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## The DEFA Film Library Newsletter

East German Cinema & Beyond

11/28/07

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### Welcome!

As you'll see, there's been a lot going on with DEFA, here and abroad!

We are also inaugurating a new column: *New Press!* Located at the end of the newsletter, this feature will alert you to reviews and other responses to our films and programs.

Best wishes in this holiday season, from all of us here at the DEFA Film Library!

### • **DEFA Films a Hit in Israel**

#### ***Black and White ≠ Gray: German Cinema behind the Iron Curtain***

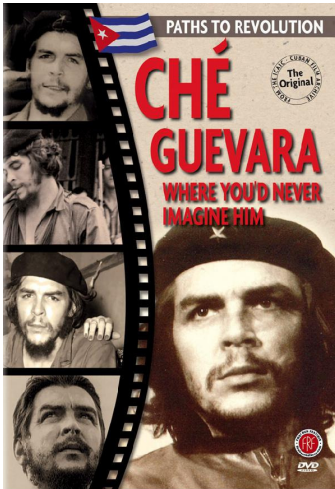
- according to the DEFA Foundation the second important international DEFA retrospective after the 2005 MoMA *Rebels with a Cause* series - met

with great and widespread success in Israel. *Haaretz* ran a full-page article about the series in its arts section, and the screenings at *cinemathèques* in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa were well attended or sold out. On November 13, **Barton Byg**, Director of the DEFA Film Library, spoke on "Konrad Wolf as Mediator" at the German Studies Center of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, in one of a series of lectures associated with the retrospective. Running from November 11 to 25, the 16-film series included several DEFA classics and films that deal with National Socialism and the Shoah, as well as five titles featured in the *Rebels with a Cause* retrospective.



**[Learn more...](#)**

### • **The Red Elvis: Dean Reed on Film**



New to North America! Two documentaries from the Cuban films series, *Cuba, Paths to Revolution (Cuba, Caminos de Revolución)*, on the luminaries of the Cuban revolution. With never-released short films by classic Cuban filmmakers, these DVDs are a MUST for film historians: ***Che Guevara - Where You'd Never Imagine Him*** and ***Moments with Fidel***.

[Learn More...](#)

The **Goethe-Institut Washington** will host a **Dean Reed** film series from December 3 to January 7. Dean Reed was an American teen idol in the late 1950s and early 1960s. More popular outside of the US than at home, the singer and actor moved to Argentina, where he took up the cause of international socialism, before settling in East Germany in 1973. There he began to write, direct and star in his own films for the DEFA Studio for Feature Films in Potsdam-Babelsberg. The series features two East German productions that Reed himself created in the tradition of the *Indianerfilm*, or DEFA Western: *Blood Brothers* and *Sing, Cowboy, Sing*. The DEFA Film Library has just subtitled *Blood Brothers*, with the support of the DEFA Foundation, and is making this title available for rental.

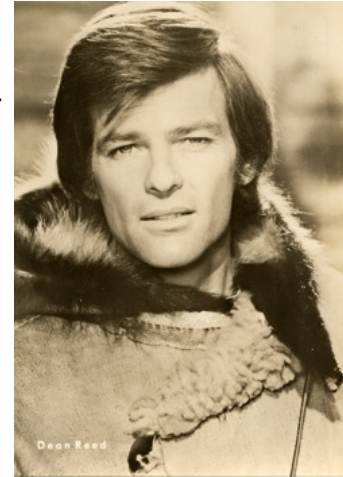
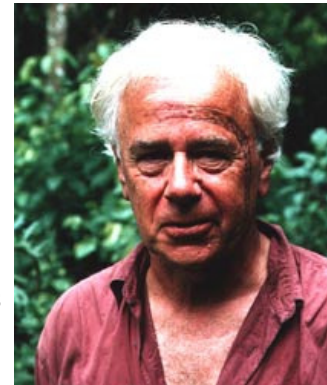


Image © Tassilo Leher, courtesy of Icestorm Entertainment GmbH

### [Learn more...](#)

#### ● **Rainer Simon - Fall 2008 Filmmaker's Tour**

The DEFA Film Library is pleased to announce the fall 2008 Filmmaker's Tour. Director **Rainer Simon** will tour North America with his films from September to November 2008. If you are interested in bringing Rainer Simon and his films to your institution, please contact us for more information: [video@german.umass.edu](mailto:video@german.umass.edu).



Rainer Simon started his career at the East German film studios in 1965, working as an assistant director under Ralf Kirsten (*The Lost Angel*, 1966) and Konrad Wolf (*I Was Nineteen*, 1967). His major films include: *Till Eulenspiegel* (1975), based on a film script by Christa and Gerhard Wolf; *The Airship* (1983); and his important film *Jadup and Boel* (1980), which was banned by officials and not released until 1988. Since shooting *The Ascent of the Chimborazo* (1989) in Ecuador, Simon's work has focused on the life and culture of the indigenous people of Ecuador. Also known as a documentarist, writer and photographer, Simon teaches film workshops for young filmmakers in Ecuador.

- **Interview with Angel Wagenstein**

The DEFA Foundation has awarded a grant to **Mariana Ivanova**, a doctoral student in German Studies at UT Austin, to travel to Sofia, Bulgaria, to conduct an interview with author and scriptwriter **Angel Wagenstein** (or Vagenshtain). Wagenstein wrote over 50 scripts, including those for the DEFA films *Stars* (1959), *Chronicle of a Murder* (1964), and *Goya* (1971). This interview forms part of Ivanova's dissertation research on eastern European film collaboration. Excerpts of the Wagenstein interview will also be made into short bonus films for releases of *Stars* and *Goya* on DVD planned for 2008.



- **New Press!**

**Dresen's [Silent Country](#):**

A rewarding introduction to a talented filmmaker. Highly recommended!

- F. Swietek, *Video Librarian*

**Wolf's [I Was Nineteen](#):**

Essentially a film about memory - riveting, uncompromising, and tragic. That no clear terms rest in the final analysis is the ultimate brilliance of this wild, subversive, and thoughtful piece of work. I highly recommend this film.

- Stuart, Henderson, [www.popmatters.com](http://www.popmatters.com)

**Cineaste** (4/2007) has published an extensive article about the documentary [Verdict on Auschwitz-The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial 1963-1965](#) by Stuart Liebman, professor of film history at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York. A 2-DVD Special Edition of this title - which includes the original 180-minute film and a one-hour version of the film made in 2005, as well as background information, critical essays and an index of Auschwitz survivors and perpetrators appearing in both versions - can be ordered through the DEFA Film Library.

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