

Philadelphia International Film Festival 2007

German, Austrian, and Swiss Movies (all Languages)



Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot *Grave Decisions*

Philadelphia Premiere

Thursday, April 12 • 2:30 • Ritz East Theater
1 Friday, April 13 • 12:00 • Ritz East Theater
1 Sunday, April 15 • 4:45 • Ritz East Theater

Germany 2006, 104 min

Director: Marcus H. Rosenmüller **Cast:** Markus Krojer, Fritz Karl, Jule Ronstedt, Jürgen Tonkel, Saskia Vester, Franz Xaver Brückner
Screenwriters: Marcus H. Rosenmüller, Julia Schwarz **Producers:** Annie Brunner, Andreas Richter, Ursula Wörner **Cinematographer:** Stefan Biebl **Editor:** Susanne Hartmann **Print Source:** Beta Film GmbH

Because of the responsibility he feels for his mother's death, a boy looks for a way to make her memory live on while also searching for a new wife for his barkeep father in this comic film about dealing with death that's surprisingly full of offbeat humor and everyday magic.

Sebastian means well, but always seems to say and do the wrong thing. He also worries that he makes things die, from his dad's rabbits that he accidentally kills to his mother, who died during his birth. After he is told that she can be immortal through him, he steals a guitar to learn how to play like she did, but that only gets him into more trouble. Also feeling guilty that his dad is alone because of him, he tries to set him up with someone new. But this time the problem is that the woman he has in mind is married. A cast of eccentrics — ranging from a spiritual, classic rock-loving DJ (who provides the film with a terrific soundtrack as well) to the colorful country folk who drink and rehearse a play at Sebastian's father's bar — populate the boy's small Bavarian village. *Grave Decisions* is a warm coming-of-age story that handles a serious subject with light humor and warm emotions. (German with English subtitles) —Jesse Dubus

Website: www.wer-frueher-stirbt-ist-laenger-tot.de

Marcus H. Rosenmüller's Filmography: *Schwere Jungs* (Heavyweights) (2007)

Slumming

Philadelphia Premiere

Wednesday, April 11 • 7:15 • Ritz East Theater 2
Friday, April 13 • 12:30 • Ritz East Theater 2
Sunday, April 15 • 7:15 • The Bridge

Austria, Switzerland 2006, 96 min

Director: Michael Glawogger **Cast:** Paulus Manker, August Diehl, Michael Ostrowski, Pia Hierzegger, Maria Bill **Screenwriter:** Michael Glawogger, Barbara Albert **Producer:** Erich Lackner **Cinematographer:** Martin Gschlacht **Editor:** Christof Schertenleib **Print Source:** Bavaria Film International

Veteran Austrian director Michael Glawogger returns to fiction filmmaking with this extremely entertaining comedic drama about the bizarre consequences of a cruel practical joke two slackers play on an unsuspecting homeless drunk.

If you are longing for a comedy with substance beyond the plotting of the latest Will Ferrell vehicle, look no further. Glawogger, coming straight off of his cinemaverité study of the world's most dangerous occupations — *Workingman's Death* — presents a hilarious, existential narrative that delves into themes of home and belonging. Smug and sly Sebastian is a smart elitist of the worst kind, bored and well-off. He spends his days amusing himself with degrading pranks involving Internet dating and the surreptitious photographing of women's crotches. One night he and his sidekick, Alex, decide to pile the local wino, Kallmann, into the trunk of their car and leave him in the Czech Republic with no identification and no way to get home. But when Alex returns home to Austria, his girlfriend, Pia, discovers what he has done; it then appears that Kallmann's life is not the only one about to change forever. Glawogger's film is brilliantly layered both dramatically and thematically. The multicultural journey ranges from heartbreaking and thrilling to absurdist and juvenile, as the characters struggle to find a place to call home. (German with English subtitles) —Michael Lerman

Website: www.slumming.at

Michael Glawogger's Filmography: *Workingman's Death* (2005); *Nachtschnecken* (2004); *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln* (State of the Nation: Austria in Six Chapters) (2002); *Frankreich, wir kommen* (France, Here We Come!) (1999); *Megacities* (1998); *Kino im Kopf* (Movies in the Mind) (1996) *Die Ameisenstrasse* (Ant Street) (1995)



Wir werden uns wiederseh'n *So Long, My Heart!*

East Coast Premiere



Tues April 10 • 4:30 • Bryn Mawr Film Inst.
Wed April 11 • 7:15 • Ritz Five
Fri April 13 • 2:30 • Ritz Five

Germany 2006, 90 min

Directors: Oliver Paulus, Stefan Hillebrand **Cast:** Tom Jahn, Pola Kinski, Isolde Fischer, Lieselotte Langer, Alice Huber
Screenwriter: Oliver Paulus, Stefan Hillebrand **Producers:** Oliver Paulus, Stefan Hillebrand **Cinematographer:** Daniela Knapp **Editor:** André Bigoudi **Print Source:** Motorfilm

This endearing gem of a movie is a sweetly melancholic meditation on life, death, love and that palpable thing called loneliness.

Holger Tewe (Tom Jahn) is a male nurse from Berlin who has relocated to Mannheim to work as a caretaker in a facility for the elderly. As the only man there, (certainly the only young man), Holger stands out, attracting the attention of women both old and young (well, relatively young). *So Long, My Heart!* is a sweetly melancholic little film about how palpable loneliness can be, particularly in a place not typically conducive to romance. The characters here — the elderly residents and the stressed-out caretakers who try to make their lives comfortable — are so finely etched that they all become oddly companionable. There's Frau Kramer (Lieselotte Langer) — whose delusions of death are personified by a little chamber group that soothes her with music — and Herr Neumann (Dietrich Garbrrecht) — a large, dignified man whose virility is sadly waning. This modest meditation on life, love and death is bolstered by the standout performances of Isolde Fischer and Pola Kinski who, as the home's manager and kitchen worker, respectively, both make a play for Holger. *So Long, My Heart!*, brims with compassion and an understanding of the life force, both in its prime and as it starts to fade. (German with English subtitles) —Joe Baltake

Website: www.wir-werden-uns-wiedersehen.com

Oliver Paulus & Stefan Hillebrand's Filmography: *Wenn der Richtige kommt* (When the Right One Comes Along) (2003)

Warchild

Philadelphia Premiere



Thur April 12 • 4:45 • Ritz East Theater 2
Sat April 14 • 12:30 • Ritz East Theater 2

Germany, Slovenia 2006, 100 min

Director: Christian Wagner **Cast:** Labina Mitevska, Senad Basic, Crescentia Dünsser, Otto Kukla, Miranda Leonhardt, Heinrich Schmieder, Katrin Sass, Zdenko Jelcic **Screenwriter:** Edin Hadzimahovic **Producer:** Christian Wagner
Cinematographer: Thomas Mauch **Editor:** Jens Klüber
Print Source: Christian Wagner Film

In this captivating drama with reverberations of the war in Bosnia, a mother goes on an epic and intense journey to track down the daughter that was taken away from her when she was living in an internment camp during the conflict.

Having settled into a good job and a stable existence, Senada has regained a sense of normalcy in the years since the war. But she is still haunted by the daughter she lost in the chaos of national strife. When the sight of a picture in a magazine gives her the faintest of hopes that her daughter is still alive and in Germany, she embarks with steadfast resolve on a dangerous and difficult voyage to illegally enter the country where she thinks her child has been adopted. The trip requires steely determination but also allows her to reflect on the horrific impact of her past. Through this sensitive depiction of one woman's story, *Warchild* expresses the painful fissures created across an entire country by war. Though a work of fiction, the film's story of a family split apart during the war is an all too common one in Bosnia. Featuring an award-winning screenplay and a mesmerizing performance by actress Labina Mitevska, *Warchild* is a poignant examination of the emotional toll of war. (German, Serbo-Croatian with English subtitles) —Noelle Reilly

Website: www.wagnerfilm.de

Christian Wagner's Filmography: *Ghetto-Kids* (2002); *Zehn wahnsinnige Tage* (2000); *Transatlantis* (1995); *Waller's letzter Gang* (Waller's Last Trip) (1998); *WAAhnsinn - Der Wackersdorf-Film* (1986); *Eingeschlossen frei zu sein* (1984); *Der prophetor* (1981)

Wholetrain

Philadelphia Premiere



Fri April 6 • 9:30 • Ritz Five
Sun April 8 • 12:00 • The Bridge
Mon April 9 • 5:00 • Ritz Five

Germany 2006, 85 min

Director: Florian Gaag **Cast:** Mike Adler, Florian Renner, Elyas M'Barek, Jacob Matschenz, Gerald Alexander Held
Screenwriter: Florian Gaag **Producers:** Sven Burgemeister, Christoph Müller **Cinematographer:** Christian Rein **Editor:** Kai Schröter **Print Source:** Goldkind Film

Possibly one of the best films ever to treat the subject of graffiti culture comes from Germany, of all places, in this exuberant story of a group of young men trying to reconcile their all-consuming lifestyle as “writers” with their growing responsibilities as adults.

When more ambitious and accomplished pieces by another gang begin to appear around Munich, the KSB crew is pulled in conflicting directions. Despite outside pressures on some members of the group to keep a low profile — one is on probation and another has a young child — their pride leads them to try to one-up the new crew by “bombing” a whole commuter train — an epic and risky undertaking that they think would reaffirm their street cred. While Wholetrain intelligently portrays this uneasy transition into adulthood with empathy and strong performances from a cast made of mostly non-professionals, its greatest pleasures are the fantastic montages (accompanied by an equally good soundtrack featuring KRS-ONE and others) of the actual construction of the pieces, thrilling in their authenticity and attention to detail, not to mention their infectious energy. Although the crews (whose members reflect the new Germany, coming from a diverse background of races and classes) speak German, international slang like “toy” and “burner” needs no translation, and the shooting locations of Warsaw and Munich nostalgically recall pre-Giuliani New York with stunning pieces covering seemingly every square inch of cement and steel. (German with English subtitles) —Jesse Dubus

Website: www.wholetrain.com

Wholetrain is Florian Gaag's debut.

Leinwandfieber

Comrades In Dreams

Philadelphia Premiere



Sun April 8 • 5:00 • Nat'l Constitution Center
Fri April 13 • 7:15 • Nat'l Constitution Center

Germany 2006, 102 min

Director: Uli Gaulke **Screenwriters:** Uli Gaulke, Jeannette Eggert **Producer:** Helge Albers **Cinematographer:** Axel Schnepat **Editor:** Andrew Bird **Print Source:** Films Transit

The extraordinary lengths to which movie exhibitors go to get films presented in remote locales — among them Burkina Faso, North Korea, India and Wyoming — are revealed in this paean to cinephilia.

Uli Gaulke, the creator of Comrades in Dreams, was once a projectionist, and his passion for celluloid is evident in this labor of love. Here is a meditative look into the hearts and souls of the dedicated (and some might say deluded) men and women who spend their lives bringing big-screen movies to those who would otherwise be forced to do without one of life's great pleasures. In a time when many people are forgoing the cinema in favor of cable and second-run movies presented on expensive home theater systems, Comrades is a comforting reminder that there are still idealists out there who believe that film should be a shared, communal experience. Whether the films themselves are Academy Award winners, Communist propaganda, formulaic Hollywood fare or corny Bollywood musicals; shown outside in a giant tent on a muggy night or in a dreary community center; cinema's appeal is universal. Celebrate the joy of movie-going with the doubly divine experience of watching a film about the magic of cinema surrounded by other movie lovers. (Korean, French, Marathi with English subtitles) — Jennifer Steinberg

Uli Gaulke's Filmography: Heirate mich - Casate conmigo (2003); Havanna mi amor (2000) Program includes the short: **Moi** (Canada, 2006, 16 min, Yan England) The story of 15-year-old Alexis (Emile Mailhot), a boy passionate about cinema and Chaplin, and who he dreams of becoming a film director.

Herr Pilipenko und sein U-Boot

Mr Pilipenko and his Submarine

Philadelphia Premiere



Tues April 10 • 7:15 • The Bridge
Fri April 13 • 2:30 • Nat'l Constitution Center

Germany 2006, 90 min

Director: Jan Hinrik Dreves, René Harder **Cast:** Vladimir Pilipenko, Anya Pilipenko **Screenwriters:** Jan Hinrik Dreves, René Harder **Producers:** Jens Fintelmann, Thomas Seekamp **Cinematographer:** Florian Melzer **Editor:** Renate Ober **Print Source:** Nonfiction Planet

This tender-hearted documentary chronicles the unfaithful quest of a retired Ukrainian to build his own submarine and pilot it in the Black Sea.

Why would a retired middle-aged man who lives in a landlocked farming community in the middle of the Ukrainian steppes decide to build a submarine? To prove that it can be done, of course...even if it takes 20 years. Mr Pilipenko, much to the chagrin of his charming wife, has modeled his craft, The Dolphin, after plans published in an ancient edition of Underwater Sportsmen magazine. It's a good thing that modern technology is not required since the poor Mr. P's pension can hardly cover the cost of batteries. What makes this story so endearing is the manner in which it captures the comical everyday life of Pilipenko and his extremely colorful, loving family who are alternately enthusiastic and annoyed at a father who they sometimes wish would spend his golden years on more traditional pursuits. When he finally gets a chance to test his U-boat in the water, things really go off the deep end. Anyone who appreciates quixotic aspirations will find a kindred spirit in this tale of a man who refuses to let reason get in the way of his dream. (Russian with English subtitles) —Jennifer Steinberg

Mr Pilipenko and his Submarine is Jan Hinrik Dreves, René Harder's debut.

A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash

Philadelphia Premiere



A bathtub of crude oil in Azerbaijan as featured in Basil Gelpke and Ray McCormack's *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash*.

Wed April 11 • 7:00 • The Bridge
Fri April 13 • 5:00 • Nat'l Constitution Center

Switzerland 2006, 85 min

Directors: Basil Gelpke, Ray McCormack, Reto Caduff (co-director) **Producer:** Ray McCormack **Cinematographers:** Frank Messmer, Daniel Pfisterer **Editor:** Georgia Wyss **Print Source:** Sundance Channel

Moviegoers will be shocked out of complacency into facing the facts after watching this well-researched examination of the state of the world's oil supply.

In the United States, oil is god and petroleum is worshipped. It is used to make countless products we consume, it gets us to where we are going, it heats our homes and it powers the equipment that plants and harvests our crops. But there is a finite amount of it, and the supply is diminishing rapidly. The last major reserve was discovered over forty years ago. It is frightening, but we need to accept what the scientists already know; that there are no more significant undiscovered sources of crude oil on the planet, as many high-tech scanning devices have indicated. As oil fields run dry, we will be forced to extract it from more and more unstable regions of the world. What will be the cost — financially and otherwise?

A Crude Awakening is a wakeup call, soliciting testimony from experts in many disciplines who all see the writing on the wall. Without falling into the traps of over-simplification or shrill rhetoric, the film demonstrates that the time to develop new forms of renewable energy is now. Problem-solving takes time and more and more people are realizing that there is none to spare. Whatever your political or social affiliations may be, this is an issue you cannot afford to ignore and a film you cannot afford to miss. —Jennifer Steinberg

Website: www.oilcrashmovie.com

Basil Gelpke, Ray McCormack, Reto Caduff (co-director)'s Filmography:
Reto Caduff : *Krokus: As Long as We Live* (2004)