



Press Release

PLAY IT AGAIN ...!

60 Years of Berlinale - A Retrospective

In 1960, a film was screened in the *Competition* of the Berlin International Film Festival that defied all filmic conventions and dumbfounded the critics. *A bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, France 1959/60) not only marks young Godard's international breakthrough but in retrospect also the arrival of the *nouvelle vague*, one of the most extraordinary milestones in the history of the festival. On an excursion through the 60 years of the Berlinale, the *Retrospective* PLAY IT AGAIN ...! will bring discoveries of the past back to the big screen and spotlight a number of films exemplary for the festival's development: from the first decades, which were overshadowed by the Cold War; and the festival's opening up to films from socialist countries; to the end of Europe's political division, which some 20 years ago released the festival from its balancing act between cultural openness and political pressures. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Berlinale was able to establish itself as a platform for Eastern European and Asian cinema; in more recent years, it has increasingly succeeded in placing German films on equal footing with international productions.

The *Retrospective* will showcase the festival's diversity with some 40 films from the *Competition*, *Forum*, *Panorama*, and *Generation* sections. The renowned British film critic David Thomson has put together the programme: "A festival like the Berlinale demonstrates how the controversial films of yesterday have become the classics of today. Alongside these films, I have included works that may even surprise or outrage audiences today - I am looking forward to stimulating discussions in Berlin," the curator, who lives in the USA, remarks on his selection. Rarities from the festival's pioneering days, such as Curzio Malaparte's *Il Cristo proibito* (*The Forbidden Christ*, Italy 1950/51), Alf Sjöberg's *Fröken Julie* (*Miss Julie*, Sweden 1950/51), and Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru* (*To Live*, Japan 1952) stand in contrast to more recent films, such as Niels Arden Oplev's *Drømmen* (*We Shall Overcome*, Denmark/Great Britain 2005/06), a gripping father-son story not only for the younger generation, and Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia* (USA 1999), which won the Golden Berlin Bear in 2000. "We wanted an outside perspective: Which films represent festival history for connoisseur of film David Thomson? Which films does he see as having been formative? His selection offers a fascinating glimpse into film history," says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick.

"Exceptionally controversial were films that for political or aesthetic reasons upset the festival's routine, and have thus remained strongly imprinted on

60. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
11. - 21.02.2010

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our minds," adds Rainer Rother, Artistic Director of the Deutsche Kinemathek and Head of the *Retrospective*.

For example, in 1976, Nagisa Oshima's *Ai no corrida (In the Realm of the Senses)*, Japan/France 1975/76) caused a huge stir: after the first screening, the film print was confiscated by the district attorney's office, and charges were filed against the Director of the *International Forum of New Cinema*, Ulrich Gregor, for "disseminating pornography". Then, in 1979 Michael Cimino's anti-war drama *The Deer Hunter* (USA 1978) created an uproar. When, despite Soviet protest, the film was shown in the *Competition*, several socialist countries withdrew their films from the programme and ordered their delegations home.

David Thomson's selection also showcases European auteur cinema, such as Werner Herzog's feature-film debut *Lebenszeichen (Signs of Life)*, FRG 1967/68) and Alain Tanner's subtle, melancholy film *Dans la ville blanche (In the White City)*, Switzerland/Portugal 1982/83), as well as cinematic gems from Asia, such as Zhang Yimou's *Hong gaoliang (Red Sorghum)*, 1987/88). With the Golden Berlin Bear in 1988, the latter was the first film from the People's Republic of China to win a major award at an international festival. In mid-January 2010, the complete film programme of PLAY IT AGAIN ...! will be available at www.berlinale.de and www.deutsche-kinemathek.de

The films of the *Retrospective* will be screened in the CinemaxX at Potsdamer Platz and the Zeughauskino. A series of events in the Deutsche Kinemathek will accompany the film programme. With an introductory essay by David Thomson and many photos, the book for the *Retrospective* will be published in a bilingual edition (German/English) in the series "FilmHeft" by the Berlin publishing house Bertz + Fischer. One section of the book will extensively document the films that are to be screened by presenting detailed filmographic information and contemporary reviews. The Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen is responsible for both the *Retrospective* and the publication.

Press Office
11 November 2009