ken Duken), which was described by the Süddeutsche Zeitung as the “Kir Royal for the next generation”. After a dry spell of several years as a director, in which he was unable to set up projects, he achieved a breakthrough with *Men in the City* (*Männerherzen*) (2009) and an enormous success among audiences and critics. *Men in the City*
(Männerherzen) was awarded the Jupiter Award 2010 for Best Film and the Bavarian Film Award for Best Screenplay. The entire ensemble received a Bambi and the Bavarian Film Award audience award for their performance. Justus von Dohnányi also won the German Film Award for his portrayal of pop singer Bruce Berger. The satirical hymn "Alle Kinder dieser Erde" by Bruce Berger, written by Simon Verhoeven, became a viral hit on YouTube. The film was produced as a "remake" in various countries. After Verhoeven made the sequel and thus his third feature film as a director based on his own script with Men in the City 2 (Männerherzen und die ganz ganz große Liebe) (2011), he explored a completely different genre in 2014 with his internationally cast, low-budget horror-thriller Unfriend about the cyber world that hit theatres worldwide.

Then Simon Verhoeven brought the most successful film of 2016 into the cinemas: Welcome to Germany (Willkommen bei den Hartmanns). The film processes the refugee crisis, and social tensions surrounding it, on the microcosm of a disputed family in the form of a social satire. It became a phenomenon that won a large number of awards in Germany, was nominated for the European Film Award and was theatrically released on an international scale. There was a theatre version of the film, which celebrated its premiere at the Vienna Burgtheater.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

A CELEBRATION OF BERLIN’S NIGHTLIFE

Even as a young author, I was fascinated by nightlife as a setting for stories. It is a place that promises so many dreams, so much excitement, and so many temptations. But it is also a place that hides the deepest abysses, some people can no longer find their way out of… “, says director Simon Verhoeven. “During my youth and my studies in New York, I regularly worked in gastronomy. I have always had a passion for the people who work in this industry and for their dreams, which often remain dreams. The bartenders, that Elyas and Freddy play, are a tribute to the people I met. Those who are standing with one leg in the underworld or struggle with addiction, who desperately try to keep a grip, but at the same time embody the power of the nightlife. I see it as Milo expresses it in the film: nightlife has always been important in human history. Even during the Stone Age, people danced and drummed around the fire to drive away evil spirits, celebrate life, harvest, fertility and community. In a way, people have preserved this tradition. For me, of course, nightlife does not only mean the glittering lights, the clubs, the bars, but also the simple “currywurst” stall, the struggling dance café, the pirate ship in the children’s playground, where you might have smoked your first cigarette as a teenager, the last subway home, the disillusionment at dawn and more than that - the longing for a safe arrival in the day. Because this dream of many people who work in the nocturnal wilderness, the desire for security at dawn, for a steady relationship, for a small idyll, for the perhaps bourgeois bike trip, for family, for safety - this wish has stayed with me since my encounter with the people from the nightlife. I always found it touching, funny and charming - as a contradiction to the inconsistent image of the night. Ultimately, not many manage to actually make this
dream of a ‘bike trip’ a reality. “ The idea to tell the story of the journey through the night, that is simultaneously a comedy, friendship and gangster film, has been on the director’s mind for a while.

**QUIRIN BERG UND MAX WIEDEMANN**

*Producers*

Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann have shared their passion for film ever since their school time. In 2003 they founded their company Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion, alongside their studies at the University of Television and Film Munich. The establishment of W & B television followed in 2010. Both companies are part of the newly founded Leonine studio since January 2020. Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann are shareholders and co-founders of Leonine and lead as managing directors of the Leonine Holding and Production Officers, the entire fiction production department. As Chief Creative Officer, Quirin Berg is also responsible for Leonine’s creative direction. As Chief Business Development Officer, Max Wiedemann is responsible for the development of new business areas and their integration.

The combination of cinema and TV, the focus on sophisticated and commercial projects, their pioneering spirit, a great team and the often early collaboration with outstanding creatives have made Wiedemann & Berg one of the most successful production houses in Germany. Their first feature film, the directorial debut of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck *The Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen)* was awarded an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007, followed by *Never Look Away (Werk ohne Autor)*, which received two Oscar nominations in 2019. Other hit films include Baran bo Odar's cyber thriller *Who Am I – Kein System ist sicher* and Simon Verhoeven's comedy *Welcome to Germany (Wilkommen bei den Hartmanns)* the most successful German film of 2016 with almost 3.9 million admissions. *Nightlife* is their fifth collaboration with Simon Verhoeven, and was domestically released in February 2020.

The wide range of television projects for all major German broadcasters begins with the classic TV movie up to the establishment of new Tatort teams, from special event productions to large public service multiples and prime-time series. In addition to the classic program for free TV, Wiedemann & Berg has also positioned itself as the first company in the new markets of pay TV and VoD. They created the first ever self-produced series on German pay-TV for TNT Series in 2012, followed by the cult series *4 Blocks* and *Almost Fly*, the latest collaborations with this broadcaster. Wiedemann & Berg also produces *Dark*, the first German Netflix original, and *Der Pass*, one of Sky’s first originals. *Tribes of Europa*, another large series, is currently in production for Netflix. The producers are also working with the German streaming service Joyn, for the 2020 event series *Blackout* based on Marc Elsberg's bestseller.

The producers and their productions have received numerous nominations and awards, including: Academy Award, award from the German Academy for Television, BAFTA,
Bambi, Bavarian TV Award, Bavarian Film Award, César, European Film Award, Hollywood Reporter Award, German Television Award, German Film Award, television film award of the German Academy of Performing Arts, Golden Camera, Golden Nymph, Grimme Award, GQ Award, LA Critics Award, Magnolia Award, Mira Award, Rockie Award, Romy and Golden Globe.

WORLD SALES

*Picture Tree International*

Picture Tree International (PTI) is an energetic and fast-growing world sales company with its headquarters in Berlin. The core business is worldwide licensing across all platforms, with the company maintaining a presence at all the major film and television markets. Alongside licensing, PTI is also able to act as your German co-producer and local distributor via a fully integrated business model that offers producers individual sales and financing strategies in a results-driven and transparent partnership, something essential in today’s ever changing audio-visual industry landscape.

PTI’s line-up of up to 15 films a year is designed to ensure the right mix of arthouse and crossover productions to fully maximize the revenue potential of each film. Picture Tree International was founded in December 2012 by Andreas Rothbauer and has been run jointly by his partner and Co-Managing Director Yuan Rothbauer since 2017.

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