TOBIS FILM in cooperation with TELEPOOL presents a TRAUMFABRIK BABELSBERG production in co-production with STUDIO BABELSBERG, PANTALEON FILMS, TOBIS FILMPRODUKTION, ARRI MEDIA, HEERTX FILM, SAMFILM and FUNKHAUS BERLIN EVENTS.

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A film by MARTIN SCHREIER

starring DENNIS MOJEN, EMILIA SCHÜLE, HEINER LAUTERBACHT, KEN DUKEN, NIKOLAI KINSKI, ELLENIE SALVO GONZÁLEZ and MICHAEL GWISDEK

Germany 2019 | 128 minutes | Cinemascope 2.39 | DOLBY ATMOS

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They fall in love as extras on a movie set and play the leading roles in the love story of their lives against the turbulent backdrop of history.

Summer 1961. Emil (Dennis Mojen) has just started working as an extra at DEFA Studio Babelsberg when he falls in love with a French dancer named Milou (Emilia Schüle). The two of them are clearly made for each other but are torn apart when East Germany closes its border and erects the Berlin Wall on August 13th of that year. It looks as if the lovebirds will never see each other again. That is, until Emil comes up with a daring plan …

TRAUMFABRIK is the first film from the newly founded production company Traumfabrik Babelsberg and the first self-made production for Studio Babelsberg in over 20 years. Director Martin Schreier (UNSERE ZEIT IST JETZT) spins a magic love story featuring two young shooting stars set against the backdrop of one of the oldest functioning film studios in the world. Dennis Mojen (BRÜDER, ENEME, NIGENDWIR) and Emilia Schüle (KU’DAMM 56 + 59, HIGH SOCIETY) take on the leading roles of the resourceful and deeply smitten Emil and the gorgeous dancer Milou. The film’s star-studded cast also includes Heiner Lauterbach, Ken Dukon, Nikolai Kinski and Ellenie Salvo González.
Emil is both literally and figuratively blinded when he first lays eyes on Milou. On the one hand, he is dazzled by her beauty, and on the other, the glare of a spotlight installed directly behind the young woman, temporarily takes away his sight. This is no coincidence, of course, as the two characters see each other for the first time on the set of a film studio, where teams of filmmakers are working hard creating beautiful illusions. Emil, fresh from his obligatory military service in the East German army and now working as an extra, is taking his first tour of the bustling studio when his gaze falls on Milou. She gives him the finger. And from that moment on, he's hooked.

It's the summer of 1961, and the world is still in order at the historic DEFA film studio just outside of Berlin in East Germany. We see throngs of actors, craftsmen, extras and creatives making films as if on an assembly line. It is literally a TRAUMFABRIK – a "dream factory" – one that could compete with Hollywood any day. Emil dives into this world of beautiful appearances, not because he's always dreamt of making films, but because he simply has nothing better to do at the moment. This young newcomer has yet to learn where the border runs between reality and fantasy in film: he takes Milou for a major movie star, even though the beautiful dancer is only working as a double for the French film diva Beatrice Morée (Ellenie Salvo Gonzáles), who is playing the leading role in an opulent cinematic pirate adventure. It takes a while before Emil understands all the various contexts and connections. But this insight changes nothing about his feelings for Milou, and he knows that he would do anything to win her over.

And then history strikes like a lightning bolt out of the blue into the middle of all the hustle and bustle. On August 13th, the GDR closes its border and there is no longer any getting through between East and West. In other words, before Emil and Milou can even become a couple, they are torn apart by history – unreachable for one another for reasons that are beyond their control. Milou travels back to Paris, while Emil stays back in the GDR, deeply depressed in Babelsberg. But he decides not to lose his life to chance, and instead takes fate into his own hands, writing a screenplay designed to help him accomplish a fantastical conquest. Taking advantage of the chaos associated with the building of the Wall, he first pretends to be a production manager and then begins to hatch a plan that is just as crazy as it is dangerous – all behind the back of studio boss Beck (Heiner Lauterbach). In order to bring Milou back to the GDR, he knows he must make a film that Beatrice cannot refuse.

With his film TRAUMFABRIK, director Martin Schreier succeeds in showcasing his master craftsmanship and sense of perfect timing. In the spectacular images of his film, he manages to resurrect the world of classical studio production and spin a turbulent narrative of mistaken identities that recalls many of the masterpieces of the golden age of cinema. At the same time, his film is a declaration of love to Studio Babelsberg. Producers Tom Zickler and Christoph Fisser cast a true dream duo in the form of young stars Dennis Mojén and Emilia Schüle, a couple whose chemistry is palpable right from the start. The cast also include many acting greats: Ken Duker plays Emil’s brother; Heiner Lauterbach expertly endows the part of the strict studio boss with splendid wickedness; Nikolai Kinski is Emil’s competitor for Milou’s affections; and, last but not least, Ellenie Salvo Gonzáles plays the temperamental film diva with a flair for parody. TRAUMFABRIK brings together grand emotions, comic wit and a touch of historical nostalgia to create a magical and endearing love story.
The DEFA film studio in Babelsberg in the summer of 1961: it’s a place located somewhere between a timeless sense of magic and a creative spirit of optimism. Fresh from his obligatory military service in the GDR army, Emil Hellwerk (Dennis Mojen) finds himself in front of the huge vaulted gate at the historical “dream factory” studio. His older brother Alex (Ken Duken), who is employed at the studio as a plasterer, has gotten him a job as an extra. Emil knows very little about the world of cinema, but he doesn’t have any other big plans at the moment. This changes in an instant when he passes by the set of a pirate movie and sees a French dancer named Milou (Emilia Schüle).

Milou works as the dance double for Beatrice Morée (Ellenie Salvo Gonzáles), France’s biggest film star. Emil is immediately fascinated by Milou’s stunning appearance and, after a couple of attempts, succeeds at getting close to her at an improvised dinner. Unfortunately, Milou must travel back to France the very next day, so he invites her to join him for a surprise on her final morning.

Emil works the whole night through creating a fantastical dance stage for Milou. That morning, she tries to get to Babelsberg from her hotel in West Berlin, but it’s August 13th, 1961, that is, the day the Berlin Wall goes up. Barbed wire, dug-up streets and armed soldiers are blocking all roads between East and West! There’s no way through. Milou doesn’t understand the world anymore.

Far away in her French home town, Milou seems unreachable to Emil. Being the enthusiastic improvisation artist he is, he refuses to give up so fast. He uses the chaos of the era to get himself a position as a production director and hatch a crazy and dangerous plan behind the back of Beck, the studio boss (Heiner Lauterbach). In order to get Milou back to the GDR, Emil decides that he is going to have to produce a film that Beatrice can’t refuse. And his plan works, because the diva simply cannot resist the offer to play the lead in “Cleopatra.”

A year goes by before the shooting of the films begins in Babelsberg. But what nobody could have predicted is that Milou is now engaged to an actor named Omar (Nikolai Kinski). Emil is devastated. Is his plan doomed to fail? The forces working against him are massive: a turbulent studio operation, a power-obsessed studio boss, the insanity of a film shoot and, most of all, the sheer confusion of emotions. Should he fight for her love?

SYNOPSIS
My first love was a girl named Lily from Chile. Back then, Lily and her sister Tatiana introduced me to a new world into which I eagerly immersed myself. Instead of our regular German black bread with salami and cheese, we ate big meals in the evenings and there was lots of singing and revelry. It turned my home town of Jena-Neulobeda into the most beautiful place on earth. But that all came to a sudden end in 1979. Lily and Tatiana had to leave the GDR with their parents very quickly, as they had become persona non grata. There would be no opportunity to see them again. We weren’t allowed to leave to visit them, and they wouldn’t be able to visit us. Plus it took weeks for letters to reach each other.

And then came November 9th, 1989, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. On November 10th, I received a telegram in my mailbox, an invitation to Barcelona. At Christmas 1989, I was finally able to see Lily and Tatiana again. We did a lot of talking and laughing. But ten years are a long time.

What remains are the great memories and, of course, the thought: What would have happened if...? Emil definitely did it better than I did.
“What really united us all was passion. Film studios are places that attract passionate people who pull together to achieve a common goal. That kind of atmosphere can create true magic.”

Martin Schreier

For Tom Zickler, it was a return to his origins. In early 2017, he co-founded his new production company on the exact spot where he had begun his career as a young unit manager in 1986: Studio Babelsberg, the oldest film studio in the world. His co-founder and longtime business partner was German superstar Til Schweiger, with whom he had produced hits like KNOCKIN’ ON HEAVEN’S DOOR (1997), BARFUSS (2005), KENNENIHABEN (2007), FREUNDSHILF (2010) and HONIG IM KOPF (2014). “Over my years working with Til, we always had days of shooting here in Babelsberg, and it eventually inspired in me a desire to return to the studio,” recalls Zickler. “I’ve always loved shooting films as part of the studio system here.”

The company is called TRAUMFABRIK – “dream factory” in English – and the name says it all. On the one hand, it refers to the historical site where movie history was made, and on the other, it’s the name of Zickler’s first film project in his new, old home. “The idea was to make a film about a dream factory under the socialist regime in East Germany (GDR),” explains Zickler. “People working in the film industry in the GDR managed to operate on a completely independent basis. Everyone had their own particular profession here at the studio complex. There was a garden nursery, a butcher, a bakery, etc. If you needed flowers, you didn’t have to go to a store.”

The team still had a long way to go before the story was finished. However, there was one thing Zickler and Schreier were sure of, namely who was going to play the female lead: Emilia Schüle, a shooting star who had wowed critics and audiences in KU’DAMM 56 (2016), JUGEND OHNE GOTT and HIGH SOCIETY (both 2017). “We basically developed the project for Emilia,” says the director. “Tom and I were big fans of hers, and she had played a small guest role in my last film, so before we even started with the screenplay, I called Emilia and asked her whether she would have any interest in playing the dancer in our film. After that, we had her in mind the whole time we were working.” As Schüle herself remembers: “They invited me to Babelsberg and gave me a tour of the complex. Then we sat down in the cafeteria for a chat. There was nothing on paper yet, just an idea that I would play a dancer, that is, a dance double. And this is exactly what the story turned out to be.”

A DREAM FACTORY WITHIN THE DREAM FACTORY – THE KICKOFF

Back in early 2016, Zickler had gotten in touch with his director of choice, Martin Schreier, to have a preliminary talk about directing the film. Zickler had already produced Schreier’s feature film debut, UNSERE ZEIT IST JETZT, a comedy romance about the German rapper CBO, that same year. “We got our screenwriter Arend Hemmers to join us and we all took a walk across the studio complex,” reports Schreier. “Tom told us some great stories from his own life. For example, a major scene in our new film features some geese, and this is based on his life. I had always wanted to make a romantic film, so my first idea was to make a movie about an extra who falls in love with a superstar.”
The project was a stroke of pure luck for Christoph Fisser, who heads up Studio Babelsberg together with Charlie Woebcken and also functions as one of the film’s producers. “For us at Studio Babelsberg and for me as a producer, it was a dream come true to be able to work together with Tom. It is the first German-language project in 25 years that was made here from start to finish. It represents a major opportunity for Babelsberg.”

“We went through quite a few stages in terms of the script,” notes Zickler. “At first, we locked ourselves in a house up north for two days,” adds Schreier. “While we were there, Tom told us stories from his time in Babelsberg, and we looked at photo albums and old DEFA films. I’m a big Steven Spielberg fan, so I also remember reading about how he made his way to the Universal lot as a young man. Nobody knew who he was, but after only a couple of days, he had gotten himself a studio pass and a telephone line. So I thought to myself, what if our young hero pretends to be a production manager just to gain access to a star. And then, when we were trying to think of something that could possibly tear these two lovebirds apart, the Berlin Wall came up.”

TRAUMFABRIK begins in the summer of 1961, right before that fateful day of August 13th, when the GDR closed its western border and started building what came to be known as the Berlin Wall. “It’s a truly epic love story about a young man working as an extra at a film studio who falls in love with a young woman working as a double for a dance star,” explains Emilia Schüle, putting it in a nutshell. “The two lovebirds are then torn apart when the Berlin Wall goes up, but their love story is grand that no wall in the world can keep them from each other for long.” Remmers’ first script was 150 pages long. “I’d never read such a long screenplay,” laughs Schüle. “The only problem with the script was that many people thought the film would be too expensive to make,” says Zickler. “And it’s true, some of the things in the screenplay were pretty opulent.” After all, the film centers on the making of a historical film with several elaborate sets. However, the trick was that the producers took into consideration all the available sets at Babelsberg while conceiving the story. “From the very beginning, we already had the existing sets in mind,” reports Zickler. “For example, we made set of ANONYMUS (2011), which had been built and rebuilt many times, as our pirate set. The same goes for the scenes with the orchestra and the office of studio boss Beck. All of these sets were already there. If we had had to build all of them from scratch, we wouldn’t have been able to keep within our budget of 8 million Euro.”

Schreier adds: “It was important to us that we talk to people who had worked at DEFA (the film studio as it was called during the GDR era) people who had experienced that era up close and who could tell us all about how the studio used to operate. For example, it’s true that French productions were actually shot here, too.”
It was clear from the very beginning that Emilia Schüle would play the lead role of the French dance double Milou, which meant that the next step for the creators was to find the right actor to take on the equally demanding role of Emil Hellwerk, the enterprising young extra who proves himself to be a true romantic and becomes the director of a major prestige production in record time. “I had seen Dennis once before during a casting call for another film, and I had totally fallen in love with him,” says Martin Schreier about Dennis Mojen, an actor most recently seen in WACH (2018). “Dennis brings such a freshness and youthful charm to his work, along with a sincere love of play, which is exactly what we wanted for Emil.”

What Mojen himself liked most about the role of Emil was that he follows his gut a lot of the time: “People today tend to behave in ways that are the opposite of intuitive,” the actor argues. “They are always thinking things over, which can lead to a kind of high-brow stasis. Emil does the exact opposite. He feels something and then just knows what he has to do.”

Emil receives support from his brother Alex, who works as a plasterer in Babelsberg and gets him a job there as an extra. Later on, Alex also helps his brother carry out his ingenious plan. For this role, Schreier called on Ken Duken, a veteran actor with whom he had already worked on his graduate film ROBIN HOOD (2013). “Ken was a great creative partner who helped me out a lot. He is like a brother to me, both in spirit and in the creative sense.”

Emil’s rival for Milou’s affections is the French actor Omar. When Emil finally sees the love of his life again after one year of separation, she is engaged to Omar, who is played by Nikolai Kinski, an actor most recently seen in the series BERLIN STATION (2019) and DEAD END (2019). “Nikolai came in for a regular casting like everyone else,” reports Schreier. “And when he stood in front of me in the casting office, he had an unbelievable presence. I’ve rarely felt that in an actor. I immediately had the sense that I was standing in front of a superstar. And this is exactly what characterizes Omar.”

As Kinski notes: “My inspiration for the role was actually Omar Sharif, a confident, charming gentleman, proud, courageous, an eternal gambler, a romantic, but also very moody and unfortunately a very jealous type.”

A similarly charming, beautiful, but also unbelievably pretentious character in TRAUMFABRIK is the French film star Beatrice Morée. She is Milou’s boss and plays the lead role in Emil’s production of “Cleopatra.” Actress Ellenie Salvo González (WIE MÄNNER ÜBER FRAUEN REDEN, 2016) proved to be the ideal casting. “Ellenie is a true big brother and feels responsible for Emil,” says Kinski about his role. But he also allows himself to get carried away by his kid brother’s energy and naiveté. Emil is a bit like the Pied Piper of Hamelin. At some point, however, Alex gives him a big wake-up call and says: ‘You have to step up to the plate, make this film and give it your best shot.’

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a dream,” gushes Schreier. “She immediately blew us all away at the casting. We were always trying to avoid as many clichés as possible, including those relating to French divas. And this is exactly what she managed to do. Audiences will have sympathy for this star, not just antipathy. And we owe all of that to Ellenie.”

Another stand-out role is that of the strict studio boss Beck. “He’s a classic antagonist,” explains German superstar Heiner Lauterbach, who succeeds here in yet another brilliant role, thus providing a perfect follow-up to his work in WIR SIND DIE NEUEN (2014) and WILKOMMEN REI DEN HARTMANNS (2016). “Beck is the biggest antipode to the love between Emil and Milou, because he’s always in the way.” As Martin Schreier notes: “We didn’t want any of those usual clichés of East German functionaries that one sees in a lot of films. You know, a bit dumb, silly and usually overweight. We wanted to give the character a certain air of dignity and sovereignty, and there is no other actor in Germany who embodies that more than Heiner. It truly was a dream to work with him. I’d been a fan of his for years and then suddenly he’s standing there in front of you and is such a charming and unaffected actor. I will never forget what he said in our first telephone conversation: ‘My dear fellows, I’ve been waiting twenty years for someone to finally make a grand-scale German romantic film again.’”

Legendary German actor Michael Gwisdek was also immediately enthusiastic when he heard about the project, which has him playing a role in the section of the film set in 2019. Gwisdek himself worked on a number of Babelsberg films back in the day. But the screenplay also spoke to him on another level: “When I read the script, I couldn’t believe it,” he remembers. “I made TREFFEN IN TRAVERS (1988), my first film as director, right before the Wall came down, and I had hoped that it would save my marriage to Corinna Harfouch, who, of course, played the leading role. Everyone was against it, but I was able to make a deal with the then DEFA boss. Everybody thought I was going to fail miserably, but I ended up taking the film to Cannes, waving the flag of the GDR.”
Shooting on the film began on May 23rd, 2018 at Studio Babelsberg. The production stayed there for around four weeks, followed by outdoor shooting on the studio site, then ten days at the Funkhaus on Nalepastraße in Berlin-Schöneberg, seven additional days on the grounds of the former Tempelhof airport and then shooting at a bridge in Spandau that served as a double for the Glienicker Bridge, which looks too different today from back in the day. The scenes set in France and featuring veteran actor Michael Gwisdek in the role of “Grandpa Emil” were also shot in Brandenburg. This totaled 43 days of shooting by late July 2018.

Prior to getting underway, the crew had to build the Egypt set which, unlike most of the other sets, had to be created from scratch. “We had a couple of animated discussions, just like any producer and director would,” admits Tom Zickler when asked about working with director Martin Schreier. “We discussed every centimeter of the columns, the height, the depth of the horizon. It had taken Martin and our cameraman Martin Schlecht six months to prepare it all. Everything was storyboarded and very convincing.”

The team had four workshops at its disposal for the creation of the costumes, including four large changing rooms for extras. “I wasn’t 100 percent sure that everything would work the way I’d planned,” admits Zickler. “It’s quite a big undertaking when you have 350 extras and a team of 150 people on one day of shooting. An average film production team has two people working on costumes, and two for makeup. But we had 35 people working on costumes and 40 for makeup.”

The costumes for the Roman soldiers didn’t have to be specially made, though, because they originated from Ridley Scott’s GLADIATOR (2000) and were imported from Spain.

In keeping with the unusual motto “the best comes first,” the very first scene they shot was actually the huge final scene. “We started with the big emotional scene,” remembers Christoph Fisser. “In other words, the actors didn’t really know each other very well yet, but they still had to generate these huge emotions on their very first day of work.”

“It’s true, we started with the finale, with hundreds of extras, dancers and elephants,” exclaims Nikolai Kinski. “At first, I thought it was a bit megolomania, but it was totally worth it. Everyone got to see right away what the film was about and that it was going to be a massive spectacle.”
“The problem was that Emilia had done ballet training two months prior to the start of shooting and especially intensively in the last two weeks prior to the start of shooting,” explains Zickler. “If we had shot other scenes first, she wouldn’t have had the time to train.”

“Yes, we started with the finale,” confirms Emilia Schüle, who performs a breathtaking dance in the scene. “It was great for me because I was able to go into it with full concentration and be perfectly prepared. All of the departments had worked towards this moment very intensively.”

“Well, the thing with the elephants was indeed a bit of an adventure,” grins Martin Schreier when asked about the most impressive ‘actors’ in the film. “We were all very excited. We handled the animals with great care, and everything worked well. They were very nice elephants and all had thick skins.”

A similarly spectacular scene was the large-scale sequence at the beginning of the film when Emil first enters the studio complex in Babelsberg and immediately gets thrown into the melee of the production. As lead actor Dennis Mojen recalls: “Shooting that scene was insane! It took six, seven hours, over and over again! It was unbelievable how it ultimately all worked.”

“The opening scene was incredibly important to me,” explains Schreier. “I wanted audiences to really be thrown into this crazy, fairy-tale world of cinema and the whole studio atmosphere—just like Emil is when he arrives there fresh from his military service. This is why it was clear to me from the beginning that we shouldn’t have any cuts or edits in the scene. I wanted to create an irresistible pull on the viewer—one that immediately takes them into this vibrant, magical world.”

“We were already working on the plan sequence six months before we started shooting,” recalls Tom Zickler. “Initially, we rehearsed the scene with a small team, just the assistant director and production managers. As we approached the first day of shooting, however, the team started getting bigger and bigger. And then, when we entered the critical stage, even more team members got involved, for example, our storyboarder played the part of the dromedary. And then, on the day we were scheduled to shoot the sequence with Dennis, Ken and the countless extras, we rehearsed once and then shot the scene a dozen times until it was perfect.”

Later on, Schreier and Zickler showed their sequence to one of their advisors who had worked at the studio in the 1960s. “He burst into tears, gave me a big hug and said: ‘It’s exactly like we did it back then!’ It was a moving moment for both of us,” sighs Schreier.
Shooting the film was a harmonious experience for all. “We had a great atmosphere on set,” recalls Heiner Lauterbach. “By that I mean a nice mixture of easygoingness and expert concentration. Nobody raised their voice once.”

“We’ve made over 100 films since I’ve been at Babelsberg,” adds Christoph Fisser, “but we’ve never had one where we noticed that every single person was having such a good time.”

“It was a picture perfect landing, so to speak,” says producer Tom Zickler with a note of satisfaction. “We had our first unplanned overtime on the 37th day of shooting, and that came when we were shooting on location.”

“I wish I could make all my films the way we made this one,” says Martin Schreier effusively. “It was a dream in the truest sense. The fantastic thing about it was that everything was there for us on-site. All of the departments were in the direct vicinity of the complex even two months before we started shooting. We didn’t have to waste any time driving anywhere, and everything was so close by.

“This meant that the team developed into a very tight community. It also made everything considerably easier to plan. We had so much more control over what we were doing.”

“I see TRAUMFABRIK as a love letter to cinema,” explains Emilia Schüle. “It’s a film about crazy filmmakers made by a team of crazy filmmakers, and it’s also about big, big love. Audiences get to see pirate villages, travel to Egypt and witness Cleopatra at work. They can let themselves be carried away on a very romantic and dramatic love story.”

“We really wanted to touch people’s hearts,” says Dennis Mojen, “and show them just what you can accomplish with the right amount of daring and enthusiasm. The most important thing is to actually do it.”

“I wanted to make a feel-good film,” notes Martin Schreier. “A film that entertains and inspires people. The message of the film is that if you want to achieve your dreams, you have to fight for them. Love overcomes every wall, every border. It’s a film that shows you how great life can be if you just take that one extra step.”
“Emil doesn’t waste time thinking about things, he just does them. He sees Milou and knows right away that she’s the one. Where do you find that today?”

DENNIS MOJEN was born in 1993 in Hamburg and started his acting career at a young age in the children’s series DIE PFEFFERKÖRNER (2009). He followed that up with roles in the feature films BISSL AUS ALS NIX (2010), LENATOYE (2014), TOD DEN HIPPIES! (2015) and HÖR T (2016). He also lent his voice to the German version of HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 1–3 (2010/2014/2019). Up next for Mojen is his work on two major historical TV shows: MORDKOMMISSION BERLIN 1 (2015) and KU’DAMM 56 (2016). At the moment, he has a number of projects in the pipeline, including NARZISS UND GOLDMUND, DIE VERGESSENLICH DER EICHHÖRNCHEN and the international series TREADSTONE.

EMILIA SCHÜLE started taking ballet lessons at the age of seven. At 13, she started dancing in a show-dance group and, one year later, landed her first TV role. Today, she is one of the most sought-after actresses of her generation in Germany. In 2017 alone, she shot five films – JUGEND OHNE GOTT, HIGH SOCIETY, SIMPEL, ES WAR EINMAL INDIANERLAND and PROFESSOR WALL-IM BORDELL – as well as the series CHARITÉ. Schüle was born in Russia in 1992 and came with her family to Germany as a small child. She completed her university entrance exam (Abitur) at an international school and made her TV debut in 2006 in the multiple award-winning GUTEN MORGEN, Herr GROTHE. She played her first feature film role in FRECHE MÄDCHEN (2008). In 2012, she impressed audiences as a young abuse victim in successive TATORT episodes – “Wegwerf- Mädchendie” and “Das Goldene Band.” She followed that up with roles in the feature films BISSER ALS NIX (2010), LENATOYE (2014), TOD DEN HIPPIES! (2015) and HÖR T (2016). She also lent her voice to the German version of HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 1–3 (2010/2014/2019). Up next for Schüle was her work on two major historical TV shows: MORDKOMMISSION BERLIN 1 (2015) and KU’DAMM 56 (2016). At the moment, she has a number of projects in the pipeline, including NARZISS UND GOLDMUND, DIE VERGESSENLICH DER EICHHÖRNCHEN and the international series TREADSTONE.
"Beck is the classical antagonist. In his function as studio boss, he’s the largest antipode to the love between Emil and Milou. He literally stands in their way."

HEINER LAUTERBACH was born in Cologne, Germany in 1953. He took acting lessons at the age of 18 and made his way to the stage for the first time at the age of 19. He also made a name for himself as a voice actor, lending his voice to such Hollywood stars as Richard Gere, Kevin Costner and John Malkovich. His breakthrough came with the hit comedy MEN (1985) by Doris Dörrie, for which he won the West German Film Prize. After that, Lauterbach played in countless TV films and series, including Helmut Dietl’s social satire BOSSINI (1997), for which he received the Bavarian Film Prize, Dominik Graf’s DER SKORPION (1997) as well as Dieter Wedel’s productions DER SCHATTENMANN (1996) and DIE AFFÄRE SEMMELING (2002). His most successful feature films include SCHLUSSMACHER (2013), DER BLINDE FLECK (2013) and the hit comedies WIR SIND DIE NEUEN (2014) and Simon Verhoeven’s WILLKOMMEN BEI DEN HARTMANNS (2016). Next on the list for Lauterbach is the film adaptation of the novel HANNES (2019).

“Alex is standing in his own way, mostly because he wants to do everything by the book. On the other hand, he’s amused by his little brother’s insolent way of seeing things, which is like watching the sun go down in front of you even while the thunder claps behind you.”

KEN DUKEN no doubt inherited his acting talent from his mother, Christina Loeb. Born in 1979 in Heidelberg, Dukken has played over 90 roles in film and television since then. He made his debut in 1998 in the TV crime show BLUTIGER ERNST alongside Nadja Uhl and Daniel Brühl. One year later, he followed that up with his first feature film SCHLARAFFENLAND, in which he played alongside his TRAUMFABRIK co-star Heiner Lauterbach. In 2000, he took on the role of a psychologist in CAFÉ PARADISO by director Miguel Alexandre. Other films include KAROL – EIN MANN, DER PAPST WURDE (2005), FÉQUE ANDERLE (2006), INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS (2009), TV audiences have seen him in the series NACHTSCHICHT (2003–2008), KRIEG UND FRIEDEN (2007), DAS ADLON – EINE FAMILIENSAGA (2013), PARFUM (2018), TV movie DAS WUNDER VON KÄRnten (2011) and COUNTERPART (2018–2019). For his work in the TV movie DAS WUNDER VON KÄRnten (2011) he received an International Emmy Award. In addition to his work as an actor, he is increasingly also working behind the camera as a director of music videos, among others. In 2017, he made his debut as a director with BERLIN FALLING about a traumatized elite soldier.
Beatrice is an international star. She shoots large-scale films everywhere she goes. She is a full-blooded actress through and through. She loves her job and audiences love her back. She also enjoys yelling at everybody.

ELLENIE SALVO GONZÁLEZ was born in Berlin in 1979, the daughter of an engineer father from Chile and a photographer mother from Germany. Already as a young child, she was fascinated by the world of cinema and theater, attended the Berlinale children's film festival each year, performed on stage and shot her first short film at the age of 15. In order to give her skills a solid foundation, Salvo González completed studies in acting at the University of Arts (UdK) in Berlin. While completing her studies, she appeared in series such as WOLFFS REVIER, SOKO LEIPZIG and ALARM FÜR COBRA 11. Salvo González made her film debut in HUI BUH – DAS SCHLOSSGESPENST (2006). She followed that up with a series of feature film and TV productions, including IM NAMEN DER BRAUT (2006, directed by Peter Gersina), TELL (2007, directed by Mike Eschmann), VOLLIDIOT (2007, directed by Tobi Baumann) and PHANTOMSCHMERZ (2009, directed by Matthias Emcke). In 2012, she played the daughter of Peter Weck in PRAGER GEHEIMNIS and acted alongside Tom Gerhardt in DER BLENDER. In 2011, she took on the role of the lovable and chaotic Katja in the office sitcom SEKRETÄRINNEN – ÜBERLEBEN VON 9 BIS 5. Since 2013, Salvo González has been a fixture in the crime series KOMMISSAR MARTHALER. In Henrik Regel’s comedy WIE MÄNNER ÜBER FRAUEN REDEN (2016), she took on the female lead next to Frederick Lau, Barnaby Metschurat and Oliver Korittke.

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"My inspiration for the role was actually Omar Sharif. A confident, charming gentleman, proud, courageous, an eternal gambler, a romantic, but also a very moody and jealous man."

NIKOLAI KINSKI was born in 1976 in Paris and grew up in the US. He made his film debut as an 11-year-old playing the son of his real-life father Klaus Kinski in the latter’s last film MAGNIFICA. In 1994, he began his studies at UCLA and featured in a number of American independent films in the early 2000s, including TOMILLA SUOP, as well as in off-broadway productions in New York. In 2004, he moved to Germany and soon took on roles in German film and TV productions as well as in international feature films, including the sci-fi film Aeon Flux (2005) starring Oscar winner Charlize Theron. He followed that up with a series of feature film and TV productions, including IM NAMEN DER BRAUT (2006, directed by Peter Germs), TELL (2007, directed by Mike Eschmann), VOLLIDIOT (2007, directed by Tobi Baumann) and PHANTOMSCHMERZ (2009, directed by Matthias Emcke). In 2012, she played the daughter of Peter Weck in PRAGER GEHEIMNIS and acted alongside Tom Gerhardt in DER BLENDER. In 2011, she took on the role of the lovable and chaotic Katja in the office sitcom SEKRETÄRINNEN – ÜBERLEBEN VON 9 BIS 5. Since 2013, Salvo González has been a fixture in the crime series KOMMISSAR MARTHALER. In Henrik Regel’s comedy WIE MÄNNER ÜBER FRAUEN REDEN (2016), she took on the female lead next to Frederick Lau, Barnaby Metschurat and Oliver Korittke.
“It’s a classic tale. A man falls in love with a woman and does the craziest things to capture her heart.”

MICHAEL GWISDEK is one of the best-known actors in Germany. He has received the German Television Award as well as two German Film Prizes. He was born in 1942 in Berlin and studied acting at the Ernst Busch Academy. After completing his studies, he played roles on several stages, including the Volksbühne and the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Gwisdek made his way into film and television in the late 1960s, at first with small roles in DEFA productions, such as SPUR DES Falken (1968) and WEISSE WÖLFE (1969). In the 1970s, he was among the very few GDR artists who were permitted to act with West German directors such as Hark Bohm. Among his most important films in the reunited Germany are Andreas Dresen’s NACHTGESTALTEN (1999), GOOD BYE, LENIN! (2003) by Wolfgang Becker, as well as LEOPOLD (2003) by Leander Haussmann. Gwisdek also appeared in Jan-Ole Gerster’s OH BOY (2012), Robert Thalheim’s KUNDSCHAFTER DES FRIEDENS (2017) and Lars Kraume’s DAS SCHWEIGENDE KLASSENZIMMER (2018).
STUDIO BABELSBERG – THE OLDEST FILM STUDIO IN THE WORLD

1912 TO 1921 – THE BEGINNINGS

On February 12th, 1912, in a glass-house atelier, shooting began on the silent movie DER TOTENTANZ starring Asta Nielsen – thus marking the birth of Studio Babelsberg. Deutsche Bioscop Filmgesellschaft had discovered the old factory complex located just outside of Berlin, and it soon became a vibrant center of the silent film production thanks to its optimal production conditions, which included plenty of space and non-haze daylight. The studio produced such classics as DER STUDENT VON PRAG (1913), DER GOLEM (1915), NOSFERATU (1922), DER LETZTE MANN (1924) by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau and Fritz Lang’s DOKTOR MABUSE (1922).

Babelsberg was also home to the world’s first movie stars: Henny Porten, Lilian Harvey, Pola Negri and Paul Wegener.

1921 TO 1932 – THE GOLDEN 20S

In 1921, the site became the property of Universum Film AG (UFA), which had been founded in 1917. In 1926, this company built a large studio – now called the “Marlene Dietrich Hall” for the large-scale production of METROPOLIS by Fritz Lang. The next chapter in cinema history came in Babelsberg in 1929 with the setting-up of the first sound-film studio in Europe, the “Tonkreuz”. MELODIE DES HERZENS starring Willy Fritsch was Germany’s first full-length feature film with sound from start to finish. This was followed up in 1930 with the first screening of Josef von Sternberg’s DER BLAUE ENGEL starring Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings.

1933 TO 1945 – BABELSBERG GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

The economic hardships at the end of the 1920s pushed UFA to the edge of bankruptcy. After the Nazis’ accession to power in 1933, a number of Nazi propaganda films were made under the auspices of the “Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.” Film-makers such as Josef von Sternberg, Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch, Billy Wilder and stars such as Marlene Dietrich would leave Germany to try their luck in Hollywood. During this era, the main task of Babelsberg Studios was the production of entertainment films designed to distract German audiences from war-related difficulties. Among the films made in this era were MÜNCHHAUSEN (1943) and FEUERZANGENBOWLE (1944), the latter still being popular today. The stars of the era are Zarah Leander, Heinz Rühmann and Hans Albers.

1946 TO 1990 – DEFA

After World War II, it didn’t take long before the studio got a new lease on life. Already on May 4th, 1946, shooting on the first film started Wolfgang Staudte’s DER MOHRER SENDT UNTER UNS starring Heinz Rühmann. The studio became the exclusive venue of feature film production in the GDR and soon advanced – with roughly 2,500 employees – to become the largest film studio in the world. The DEFA studios started the production of more than 1,200 feature films and TV films of various artistic and political orientations, including DAS KÄLTE HERZ (1953), DIE GESCHICHTE VON KLEINEM MUCK (1953), NACKT UNTER WÖLFEN (1963), DAS SINGENDE KLAGENBUCH (1953), DAS KÄLTEHUNDE (1965), SPIEL DER STERN (1965), DER ZORN VON PAUL UND PAULA (1966), WOLFGANG (1968), GESANG DES WEIBES (1969). In 1976, JAKOB DER LÜGNER becomes the only GDR film to be nominated for an Oscar.

1990 TO TODAY – HOLLYWOOD COMES TO BABELSBERG

In August 1992, the former DEFA film studio was sold to the French corporation Compagnie Générale des Eaux (today: Vivendi Universal). In the following years, the company would invest roughly 500 million in the studio and the surrounding media city. The current CEOs, Charlie Woebcken and Christoph Fisser, took over in July 2004 and expanded the site by means of large-scale industrial halls, thus driving forward the internationalization of the site’s production services. 2007 became the most successful business year since the privatization of the company – 12 German and international feature films were produced, including THE READER, VALKYRIE, MONUMENTS MEN, THE BOOK THIEF, THE TRIBUTE OF PANEM: MOCKINGJAY, BRIDGE OF SPIES, THE FIRST AVENGER: CIVIL WAR, Homeland, A CURE FOR WELLNESS, BERLIN STATION and more. Since 2003, productions completed at Studio Babelsberg have received 48 Academy Award nominations and taken home 15 Oscars in different categories.
MARTIN SCHREIER was born in 1980 in Germany’s Taunus region. He began making short films while still at primary school and later gathered practical experience as an intern and freelancer at various production companies. From 2005 to 2006, he studied at the German Film School in Berlin. After that, he studied feature film direction at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. In 2009, he received a scholarship to attend the Hollywood Masterclass at UCLA in Los Angeles and also shot a number of prize-winning short films. The roughly 35-minute THE NIGHT FATHER CHRISTMAS DIED (2010), which focused on three highly different people whose lives cross paths on Christmas Eve with partly tragic consequences, was nominated for the Student Oscar in 2010. In that same year, he received the Pro7/Sat.1-Primetime Award for creating the idea for the thriller ROBIN HOOD. One year later, he became the first holder of the Deutschlandstipendium (German Stipend) at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. In 2012, he shot the film ROBIN HOOD as his graduating project. The thriller about a policeman who robs the branches of a corrupt bank and hands out the money to the needy premiered as the opening film at the Max Ophüls Festival in Saarbrücken. Schreier worked as a co-author (with Wiebke Jaspersen) on the screenplay for the TV drama GEFANGEN IM PARADIES (2016). His second feature-length film as director was UNSERE ZEIT IST JETZT (2016), a film that mixed the genres of film biography, docudrama and comedy about the German rapper Cro, who hires three young artists to make a film about his life.
TOM ZICKLER was born in 1964 and is one of the most renowned film producers in Germany. While still a student, Zickler gained his first experience as a unit manager at DEFA in Babelsberg, where he was employed right up until the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the early 1990s, he co-founded together with Til Schweiger the production company Mr. Brown Entertainment, later Barefoot Films, where Zickler served as managing director until 2016. Zickler and Schweiger have produced numerous highly successful German films, including KNOCKIN’ ON HEAVEN’S DOOR (1997), BARFUSS (2005), KEINOHREN (2007), ZWEI OHRENBÜXEN (2009), KOKOWÄÄH 1 & 2 (2011/2013) and HONIG IM KOPF (2014). Zickler even brought his own life story to the screen in the film FRIENDSHIP! (2010). With the company Checkpoint Berlin, he produced the B-movie series “Planet B.” In 2017, he joined with Studio Babelsberg to co-found the production company Traumfabrik Babelsberg. The goal of this cooperation is to develop and produce German productions and co-productions for Studio Babelsberg. The managing directors of the company are Studio Babelsberg CEOs Christoph Fisser and Tom Zickler.

CHRISTOPH FISSER was born in 1960 and is CEO of Studio Babelsberg AG as well as managing director of the production companies Babelsberg Film GmbH and Traumfabrik Babelsberg GmbH. Fisser and Charlie Woebcken acquired the legendary Studio Babelsberg in 2004 and have been co-producing prize-winning German and international films ever since, including THE COUNTERFEITERS (2007) by Stefan Ruzowitzky, INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS (2009) by Quentin Tarantino, THE GHOST WRITER (2010) by Roman Polanski, GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL (2014) by Wes Anderson, BRIDGE OF SPIES (2015) by Steven Spielberg, and many more. Fisser also co-produces series such as HOMELAND (2011-2018), BERLIN STATION (2016–17) and COUNTERPART (2018-19). Before coming to Babelsberg, he was head of leading media and cultural sites in Munich.

TOM ZICKLER
PRODUCER

CHRISTOPH FISSER
PRODUCER

PHILIPP NOLL began his career as a composer in 2009 with the short film PUPPENHAFT. After various other short films, he started working on TV movies such as BISSIGE HUNDE (2012), TATORT: BÖSER BODEN (2017) and WINTERJAGD (2017). After Noll created the music for several episodes of the documentary series SCHÄTZE DER WELT– ERBE DER MENSCHHEIT between 2005 and 2011, he found yet another long-term project in 2015 with the TV series BETTYS DIAGNOSE. He has been writing the music for that ZDF hospital series together with Axel Huber ever since.

MARTIN SCHLECHT was born in 1976 and got his start in the business in 1998 as an intern at ARRI in Munich. After that, he worked as a clapper loader, and starting in 2005 as a camera assistant and second-unit cameraman. He worked for the first time as an independent cameraman on Oliver Kyr's thriller THE BIG BLACK (2011). He followed that up with the sci-fi thriller REALITY XI (2012) by Thomas Bohm, the comedy GROSSTADTKLEIN (2013) by Tobias Wiemann, the hit comedy HONG IM KOFF (2014) by Til Schweiger, the dramedy AFFENKÖNIG (2016) by Oliver Rihs and the adventure-drama AMELIE BENNT (2017) by Tobias Wiemann, which received the German Film Award for Best Children's Film in 2018. Schlecht has done the camerawork on a number of episodes for TV shows such as TATORT (2013), LOTTA (2016), HOTEL HEIDELBERG (2018) and NORD BEI NORDWEST (2019).

AREND REMMERS was born in 1981 in Bad Soden and grew up in Groß-Gerau and Mainz. After completing his university entrance exams (Abitur) and his compulsory social service, Remmers went to Berlin to pursue his dream of becoming a screenwriter. In the subsequent years, he gained experience in various areas of the film industry, first as an intern at a production company and then writing short films, music videos and advertising clips. His first feature-film screenplay was the black comedy SCHNEEFLÖCKCHEN (directed by Adolfo J. Kolmerer) in 2014. On its tour of the international festival circuit, the film received 19 prizes. Remmers has been active as a freelance screenwriter ever since. His next project was the screenplay for UNSERE ZEIT IST JETZT (2016), a romantic comedy centering on the German rapper Cro with Martin Schroeier directing. He followed that up in 2017 with the comedy RONNY & KLAID directed by Erkan Acar (theatrical release scheduled for late 2019). After his screenplay for TRAUMFABRIK, he also wrote an episode of the Netflix series DOGS OF BERLIN.