Bertelsmann and UFA present

UFA FILM NIGHTS

August 25–27, 2021

Presented by

BERTELSMANN
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Introduction

Live and in front of an audience again: After last year’s digital edition, the UFA Film Nights will once again be held on Berlin’s Museumsinsel (Museum Island). On the three evenings of August 25 to 27, 2021, Bertelsmann and UFA will present masterpieces of Weimar cinema, all of which made international cinema history – open air, against a spectacular backdrop, and accompanied by live music. An online edition of the silent film festival will take place simultaneously, with live streams, a relaunched website, and digital program information.

This year’s UFA Film Nights kick off with Ernst Lubitsch’s CARMEN, loosely adapted from Georges Bizet’s opera of the same name and Lubitsch’s first major production. Because of its opulence and Pola Negri’s brilliance as an actress, the film caused a worldwide sensation at the time under the alternative title GYPSY BLOOD. CARMEN has been extensively digitally restored by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation with financial support from Bertelsmann. This cinematic gem is now being presented to the public again for the first time in a largely completed cut and with reconstructed color. On Museum Island, the ensemble KONTRASTE will accompany the film with a new composition by Tobias Schwencke, commissioned by ZDF/Arte.

The second evening will feature the oriental fairy tale DIE LEUCHTE ASIENS (THE LIGHT OF ASIA) by Franz Osten. It was the first collaboration between German and Indian filmmakers and also India’s first ever international co-production. The Silent Light Orchestra will thrill the audience with oriental soundscapes to match the movie. The orchestra was formed from members of the Trioglyzerin ensemble and the Ekkehard Wölk Quartet, both formations that have lent musical enchantment to previous UFA Film Nights.

The third evening is dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s classic NOSFERATU. The “mother of all horror films” will be accompanied by the world-famous organist Cameron Carpenter, whose virtuoso organ performances have delighted the international music world for years.

All films start at 9:00 p.m. Admission from 7:30 p.m.

All three films will also be streamed live and free of charge on the specially redesigned website www.ufa-filmnaechte.de/en. Afterwards, the films will remain available on demand until 9:00 p.m. the following day and will also be accessible via the social media channels of the UFA Film Nights as well as Bertelsmann and UFA.
Program

8/25 Wednesday, August 25, 2021, film starts at 9:00 p.m.

CARMEN / GYPSY BLOOD (1918), directed by Ernst Lubitsch
Screenplay: Norbert Falk, Hanns Kräly
Production: PAGU (Paul Davidson)
Length: 94 min.
Music: New composition by Tobias Schwencke based on motifs from Georges Bizet’s eponymous opera, commissioned by ZDF/Arte. Performed by ensemble KONTRASTE

8/26 Thursday, August 26, 2021, film starts at 9:00 p.m.

DIE LEUCHTE ASIENS / THE LIGHT OF ASIA (1925), directed by Franz Osten
Screenplay: Niranjan Pal
With Sarada Ukil, Himansu Rai, Profulla Chandra, Seeta Devi, Rani Bala, Sunit Mitter, Jagit Mathur, Sundar Rajam, Nolini Kumari
Production: Emelka Group, Himansu Rai, Peter Ostermayr
Length: 97 min.
Music: Silent Light Orchestra

8/27 Friday, August 27, 2021, film starts at 9:00 p.m.

NOSFERATU (1921/22), directed by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau
Screenplay: Henrik Galeen
With Max Schreck, Alexander Granach, Gustav von Wangenheim, Greta Schröder, Ruth Landshoff, Georg Heinrich Schnell, John Gottowt, Gustav Botz, Max Nemetz
Production: Prana-Film, Albin Grau, Enrico Dieckmann
Length: 94 min.
Music: Cameron Carpenter (organ)

Tickets are available for 20 euros incl. advance booking fee at www.ufa-filmnaechte.de/en or www.ticketmaster.de

Admission from 7:30 p.m. under the Corona regulations then in force. Up-to-date details at www.ufa-filmnaechte.de/en
Dragoon Don José (Harry Liedtke) comes from the provinces to Seville, where he is to be promoted. There he meets the attractive Carmen (Pola Negri), who works as a cigarette maker by day and turns men’s heads by night. When Carmen is arrested after a brawl in her factory, José is assigned to guard her. But Carmen sweet-talks him and he helps her escape. As punishment, he is demoted again and serves as a simple guard soldier. When he meets Carmen again, she distracts him to make sure a gang of smugglers led by her remains undetected. After José is expelled from the army for killing an officer in a duel, he joins Carmen’s smuggling ring. But then he realizes that Carmen’s love is reserved solely for the bullfighter Escamillo (Leopold von Ladengast)…

Lubitsch’s screen adaptation of a popular love drama based on the opera by Georges Bizet was made in the summer of 1918 and was his first major production. Historic Seville streets were recreated in the PAGU studios in Tempelhof, and hundreds of extras in early 19th-century costume took part in the crowd scenes. Pola Negri as the spirited title character largely dominates the film. Under the title GYPSY BLOOD, Ernst Lubitsch’s Carmen adaptation ran successfully in American cinemas; the first building block of his later Hollywood career.

CARMEN underwent extensive digital restoration by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation with financial support from Bertelsmann. It is now being presented to the public again for the first time in a largely completed edited version and with reconstructed coloring.

**Music:**
ensemble KONTRASTE with a new composition by Tobias Schwencke, commissioned by ZDF/Arte.
About the films

THE LIGHT OF ASIA
1925

Directed by Franz Osten
Production Emelka-Konzern, Himansu Rai, Peter Ostermayr
Screenplay Niranjan Pal
Cast Sarada Ukil, Himansu Rai, Profulla Chandra, Seeta Devi, Rani Bala u.a.
Length 97 min.

This oriental fairy tale in opulent pictures tells the story of the Indian prince Gautama (Himansu Rai), who gives up his family, palace, and earthly possessions to find the path to enlightenment on a long wandering journey. Dismayed by the prince’s sudden disappearance, Gautama’s wife (Seeta Devi) sets out to find her beloved husband. He, meanwhile, wanders the country in the rags of a beggar. This monumental film full of enchanting exoticism is about the hardships, experiences and insights on the life journey of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism in the 6th century BC.

As India’s first German-Indian and first ever international co-production, the film was shot at original locations in India. The Maharaja of Jaipur also supported the film team by providing his court, 30 richly decorated elephants, and extras from his people. The result was a poetic masterpiece that beautifully documented the brilliant cinematic collaboration of Orient and Occident. The Berlin Film Review Board accordingly rated the film as “educational and artistically valuable” in the year of its release.

Music:
Silent Light Orchestra, with a special focus on evoking oriental soundscapes.
About the films

NOSFERATU
1921/22

Hutter (Gustav von Wangenheim), assistant to an estate agent, lives a carefree life with his young wife Ellen (Greta Schröder) in Wisborg, a small German port town. One day his boss Knock (Alexander Granach) decides to send him to Transylvania to sell a house in Hutter’s hometown to one Count Orlok (Max Schreck). Hutter’s wife bids her husband a worried farewell.

At the destination of his journey, Hutter first encounters the strange lord of the castle at night. Count Orlok signs the contract of sale for the abandoned warehouse without hesitation. The next morning, Hutter discovers two small red marks on his neck, apparently caused by a nocturnal visit from the bloodsucking count. Full of dark forebodings, Hutter sets out on his way home to forestall the vampire, who brings a plague and its attendant death and destruction down upon Wisborg, and who can only be defeated by a sacrifice made for true love. Hutter fears for his wife...

Loosely based on Bram Stoker’s “Dracula” novel, with a brilliant cast – first and foremost leading actor Max Schreck – and nightmarish images that have lost none of their impact even today, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s expressionist masterpiece is regarded as the mother of all horror films. The UFA Film Nights show Murnau’s classic on the occasion of the centenary of its creation.

Music:
Cameron Carpenter on the organ.
ensemble KONTRASTE (eK) has been regarded as one of the most renowned German formations in new music for three decades. It has performed all over the world at venues including the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Athens Concert Hall, and Lisbon’s National Theater. The eK has received invitations to the Vienna Festival, the Chopin Festival Warsaw, the Berlinale, the Salzburg Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Nara Music Festival in Japan, and the Gavroche Festival in Moscow.

True to the words of Pierre Boulez, who wrote: “Culture needs no false security, but open doors and risk takers”, the eK questions traditions and develops new formats, tirelessly seeking out alternative concert venues, and collaborating with other art movements. This is always done with respect for the old masters, yet with great curiosity for the young generation.

The eK’s virtuoso qualities become particularly apparent in its accompaniment of silent movies. Here, it becomes audible that the eK goes far beyond providing a background score and enters into a fascinating partnership with the film. By virtue of its high level of musicality and love of experimentation, the eK succeeds in bringing new facets to silent film classics and thus building a bridge to the present, most recently at the stummFILMMUSIKtage 2019 in Nuremberg with Georg Wilhelm Pabst’s DIE BÜCHSE DER PANDORA (PANDORA’S BOX).

For CARMEN, ensemble KONTRASTE will perform a composition by Tobias Schwencke commissioned by ZDF/Arte. The composer and pianist regularly works for theaters and opera houses such as the Maxim Gorki Theater Berlin, the Berliner Ensemble, and the Staatsoper Unter den Linden. He has already staged or musically directed performances at renowned houses worldwide including the Theater an der Wien, the Teatro Real Madrid, the Uppsala Stadstheater, the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus, and the Munich State Opera. He has worked with directors such as Herbert Fritsch, Nurkan Erpulat, Claus Peymann, Leander Haußmann and Frank Castorf. He is also known for his new concertante film music, for example for Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s FAUST at the Salzburg Festival in 2011.

ensemble KONTRASTE is supported by the city of Nuremberg, the district of Middle Franconia, and the Free State of Bavaria.
SILENT LIGHT ORCHESTRA

Silent Light Orchestra is the name of a new musical formation consisting of members of the ensemble Trioglyzerin and the Ekkehard Wölk Quartet: Kristoff Becker (cello), Ulrich van der Schoor (sitar, theorbo), Ekkehard Wölk (piano) and Andrea Marcelli (tabla, percussion, bansuri).

Trioglyzerin has performed highly acclaimed accompanying music at the UFA Film Nights for many years now. In 2012, for example, the ensemble created the music for Fritz Lang’s SPIONE (SPIES), in 2013 for GEHEIMNISSE DES ORIENTS (SECRETS OF THE ORIENT), in 2015 and 2020 for DIE ABENTEUER DES PRINZEN ACHMED (THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED), in 2016 together with the Deutsche Oper Berlin’s JazzCombo for DIE BERGKATZE (THE WILD CAT), and in 2018 for SUMURUN.

Another successful venture was Ekkehard Wölk’s 2019 score to accompany MADAME DUBARRY – a winning fusion of baroque and jazz for whose performance he teamed up with the musicians of his quartet to form the Ensemble Ancien Régime.

In their jointly developed new film score for DIE LEUCHTE ASIENS, the musicians of the Silent Light Orchestra pay special attention to evoking oriental soundscapes, a field with which they are deeply familiar.
About the musicians

CAMERON CARPENTER

With his extraordinary musicality, near-limitless technical skill, and pioneering spirit, Carpenter is one of “the most strident and provocative phenomena on the classical music scene” (Süddeutsche Zeitung) and is considered the “decathlete of manuals, pedals, and stop knobs” (Die Zeit). Since the completion of the International Touring Organ (ITO) in 2014, Carpenter now plays almost exclusively on his own instrument. The ITO, built according to his plans, allows him to perform at almost any venue imaginable.

Born in Pennsylvania, USA, in 1981, Cameron Carpenter first performed J. S. Bach’s “Well-Tempered Clavier” at the age of 11. While studying composition and organ at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, he transcribed over 100 works for organ, including Gustav Mahler’s Symphony No. 5. Carpenter’s first compositions were written during his time at the Juilliard School in New York.

In 2019, Carpenter’s recording of his arrangement of Sergei Rachmaninoff’s “Paganini Variations” was released, and of Francois Poulenc’s Organ Concerto with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under Christoph Eschenbach. Cameron Carpenter was the first organist ever to be nominated for a Grammy for his album “Revolutionary” (2008, Telarc).

Carpenter has received numerous awards for his work and in 2017/18 was an “Artist in Residence” with the Konzerthausorchester in Berlin, his current home. It was there that Carpenter discovered his penchant for silent film classics, which he accompanies with great passion, as a change of pace and an extension of his repertoire. In 2014, for example, he gave three live concerts at Berlin’s Babylon cinema, accompanying the Berlinale version – lavishly restored with Bertelsmann’s support – of DAS CABINET DES DR. CALIGARI. Later, he improvised a score to accompany Ruttmann’s BERLIN – DIE SINFONIE DER GROßSTADT and Fritz Lang’s METROPOLIS. The revolutionary organist has previously accompanied Murnau’s NOSFERATU as well.
About UFA

Over the past 100 years, UFA has created unforgettable images. It is the umbrella company for all German production activities of the internationally active media and entertainment company Fremantle, the worldwide production arm of Bertelsmann’s RTL Group.

In 2017, UFA celebrated its 100th anniversary, making it one of the world’s oldest entertainment brands. With more than 3,500 hours of programming broadcast a year, today’s UFA Group presents itself as a powerful program creator that has steadily expanded its market leadership as a film and TV producer in Germany in recent years. UFA programs inspire and excite millions of viewers every day.

The production units UFA Fiction, UFA Serial Drama, UFA Show & Factual and UFA Documentary operate under the UFA umbrella. High-quality fictional productions such as TV movies, series, serials and TV events are realized by UFA Fiction. First-class shows of all genres, from talent and game shows, to quiz, panel and dating shows, to comedy and music shows, as well as high-quality factual programs, emotional, journalistic and documentary, are created in UFA Show & Factual. UFA Serial Drama is the leading provider of industrial series productions. UFA Documentary focuses on documentaries, documentary hybrids and serial features.

With currently more than 30 serial program brands, UFA has more long-running formats on the market than any other producer. UFA sets and develops trends with its programs, while also remaining committed to proven ideas and traditions. Its impressive track record comprises high-ratings series and shows like “SOKO LEIPZIG,” “GZSZ,” “ALLES WAS ZÄHLT,” “UNTER UNS,” “EIN STARKES TEAM,” “WER WEISS DENN SOWAS?” “DEUTSCHLAND SUCHT DEN SUPERSTAR,” “TAKE ME OUT” or “SAG DIE WAHRHEIT.” Outstanding high-end drama series, event-scale TV programs, and TV movies like “_UNSERE MÜTTER, UNSERE VÄTER” (GENERATION WAR), “KU’DAMM 56/59/63,” “CHARITÉ1/2/3,” “DEUTSCHLAND 83/86/89,” “HACKERVILLE,” “ALTES LAND” or “8 ZEUGEN” and feature films like “DER JUNGE MUSS AN DIE FRISCHE LUFT” or “ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK,” as well as successful factual entertainment like “BAUER SUCHT FRAU” (FARMER WANTS A WIFE), and social documentaries such as “HARTZ UND HERZLICH.”

More about UFA and its productions:

www.UFA.de
www.facebook.com/UFA
About 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 around 130,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.3 billion in the 2020 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. In 2021, Bertelsmann commemorates the 100th birthday of Reinhard Mohn, the Group’s late post-war founder and longtime Chairman and CEO.

As a creative content company with a close connection to its 186-year history, Bertelsmann is committed to the cultural community at various levels as part of its “Culture@Bertelsmann” activities. For example, the Group devotes itself to preserving important cultural assets, with a focus on making cultural heritage accessible, for example through digitization or exhibitions and concerts. For many years, Bertelsmann has organized the UFA Film Nights in Berlin and supported the screening of silent films at festivals around the world. The company also regularly acts as the main sponsor of the digital restoration of important silent films. The Group also owns the Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, which houses a wealth of unique testaments to Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing the archive holdings according to the latest standards and making its cultural treasures accessible to a broad public. Since 2020, the “Culture@Bertelsmann” activities have increasingly shifted to the digital realm.

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