The Fiddler of Florence

BERTELSMANN

Contents

"Bergner! Bergner! cheered the gallery. And those of us who were there bowed our heads, and blessed her, and wished her all the best. Praying that God would preserve her, so young, so beautiful, so fair. And that film would stay away from her..."

Kurt Tucholsky
Die Weltbühne, May 10, 1923

Fortunately, Tucholsky's last wish didn't come true. The following year, the celebrated theater actress appeared in front of the camera for the first time in a movie by her future husband Paul Czinner, followed in 1925/26 by THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE, the opening movie of this year's UFA Film Nights, which is able to be shown in full again for the first time.

Elisabeth Bergner was an icon of her time. The actress, born in 1897 in Drohobycz in present-day Ukraine and raised in Vienna, embodied an ideal of beauty of the 1920s. "Boyishly slim, wide-eyed, with an Eton crop, naive and coquette with a seductive, singing voice, half elf, half angel, hardly a woman," wrote *Der Spiegel* in an obituary.

THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE, in which the celebrated theater star Bergner appeared again alongside the great Conrad Veidt (after their first joint film NJU), was just one of many movies that Paul Czinner and Elisabeth Bergner made together.

In 1933 Bergner and Czinner, who were both Jewish, first fled to Vienna and from there to London, where they married and found a new home. They also celebrated great success abroad; in 1935, Bergner was even nominated for an Oscar.

THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE, however, did not fare so well. The movie, celebrated by contemporary critics (apart from Bergner's scenes, the critics were especially taken with the original landscape shots from Tuscany, which was still so far away at the time), was shortened enormously by its U.S. distributor. Thanks to the elaborate restoration and reconstruction by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, however, the movie is now available again in a complete and digitized version, almost one hundred years after its creation.

Digitization currently poses the greatest challenge. Anything that isn't transferred from analog film material to digital media in the next few years threatens to vanish in the media age of the 21st century. The aim is not only to make movies available on new storage media, but also in the best quality and, if possible, in their original form. The Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation and its partners worked on the movie for over a year. The project was made possible by the support of Bertelsmann as the main sponsor.

Now you can look forward with us to the premiere of the reconstructed version, for which ZDF/ARTE commissioned Uwe Dierksen to compose a new score.

Dear film fans,

Silent movies exert an enduring fascination: They enable us to travel back in time to the early days of cinema. Without sound, actors and directors had to develop their own language and find new forms of artistic expression. Their works reflect this pioneering spirit and draw people to movie theaters and silent movie festivals to this day.

No less fascinating is the cultural-historical significance of this art form, which is now nearly a century old. Silent movies are the starting point of all cinematic genres. They are the bedrock of the creative diversity of the movie industry as we know it today. As a company that has been living off the creative achievements of its filmmakers, authors, musicians and journalists for over 180 years, we know the high value of such inspiring and timeless works.

For some time now, Bertelsmann has been committed to the preservation of important cultural assets – including cinematic heritage – at a European level. This is especially necessary in the case of silent movies, because the copies that still exist are not only getting old, but will soon no longer even be accessible. Only very few theaters still have analog projection technology. Foundations and movie archives face the mammoth task of elaborately restoring our at-risk silent movie heritage and digitizing it for posterity; a task that they can hardly cope with alone.

This is where Bertelsmann can and wants to help. As a company with its own tradition in the movie business and extensive digital expertise, we feel we are practically predestined to do this. Bertelsmann organizes silent movie festivals in European cities and sponsors major restoration projects, as when we digitally restored THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI together with the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in 2014. We largely financed the restoration of an early masterpiece by the director of METROPOLIS, Fritz Lang: DESTINY from 1921. Now we have supported the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in the restoration of another classic silent film: THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE by Paul Czinner (1925/26). I hope you are as delighted as I am that this silent movie classic can now be shown again in its complete state and in digital cinematic quality!

Yours sincerely,
Thomas Rabe
Chairman & CEO of Bertelsmann

Dear silent movie fans,

This is the eighth time Bertelsmann and UFA are presenting the UFA Film Nights in Berlin against a spectacular backdrop – a wonderful tribute to German film heritage. Putting silent film at the center of Berlin's cultural life and showing it to an enthusiastic public is the best possible way to promote the preservation and digitization of our cinematic heritage.

With Paul Czinner's THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE – in a version digitally and painstakingly restored by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation over recent months – we have once again succeeded in presenting the world premiere of a momentous work of film history, in its complete version and in new splendor, to an audience of cinephiles.

The tragicomedy, which tells the romantic adventures of a young woman dressed as a man who travels to Italy, where she acts as a model to a painter, shows Elisabeth Bergner in one of her pivotal roles. The film also captivates viewers with its extraordinary camerawork, and takes them on a journey through Italy's beautiful countryside.

My thanks go out to the cultural broadcaster ZDF/ARTE, which has been our premium partner for many years, and is traditionally engaged in the restoration and new composition/re-recording of film scores that celebrate their splendid premieres as live events in festival or concert halls at the Berlinale and elsewhere.

The digitization of this movie was made possible with funds from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, an essential and now enduring basis for our key mandate of preserving Germany's film heritage.

In particular, I would like to highlight the enduring commitment of our main sponsor Bertelsmann, which has close connections to the history of German cinema – and thus also to our foundation – through the historic company, Ufa. This year, once again, Bertelsmann is sending out a visible signal for the preservation of this worldwide unique, historical cultural asset by hosting the UFA Film Nights in Berlin.

Our audiovisual legacy is a living memory bank that is at threat of disappearing in this age of digitalization. Keeping this special European cultural asset alive is our shared motivation.

Yours sincerely,
Ernst Szebedits
Chairman of the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

The Fiddler of Florence
(GER 1925/1926, 82 min.)

Until now, young Renée has enjoyed the undivided attention of her beloved father. But after his wedding, their domestic circumstances change. Driven by jealousy, the girl begins to compete bitterly with her stepmother. When an attempt at reconciliation fails, the father finally sends the fiery Renée to a Swiss boarding school. But she flees across the border into Italy, disguised as a shepherd boy. During her journey through the country, Renée's violin playing attracts the attention of a painter. He takes the supposed young man into his home – and soon finds his muse in Renée…

Production

Director	Paul Czinner
Screenplay	Paul Czinner
Set construction	Erich Czerwonski
Cinematography	Otto Kanturek
	Adolf Schlasy
	Arpad Viragh
Producer	Erich Pommer
Production company	Universum-Film AG, Berlin

Cast

The father	Conrad Veidt
His daughter Renée	Elisabeth Bergner
His second wife	Nora Gregor
The painter	Walter Rilla
His sister	Grete Mosheim

Premiere

Original	March 10, 1926
	Gloria-Palast, Berlin
Restored Version	August 22, 2018
	at the UFA Film Nights in Berlin
	and via live stream:
	cinema.arte.tv/de
Television premiere	September 24, 2018 on ARTE

Restoration (2018)

Restoration	Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation
Funding	Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA
	Federal Government Commissioner
	for Culture and the Media
Material	Federal Archive Film Archive
Editing	Anke Wilkening
Scan & digital mastering 2K	ARRI Media
Color correction	Andreas Lautil
Digital image restoration	Markus Kappelmeier

Music (2018)

Music	
(commissioned by ZDF/ARTE)	Uwe Dierksen
Recording	Diego Ramos (violin and mandolin),
	Hugo Rannou (cello), Neus Estarellas
	(piano), Miguel Casas (trombone)
Executive Producer	2eleven || zeitgenössische musik
	projekte (contemporary music projects)
	Thomas Schmölz
Editing	Nina Goslar

Biographies

Elisabeth Bergner

*** 22 Aug 1897 Drohobycz, Galicia, Austria-Hungary (today Ukraine), † 12 May 1986 London, Great Britain**

For the Viennese-born Bergner, THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE was the second collaboration with her future husband Paul Czinner after NJU (1924). After several stage engagements, the celebrated theater actress made her screen debut in THE EVANGELIST in 1923. Her greatest silent movie success was the screen adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's FRÄULEIN ELSE (1928/29, also directed by Czinner). In 1933, Bergner, who was Jewish, went into exile in London. There, and later also in New York, she remained true to the theater. Elisabeth Bergner lived in London from 1951, but continued her stage career in Germany from 1954, and her movie career from 1962.

Conrad Veidt

*** 22 Jan 1893 Berlin, Germany, † 3 Apr 1943 Hollywood, USA**

In the course of his extensive silent movie career, the Berliner became one of the most popular and best-paid actors of the Weimar Republic. His appearance in Robert Wiene's THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1920) remains unforgotten. Veidt only rarely played positive roles such as that of the loving father in THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE. Instead, he regularly portrayed mysterious villains and figures living on the fringes of society. He was also successful in the talkies. From 1927 he shot four movies in the U.S., including THE MAN WHO LAUGHS by Paul Leni. Veidt emigrated to England in 1933 together with his Jewish wife. His best-known role in an American movie is that of a Nazi in the classic CASABLANCA.

Nora Gregor

*** 3 Feb 1901 Gorizia, Austria-Hungary (today Gorizia, Italy), † 20 Jan 1949 Viña del Mar, Chile**

Gregor, who came from the south of what was then Austria-Hungary, was actually four years younger than her movie daughter Bergner in THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE. During the 1920s and 1930s, Gregor was one of the best-known theater actresses in her homeland. In the early 1930s she appeared briefly in American movies, but then went to Germany in 1933. That same year she returned to Austria and performed at the Vienna Burgtheater for four years. After the Nazis invaded Austria, she emigrated

ELISABETH BERGNER

to Paris in 1938. After the Germans occupied France as well, Gregor settled in Chile, where she died penniless.

Walter Rilla

***22 Aug 1894 Neunkirchen (Saar), Germany, †21 Nov 1980 Rosenheim, Germany**

The role of the painter in THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE corresponded to Rilla's typical role of the cultivated gentleman at that time. Outside the movie business he had already worked as a magazine founder and script editor. In 1933 he and his Jewish wife emigrated to England, where he worked as a radio play author and producer for the BBC during the war years. Rilla also published novels. After his wife's death, he returned to Germany in 1957 and appeared in numerous crime movies in the 1960s.

Grete Mosheim

***8 Jan 1905 Berlin, Germany, †29 Dec 1986 New York City, USA**

Grete Mosheim initially performed on various theater stages, under directors including Max Reinhardt. She made her movie debut in 1924 in Carl Theodor Dreyer's MICHAEL. In THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE she plays the sister of Walter Rilla's character, the painter. Mosheim first emigrated to England in 1934 before settling in New York in 1938 with the industrialist Howard Gould. There she retired from the theater, but a few years later she founded a German-speaking ensemble. In 1952 she returned to the German stage, but apart from occasional appearances in TV movies, she no longer appeared in screen roles.

Paul Czinner

***30 May 1890 Budapest, Austria-Hungary, †22 Jun 1972 London, Great Britain**

Czinner was no stranger to the art of violin playing. As a child he was considered a virtuoso because of his abilities on the stringed instrument. He wrote the female leading role in THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE specifically for Elisabeth Bergner. In 1933, the pair married in England. In 1939 they both moved to the U.S. where Czinner categorically refused to shoot any more movies without his wife's involvement and instead embarked on a career as a theater producer. From the beginning of the 1950s, now permanently back in England, he dedicated himself to documentary films about dance and musical theater.

Erich Pommer

*** 20 Jul 1889 Hildesheim, Germany, † 08 May 1966 Los Angeles, USA**

As a producer and member of the Ufa board, Erich Pommer influenced the cinema of the Weimar Republic like no other. He worked closely with Fritz Lang and is regarded as the discoverer of Marlene Dietrich, whose international career began with THE BLUE ANGEL. Being Jewish, he was forced to emigrate in 1933. He returned to Germany as an American film control officer. In this role he was responsible for the reorganization of the German film industry, among other things coming up with the concept for the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft (Self-Regulatory Body of the Movie Industry, FSK) in 1948.

Otto Kanturek

*** 27 Jul 1897 Vienna, Austria, † 26 Jun 1941 Cawston, Great Britain**

The Austrian worked as a cameraman on numerous silent movies and talkies. His movie career began in Vienna in 1912 and over the years took him to Paris, Milan, Budapest and Berlin. Like the director and also the leading actress of THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE, Kanturek emigrated to England in 1933. When his attempts at directing were not financially successful, he continued to devote himself entirely to camera work. Kanturek died in a plane crash in 1941.

Adolf Schlasy

*** 23 May 1896 Alwernia, Poland, † not known**

Born in Poland, he began working as a cameraman on Austrian movies after completing his training as a photographer. THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE was the first of five movie collaborations with Paul Czinner and Elisabeth Bergner. The Nazis' assumption of power prompted Schlasy, who was Jewish, to leave Germany – first for Vienna, then Amsterdam, Paris, and finally Madrid. No certain facts are known about his fate after 1937.

Arpad Viragh

*** 11 Jan 1888 Budapest, Hungary, † 31 May 1930 Capri, Italy**

His photographic training was followed in 1910 by two years as cameraman for Pathé in Paris and five more as chief cameraman in Budapest,

Viragh's birthplace and hometown. After the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and his flight to Germany, he found constant work behind the camera in the silent movie business there. When Viragh died in 1930, he was working on his first talkie.

Erich Czerwonski

***3 Oct 1889 Berlin, Germany, †Aug./Sep. 1940 Berlin, Germany**

The trained architect began his career as a stage designer, draughtsman and stage-set painter. After the end of the First World War he began his movie career as assistant to the famous movie architect Hermann Warm at Decla-Bioscop. In the early 1920s he was already responsible as chief architect for films including MELODIE DER WELT, the first full-length German talkie. In the 1930s he became one of the most sought-after set designers.

Contemporary Press Coverage

„Der Geiger von Florenz."

...ères et les enfants p...
...devant ces « mécanique...
...quant des outils d'usine...
...modernes pour simplifier...
...contraste était amusant...
...vaisselle, très scientifique...
...nous présentait l'an derni...
...nous propose aujourd'hui...
...on fait tourner un disq...
...douzaine d'assiettes. Il ser...
...machine établie par un...
...autres, celle baptisée *la S...*
...principe et réalisée par...
...à son actif plusieurs inve...
...parmi lesquelles un t...
...connut, il y a quelques...

D'autre part, les fabr...
...se rendent compte que, ...
...du courant est prohibiti...
...ustensiles où la comme...
...dépense minime : bouill...
...friser, etc. Le fer à repa...
...ment en apparence in...
...trouver : il est muni d'u...
...donner sur la table sans...
...aussi une marmite norv...
...paraissant bien comprise...

"A spectacle of nature – this woman. With her beatific obliviousness with this sinking into the emotion of the moment, which she never completely succumbs to, but manages to escape with her robust strength, this delightful girl, for whom love is the very air she breathes, embodies the golden cheerfulness of the South under the open skies of Italy. Unforgettable – the studio scene with Rilla, who is exceedingly likeable as her second. How the slow motion picks up Bergner's boyish grace. How she holds the violin to her chin – how she glides through space. This is the manifestation of the most beautiful form of human arousal. One would have to fill a book were one to fully register the impressions of this acting performance. Czinner and his cinematographers have done an extraordinary job. One has seldom seen such perfect outdoor shots as the journey through Florence. Remarkably good sets: Erich Czerwonski."

***Filmkurier*, March 11, 1926**

"This is probably the first time that an emotional process – no, that is too hard a word – that an emotional miracle has been revealed in such a way in cinematography – Czinner gave this to us here […]"

***Reichsfilmblatt No. 11/1926*, March 13, 1926, Felix Henseleit**

"There are shots from a moving train where even a technician has to wonder long and hard about how they were created. Presumably the passing landscape (it was not a backdrop!) was projected synchronously with the course of the recording camera onto the compartment window of a film. Italy's beautiful landscape was used extensively and artistically; one is even abundantly reconciled with the numerous passages as a result. The highlight is a car journey through Florence. You would think you're driving through the narrow alleyways streets yourself."

***Lichtbild-Bühne*, March 11, 1926, Dr. Georg Victor Mendel**

"The performance alone is not the source of the enchantment here; rather the character is. It emerges even without a voice. It is expressed in the relationship of the forehead to the nose, it is expressed in walking, in running through the garden. The figure itself speaks before there is any talking. It holds the contradictions in itself – the face both naive and depraved, young and old, feminine and boyish. It is in fact this indeterminateness of the figure that makes the image exciting. The figure goes beyond gender.

This is why Bergner likes to play male roles. They render her 'mignon' beyond male or female. For that is the crux: As a boy she is not masculine; as a girl not purely woman. But this is not to say that her being between woman and man has a place; it is shaped by a spiritual sphere that lies above the distinction between male and female. The androgynous gives Bergner that ambiguity that makes it impossible to find definite edges, and turns her figure into an enigma."

***Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 393*, May 29, 1926; Siegfried Kracauer**

"Elisabeth Bergner, who figures as Renée, looks even less like a boy than Marion Davies did in the pictorial transcription of 'Little Old New York.' She has very long bobbed hair and an emphatically feminine countenance. Had she taken the pains to have her hair cut closely, the effect might have been more plausible."

***The New York Times*, 1927**

"Close-ups show her [Elisabeth Bergner's] smallest gestures and actions, as if to impress them on the viewer as symptoms of her emotions. Easy pickings for psychoanalysts, made still more interesting by Bergner's boyish appearance. Strolling along Italian streets in boy's clothes, she looks half like a boy, half like a girl. The androgynous character she embodied resonated in Germany, perhaps intensified by the prevailing inner paralysis. Psychological frustration and sexual ambiguity are mutually reinforcing. In her subsequent movies, Bergner would develop from a girlish boy into a similarly complex child-woman […].

Siegfried Kracauer. In: *Schriften/Siegfried Kracauer. Vol. 2: From Caligari to Hitler.* Edited by Karsten Witte. Trans. by Ruth Baumgarten and Karsten Witte. Frankfurt am Main 1979, here p. 161.

"Do you know that in THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE I wore Rosalind's costume from 'As You Like It'?"

"Was that your idea?"

"My condition. [...] Czinner wrote the story, as far as I recall. And somehow he's to blame for my type. A type he created with it."

"The boy?"

"Yes, the boy, and he saw me in 'Twelfth Night' where I played this guy. And that, I think, led him to write THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE. He came to Zurich and told me the story. I liked it, so I said yes."

Elisabeth Bergner in conversation with Eva Orbanz on November 28, 1982 in London. In: *Elisabeth Bergner (Exile 1)*. Publisher: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek. Berlin 1983, here p. 8.


Restoration

Chamber Play Meets Road Movie

Rediscovering THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE by restoring it.

"Ufa itself doesn't seem to have known what arrow it had in its quiver with this film, because all of the leading actors were missing from the premiere, although it could have been a roaring success, especially given La Bergner's popularity in Berlin." [1] After the success of the first Bergner/Czinner movie, NJU, Ufa produced THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE. Despite the loveless launch, the film was celebrated by the premiere critics, especially for the discovery of Elisabeth Bergner as a new type of screen star.

This neglect by the film's own producer is evident in the massively abridged and modified U.S. version in which the film was available until now. IMPETUOUS YOUTH was the U.S. title. The U.S. distributor saw the 80-minute tragicomedy merely as a German answer to Mary Pickford comedies and cut it down to 60 minutes. In this abbreviated version, the story begins somewhat abruptly with Elisabeth Bergner as the teenager Renée having dinner with her father and stepmother, a scene that Renée's infantile jealousy causes to deteriorate into chaos complete with angry father and dog bite. Introduced in this way as a teenie drama with a comedic touch, it develops merely into a cross-dressing role for Bergner, garnished with a few pretty landscape shots of Italy.

The German distribution edition, which premiered on March 10, 1926 in the Gloria Palace of Ufa, must be considered lost. However, two further export editions, a distribution copy with Russian intertitles and an original negative from the Federal Archives used for the British market are far more complete than the U.S. version being circulated. Both begin with a close-up of a framed photo of a woman (Nora Gregor) standing on a desk. Two hands pull it out of its frame and exchange it for another one. This one shows Renée. The dissolve into a back view of a girl at a desk, who pushes the new photo into the frame and tears the other one energetically, identifies Renée as the perpetrator.

Cut into another room to a medium close-up of the woman shown in the first photo. She has already been introduced in the cast list as the second wife of Renée's father. She sets a small vase with orchids on the laid table. Back in the first room, the father (Conrad Veidt) discovers a fragment of the torn photo (showing the face) on the carpet. Only now do we see

British original negative

Russian copy

the protagonist from the front: in the dining room (shot in a similar way to the stepmother earlier), after a short stealthy glance over her shoulder, Renée places a large bouquet of flowers on the table and removes the small vase with orchids. This exposition identifies the film as a chamber play. And yet Czinner does without any of the seriousness of the expressionist chamber play. Uniform illumination instead of light-and-dark contrasts.

The films Paul Czinner shot with theater star Elisabeth Bergner are a unique form of the genre. Although Lotte Eisner acknowledges Czinner's "subtle design of the flowing ambivalence of chamber play film," in her standard work on German silent film – especially as Bergner is the ideal actress for "interludes of the soul," she concludes about the Bergner-Czinner oeuvre that: "Czinner often gives in to his tendency to sentimental routine" and "Bergner is given little guidance." [2]

Eisner doesn't even mention THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE at all. Perhaps because it goes beyond the confines of a chamber play. It leaves the unity of place, time and plot that is customary for a chamber play, becomes a road movie and a travel film. Elisabeth Bergner walks from the Swiss-Italian border towards Florence. The film was shot around Lake Lugano and in Florence.

Czinner uses the playful alternation between genres as a reflection of the emotional fluctuations of his main character. This dramaturgy didn't reveal itself until a flashback was discovered in the Russian copy and in the British original negative that shows Renée's memory of a trip to Italy with her father after her mother's death.

Besides some additional footage of Renée roaming around Italy, one of the most important rediscoveries is a Shakespearian cross-gender moment with Elisabeth Bergner and Walter Rilla in the picturesque garden of the painter's Florentine villa.

Although the Russian version initially appeared to be the most complete, it proved to be the least suitable basis for the restoration. Massive damage caused by wear and tear caused repeated jumping, and even a partial or complete lack of settings at the reel changes.

Fortunately, it turned out that all the cuts made by the British distributor in the original negative were preserved in two separate roles. They also contained all the inserts with Renée's diary entries, letters, and newspaper clippings in German. Complemented by the reinserted sections, the original negative proved to be more complete than the Russian version. The serial numbers of the individual scenes in the perforation of the original negative made it possible to trace the original mounting of the original negative before the

British original negative

Russian copy

intervention of the distributor, and to reinsert the cut scenes.

The German intertitles were not preserved, but their text is documented on a registration card dated March 9, 1926 from the Federal Archives. The two reels containing the cuts even included fragments of two titles and the cast list as complete scroll titles, so that a reference for the typography of the German titles was available. The cast list was adopted in the original, and the intertitles recreated in a similar typeface.

The three export versions are based on two different original negatives that were mounted from different shots. The heavily damaged black-and-white copy with Russian intertitles, and the massively shortened U.S. version go back to the same original negative, which was lost. The original negative used for British distribution has been preserved in the Federal Archives.

Since no German version has survived, it remains unclear whether only two negatives were mounted, or whether there was a separate negative for the German market which has disappeared without a trace. The comparison shows that the double footage of a given scene, with a few exceptions such as the car ride through Florence, were shot by two cameras working in parallel. The field size and angle differ, while the scene shown is the same.

Three cameramen were responsible for the photography: Otto Kanturek, Adolf Schlasy and Arpad Viragh. It is unclear how they divided up their work when shooting multiple shots of a scene for the two [or more] negatives. Contemporary reviews indicate that their respective responsibility for the various technical challenges – landscape shots in Italy, train rides with the landscape flying by as a rear projection, slow-motion footage of the violinist in the painter's studio – cannot be identified either.

"The highlight is a car ride through Florence. One believes one is driving through the narrow alleys oneself." [3] There are two very different sets of shots for this scene. They suggest different views of filming with the camera – which was travelling along inside the car – and thus that different cameramen were responsible for the two negatives.

Anke Wilkening
Film restorer at the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

Music

Eye to Eye with the Child-Woman

Composer Uwe Dierksen On His New Score for the Film

When composing film music, one gets to know the film's characters very well. How easy is Elisabeth Bergner to handle?

Demanding, I would say, because Elisabeth Bergner was an incredibly virtuoso actress. In the 80 minutes of this film, she creates very different moods and expresses a wide range of feelings. Sometimes these states are authentic, at others consciously 'stagy' or even affected.

At the beginning of my work I thought it would be enough for the music to follow along, so to speak. But this turned out to be difficult, because the emotional caprices that Elisabeth Bergner celebrated in the film – and also on stage – are repeated in ever-changing contexts.

If you only illustrate it, the music simply duplicates and serves as an almost superfluous commentator on a strong actress. I believe the music has to be more of a counterpart, and that can be achieved if the music has a calculated dramaturgy of closeness and distance.

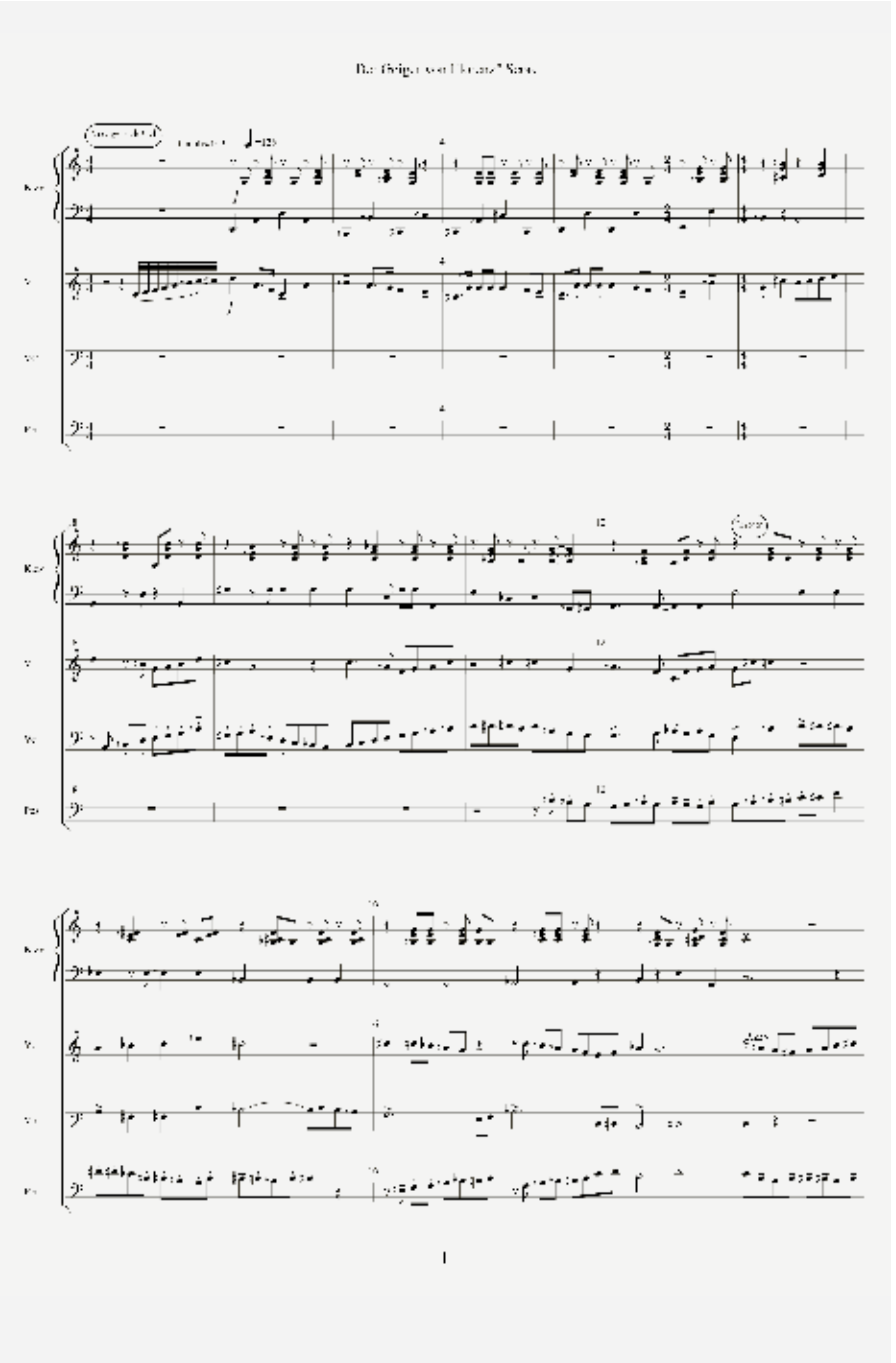
In silent movie theaters, films were accompanied by atmospheric pieces, often simply played one after the other. Does the new score take a similar approach?

The musical approach came with the realization that I have to make a real intervention here: whenever things become too dramatic, the music withdraws from the plot. Like in epic theatre, I float away from the whole, take a helicopter perspective, and simply let the 'drama' happen. In this way, the music develops a tremendous power.

How did the choice of instruments come about? Are they used to characterize the figures or are they used more in a situational manner?

I chose versatile, multi-faceted instruments: violin as a filigree and agile melodic instrument, cello as its counterpart on the deep (enigmatic) side, piano as a harmony instrument, and trombone as a snappy connecting instrument from the brass family. Only a few instruments – just enough to form a strong antithesis to the cinematic plot. Not to mention that all these instruments also have excellent properties beyond the traditional playing techniques.

But don't they all have to play keyboard and melodica as well? A mandolin appears in the line-up, as well...



That's right, but these aren't just any old sample instruments, but are actually intended for the piano part, namely accordion, harmonica or melodica. These are the instruments that stand for Elisabeth Bergner's internal melancholy. In certain sequences, the other players take over the keyboard part because the pianist has to play the piano. The exception is the mandolin – it is the typical instrument of Italian folk music. By the way, I managed to buy an original replica that our violinist now has to grapple with…

There's a lot of movement in the new score. Is that merely a matter of the chosen tempi, or what gives the music its dynamic pace?

A multitude of notes or a high tempo don't necessarily translate to a dynamic pace. I think the dynamic develops on the one hand from the deliberately contrapuntal attitude to the film, and on the other hand from the chosen underlying musical tenor. The key scene for me was the table scene at the beginning, in which Renée pushes the flower vase between her adored father and unloved stepmother. That practically screams for 1920s Kintopp music, like the dog scene a little later. With that, I had set the energetic foundations, and once that was done, the opposite also worked: the melancholic melodica and accordion scenes.

While you were composing, did you have the live situation in your mind's eye, or more the studio recording?

Interesting question – because when I was writing I actually thought about how and in what context the music would have to work. Because I tend to write less, and more cautiously, but the live situation does require a more courageous tackle. And then I liked the idea of writing less and more cautiously, but the live situation requires a more courageous approach. And then I liked the thought of how four musicians putting a lot of heart and soul into their virtuoso playing could at times end up hitting a wrong note. This is, after all, a pretty good reflection of the situation in which Renée as played by Elisabeth Bergner finds herself (although they probably won't hit a wrong note at all…)

What was the nicest surprise, and what cost you the most effort?

The best surprise was also the thing that cost me the most effort: the realization that this film, especially for today's reception, needs strong, comprehensively well-composed music. The number of melodies, motives, harmonic turns etc. I had to come up with… From my point of view this film can't withstand pauses or aleatoric sprinkles. Never before have I intervened in a film so boldly.

You are internationally renowned as trombonist of the Ensemble Modern and recently realized top-class performance projects with Judith Rosmair. What is it about silent movies that appeals to such a 'modern' musician?

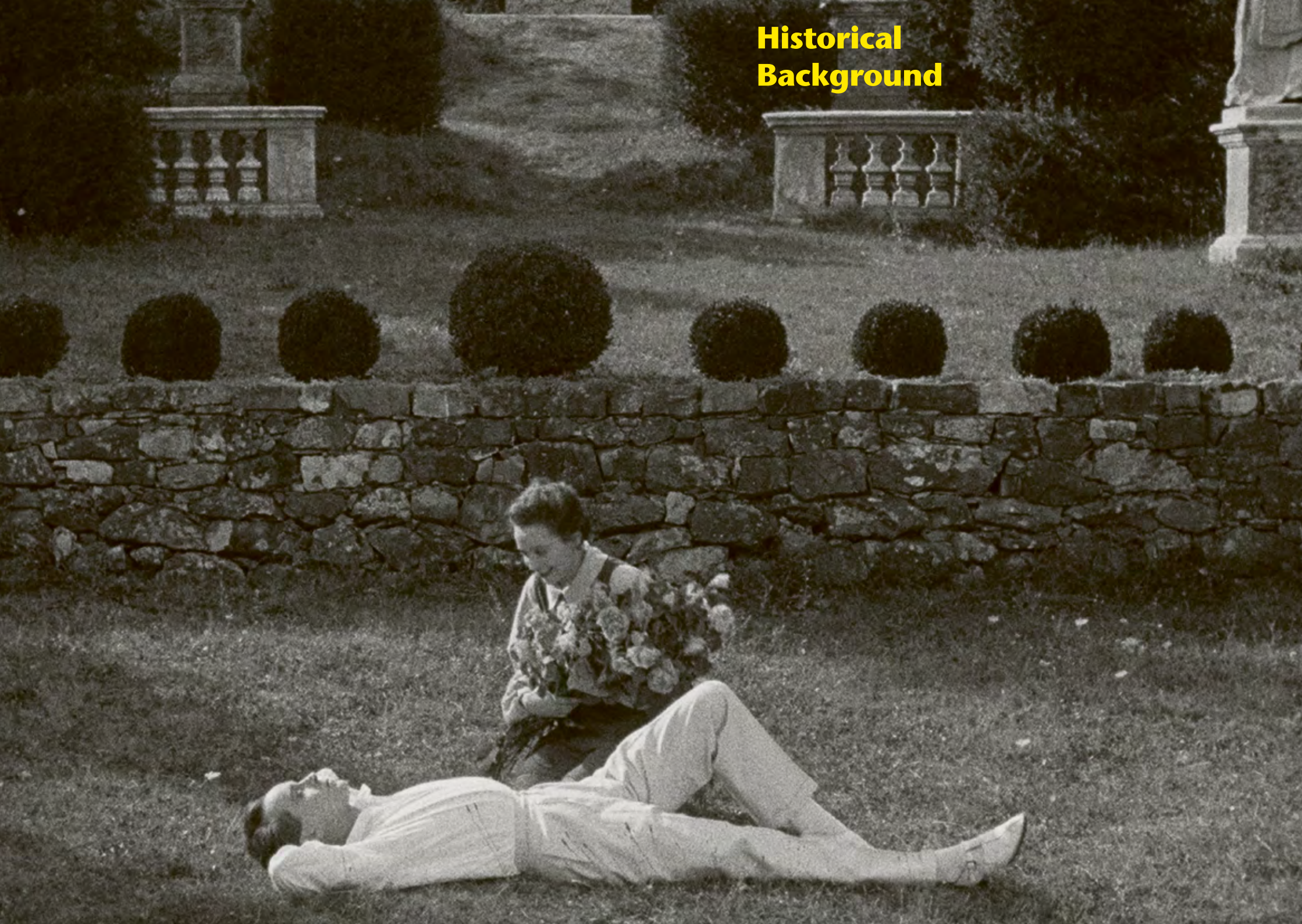
The discrepancy: I'm fortunate enough to work with first-class musicians, conductors and composers. I am, so to speak, in the middle of the current reception of music, but also of its adjoining arts. Looking at a work of art that was created 100 years earlier against this background creates highly interesting spheres of tension. Let's take the pace with which THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE in particular is filmed: this expanded narrative style – which fully savors even the smallest details – is highly exciting from the perspective of composers like John Cage or Morton Feldman. These composers would probably further reinforce the slow narrative style with their music, and thus deliberately oppose our fast-paced mode of reception.

What appealed to me about this film was to write music that sounds traditional and has a tonal structure, but that doesn't merely resort to nostalgia. Because the way I relate certain music styles to each other, and the kind of music that basically comes to my mind contains the point of view of the present day. I wanted to hit the nerve of that period, which was exciting and anything but stuffy, even though this film is set in a luxurious bourgeois milieu. And even if I set this film to music with intentional melodiousness, it doesn't mean that other silent films cannot also be set to completely avantgarde music. Silent film offers endless possibilities for music, because the genre itself tried out so much and carried innovation within itself.

Uwe Dierksen has been a trombonist in the Ensemble Modern since 1983. He has recorded more than 20 CDs, about a third of them as a soloist and with his band MAVIS. In the past 10 years he has also been active as a lecturer and a composer of radio plays and performance projects (with Judith Rosmair, among others). He has composed several silent film scores commissioned by ZDF/ARTE and the Murnau Foundation.

The Interview was conducted by Nina Goslar, film editorial department ZDF/ARTE

Historical Background



Historical Paths

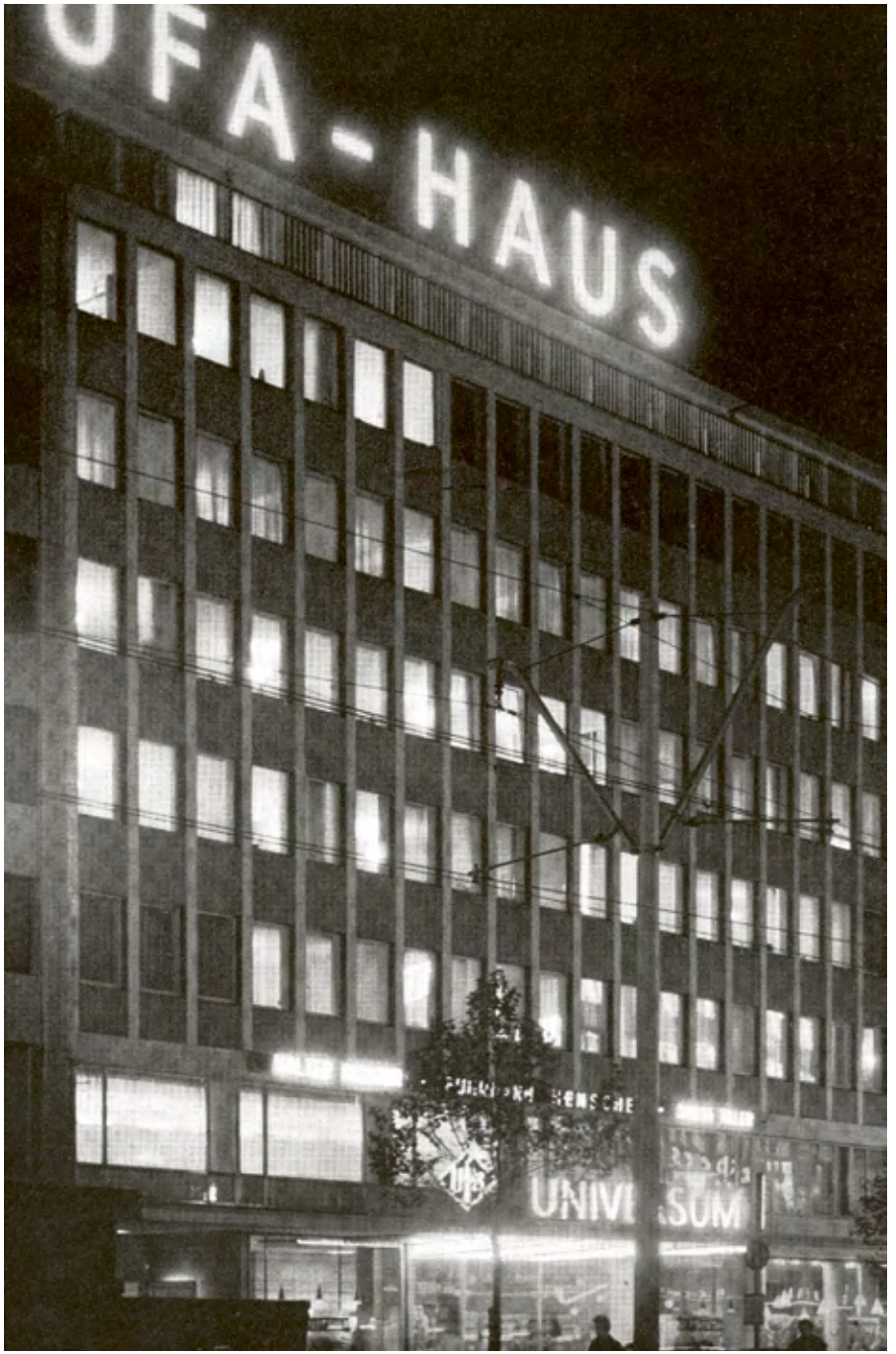
Ufa, Bertelsmann and the establishment of the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

It may surprise some cineastes to see an international company that is commercially successful with its media businesses in more than 50 countries, and a foundation under civil law, which today manages most of Germany's film heritage, appear as partners in a project to preserve a significant silent film. For several years now, Bertelsmann has been working to preserve Germany's silent-film heritage, at various levels and in pan-European context: The UFA Film Nights, for example, a festival originally established in Berlin, went on to achieve great popularity in other European countries as well; and four years ago Bertelsmann became the main sponsor of the digital restoration of the classic THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. The world premiere of this version of the Expressionist masterpiece at the Berlinale 2014 became a major media event. Since then, Bertelsmann has organized further screenings in Berlin, Brussels, Madrid and New York.

In this connection, it also provided the financial support for the digital restoration of Fritz Lang's DESTINY (2016) and Paul Czinner's THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE, which will now be presented for the first time in its largely reconstructed version at the UFA Film Nights 2018. Ultimately, however, the efforts of Europe's largest media house tie in to a historical connection that began more than 50 years ago.

Effective January 1, 1964, Bertelsmann acquired Universum-Film AG (Ufa), which had gone bankrupt after the reprivatization, and in so doing achieved its long-desired entry into the television production business[4]. At that time, expansion was the order of the day in Gütersloh. The publisher, originally founded in 1835, had first ventured beyond the pure print and publishing business in 1950 with the founding of the Bertelsmann Lesering (book club), and proceeded to grow very rapidly.

In the early 1960s, the first Lesering offshoots in other European countries were founded. Above and beyond this, Reinhard Mohn (1921–2009), the "post-war founder," CEO and owner of Bertelsmann, was determined to expand into new lines of business, a process that had begun with the founding of the Ariola record label in 1958. And while the next step – the path to commercial television, which had moved within reach at the



THE UFA HOUSE IN DÜSSELDORF, 1964

end of the 1950s ("Adenauer-Fernsehen") – was still a long way off, content production for public-service TV appeared to be a worthwhile business for the future.

With the purchase of Ufa, Bertelsmann had not only acquired the brand but also Ufa's stake in Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH, Ufa Tonverlag including Vienna-based Bohème Verlag, Ufa Industrie- und Werbefilmproduktion, Ufa Fernsehproduktion, and exploitation rights to Ufa's inventory of films. Initially, Mohn had little interest in cinema productions or even the legendary silent film heritage that is so inseparably linked to the name Ufa, because after the purchase of Ufa, the focus was clearly on the television business. Bertelsmann Fernsehfilmproduktionsgesellschaft and Playhouse Studio Reinhard Mohn, which had only been founded a few years earlier, were integrated into the newly acquired Ufa in 1964.

However, the Bertelsmann credo, that media such as books, films, television and records should not compete, but should complement each other as a chain of creative content, inexorably led the company in the direction of film in the following years. In April 1965 the newly acquired Ufa cinema chain was expanded by the acquisition of Pallas Filmverleih GmbH and Merkur Filmtheater. With the 15 Merkur theaters, Ufa-Theater AG now had a total of 44 movie theaters. Just three months later, on July 1, 1965, Bertelsmann acquired a 60-percent stake in the successful Constantin Film GmbH. The focus was on a common feature film production. These investments, coupled with the relatively good 1964 financials of Ufa-Theater AG, seem to have given the film industry, which was definitely ailing at the time, a glimmer of hope. "There can be no doubt," wrote the trade magazine *Filmblätter* in March 1966, "that the secret high command of German film expansion is currently based in Gütersloh."

But the company was looking forward, not back; and at first it remained unclear how one would go about exploiting Ufa's legendary film inventory, which after all represented a major asset of the newly acquired company. As early as spring 1964, an outcry was heard in the (trade) press: A sale of the films to the US-American company Seven Arts, as was apparently planned, was unthinkable... and was then promptly prohibited by the German government, via the "Ufi liquidation committee." A directory published in 1966 in the magazine *Filmecho* shows just how extensive the collection was: it comprised "film rights from around 1,000 silent films and 900 sound films, 1,200 cultural films and 106 post-war films, as well as some 200 unfilmed material rights."

After intensive discussions between the German government, Bertelsmann and Germany's leading cinematographic organization SPIO, it was finally agreed at the beginning of 1966 to establish a non-profit foundation under civil law, which took over both Bertelsmann's and Bavaria's film holdings for a total of DM 13.8 million, for which it received a loan from the Ufi liquidation proceeds, that it was expected to repay in the following years. The Wiesbaden-based foundation was named after the renowned German silent film director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. For Bertelsmann, this closed the chapter of Ufa's silent film legacy.

Meanwhile, the potential of the large Ufa brand has been exploited further, particularly after the advent of private television in the 1980s. Today, UFA is a powerful program creator within the Bertelsmann Group, which has continuously consolidated its leadership of Germany's film and television production market. And yet: To this day, its historical legacy forms an essential part of the brand's charisma. One year after the 100th anniversary of the "old" Ufa, today's UFA still successfully invokes an artistic tradition that once began with Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau and many others.

In the case of THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE from the holdings of the old Ufa, taken over from Bertelsmann more than 50 years ago, another major German silent film has been permanently secured by digitization. This masterpiece is now finally made available to posterity in a version that comes as close as possible to its original (now lost) version. As a media company that places creativity at the center of its value creation and corporate culture, Bertelsmann is also committed to safeguarding and preserving important creations of the past.

Today's diversity and the Group's large, multi-digital media offering worldwide have historical roots. This is one of the reasons why Bertelsmann feels its commitment to Europe's cultural heritage is so important.

Helen Müller
Head of Cultural Affairs
and Corporate History, Bertelsmann

50.000 Frc.

Belohnung!

Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the broadcaster RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner+Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 119,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.2 billion in the 2017 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for entrepreneurship and creativity. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

As a culturally engaged media company that places creativity at the center of its value creation and corporate culture, Bertelsmann is also committed to protecting and preserving important creative works from the past. This commitment to European cultural heritage is expressed, for example, in the indexing of the Ricordi Archive, which was acquired in 1994, is regarded as the most important privately owned historical music collection, and was made accessible to the European public for the first time in Verdi Year 2013. After supporting the restoration of THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI in 2013/14 and DESTINY in 2015/16, THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE is Bertelsmann's third involvement in the digital restoration of an important silent movie classic – a clear show of support for the preservation of Germany's cinematic heritage.

Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

The Murnau Foundation, in its capacity as an archive and rights holder, curates a significant part of Germany's movie heritage. Its most important endowment is the unique, cohesive movie stocks, comprising copies and material as well as rights from the former production companies Ufa, Decla, Universum-Film, Bavaria, Terra, Tobis and Berlin-Film. This outstanding inventory of cultural and film history – more than 6,000 silent movies and films with sound (feature films, documentaries, short movies and commercials) – covers the period from the beginnings of motion pictures to the early 1960s, and includes movies by important directors such as Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch, Detlef Sierck, Helmut Käutner and Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, the namesake of the foundation. The best-known titles include THE CABINET OF DR CALIGARI (1919/20), METROPOLIS (1927), THE BLUE ANGEL (1929/30), DIE DREI VON DER TANKSTELLE (1930), MÜNCHHAUSEN (1942/43) and GROSSE FREIHEIT NR.7 (1943/44).

ARTE

Since 1995, ARTE has regularly broadcast silent films, airing more than 250 silent films in their restored versions. In addition, ARTE offers a collection of international silent films on the Internet that brings to life all the magic of early cinema: www.arte.tv/de/videos/kino/stummfilme

The next silent movie broadcast dates on ARTE:
24 Sep 2018: THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE (D 1926) by Paul Czinner
29 Oct 2018: SHIRAZ – A ROMANCE OF INDIA (India 1928)
by Franz Osten. The story of the Taj Mahal
19 Nov 2018: A SANTA NOTTE, E PICCERELLA (I 1922)
by Elvira Notari. Two melodramas from Naples
24/26/28 Dec 2018: LAUREL & HARDY (USA 1928–40).
A best-of collection of the great comic duo

Publishing Credits

Publisher
Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA
Corporate Communications
Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 270
D-33311 Gütersloh, Germany
www.bertelsmann.com

in cooperation with the
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Assistant Editor
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Concept and Design
Büro Ballmann Weber, Hamburg
www.ballmannweber.de

Printing
Bunter Hund, Berlin

Footnotes

1 *Der Film*, March 14, 1926
2 Lotte Eisner: *Die dämonische Leinwand,* Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 191.
3 *Licht-Bild-Bühne,* March 11, 1926
4 See Jörg Schöning, *„Es wurde um ein Butterbrot verkauft". Das Erbe der Ufa: Entflechtung und Neuausrichtung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg,* in: Rainer Rother, Vera Thomas (Hrsg.), *Linientreu und Populär, Das UFA-Imperium 1933–1945,* Berlin 2017, p. 194–206, esp. p. 203 ff; and Klaus Kreimeier, *Die UFA-Story, Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns,* Frankfurt a.M. 2002, p. 451ff.

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