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The DEFA Film Library Newsletter

The Cinema of East Germany and Beyond

5/8/2007

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**25th Anniversary!
Your Unknown
Brother 25% Off!**



On May 13, 1982, Ulrich Weiß' film *Your Unknown Brother* premiered at the Colosseum cinema in East Berlin. A rare psychological take on antifascism, *Your Unknown Brother* both sustains and

Welcome!

It has been a busy month here at the DEFA Film Library! We've had the visit of DEFA researcher Paul Werner Wagner, and subtitling and other production work has been going full steam ahead. We also held 2 DVD-premieres: Andreas Dresen's *Silent Country* (1992) was screened in the German Film Series at Amherst College; Humberto Solás' Cuban classic *Cecilia* (1981) was part of the 14th Massachusetts Multicultural Film Festival! We are getting in touch with those who applied for the Summer Film Institute and still have a few spots open. So spread the word!

- **Kuhle Wampe - Release Delayed**

Our release of *Kuhle Wampe, or Who Owns the World?*, due to come out this month, will be delayed until spring 2008, but we think it will be worth the wait!



Along with absolut Media, our German partner for this project, we have decided to undertake significant restoration of this important 1932 film. The 35mm positive stored at the German Federal Film Archive will be transferred to a digital Betacam, then both the image and sound quality will be restored under the supervision of Harald Brandes, who helped restore Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. In addition, we will be adding exciting special features that our research has turned up, including director Slatan Dudow's 1929 silent short film, *Zeitprobleme: Wie der Arbeiter wohnt*, and Volker Koepp's 1974 documentary on Dudow. Please check our website for updates on this title!

Learn More...

- **Jurek Becker Film Festival - Fall 2007**

breaks with antifascist conventions. As such, it represented a milestone in East German filmmaking and was chosen for the 2005 "Rebels with a Cause" retrospective at MoMA.

Your Unknown Brother tells the story of a young communist who returns from a Nazi camp for political prisoners in 1935. He is ambivalent about re-establishing contact with his resistance group and afraid he is being watched. Isolation, fear, betrayal, and the need for friendship are the themes of this film.

Invited to compete at the Cannes Film Festival, *Your Unknown Brother* was withdrawn by East German officials, despite the filmmakers' feverish preparations. Ulrich Weiß, a talented director for whom this film represented great strides in creative development, emerged embittered from this experience and, from this point on, all his artistic activities were undercut. The Oxford History of World Cinema calls Weiß "the greatest talent to emerge from the Babelsberg film school in the 1970s."

To order the film, email: defaorder@german.umass.edu

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Jurek Becker (1937-1997) was one of the most important (East) German writers of the 20th century. Becker grew up in the Jewish ghetto of Lodz, Poland and survived the Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen concentration camps. In his novels and short stories, he extended his exploration of Jewish identity to other minorities as well.

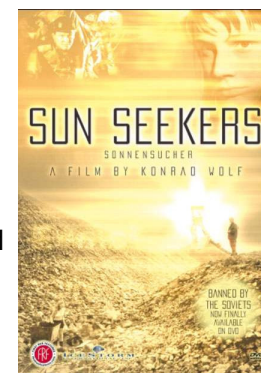


In commemoration of Becker's 70th birthday, the DEFA Film Library is planning a festival of four films based on his novels and stories. We are honored to announce that Christine Becker will introduce and discuss the films and read from her late husband's work. Screenings here at the Five Colleges will include: *Jacob the Liar* (Dir. Frank Beyer, 1974), *Bronstein's Children* (Dir. Jerzy Kawalerowicz, 1990), *Shortcut to Istanbul* (Dir. Andreas Dresen, 1990) and *While All Germans Sleep* (Dir. Frank Beyer, 1994). The last screening will be a North American premiere; this film is about the dangerous adventure of 5-year-old Marek and his friends, who leave a Polish transit camp in 1942 - a few days before their evacuation to Auschwitz - to go get the toys they forgot at home.

If you are interested in screening part, or all of this program at your campus or institution, please contact Hiltrud Schulz at video@german.umass.edu.

- **Researching East German film in Berlin this summer?**

In early April, we were pleased to welcome Paul Werner Wagner, German film historian, at the DEFA Film Library. In two classes here at UMass Amherst, he spoke on Konrad Wolf's *Sun Seekers* (1958/1971) in relation to The Cold War in East Germany: Personal experiences with the Stasi during the 1960s. Following his stay here, he joined Assistant Prof. Laura McGee at Western Kentucky University, where he held a two-week-long workshop on Music in DEFA Films and the Youth Scene.



Paul Werner Wagner is also the host of a bi-monthly talk show at the Café Quchnia in the center of Berlin, which features guests related to East German film, television and theater. These talk shows are supported by the DEFA Foundation and ICESTORM Entertainment. Click on DEFA-Filmküche on the ICESTORM website for

a look at the exciting directors and actors who have appeared on the show: www.icestorm.de.

If you are going to Berlin this summer and you are working on a DEFA topic, please let us know (video@german.umass.edu). Perhaps you could be a guest on one of his summer talk shows!

- **FYI: Books on (East) Germany**

The Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung offers a wide range of books about (East) German history, such as Rock Music in the GDR, The East German Secret Service, The Democratic Revolution and June 17, 1953. All books are in German; they are inexpensive and can be ordered through the Bundeszentrale website: www.bpb.de.

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