



Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

If you want your fellow fans to receive this newsletter or if you just want to add information write to [mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de](mailto:mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de). If you want to support the work of the Filmmuseum Berlin-Deutsche Kinemathek of which Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division you can do so by joining the "Friends and Supporters of Filmmuseum Berlin". Just go to <http://www.fffb.de> You'll find us on the web at [www.marlenedietrich.org](http://www.marlenedietrich.org) and [www.marlene.com](http://www.marlene.com)

Dear friends and fans,

Europe – continent of mystery, kings and castles, secrets and secret agents. At the beginning of the century, in the early spring of 1901, the German Kaiser Wilhelm secretly visited a jewellery shop Unter den Linden. He fell in love with a young maiden who showed him all her fine goods. Nine months later she gave birth to twins – two little baby daughters to be correct.

To avoid the scandal the young maiden was quickly married to a certain Major Dietrich and one of the twins was given to a family by the name of Riefenstahl. The Riefenstahl baby was named Leni, the Dietrich one named herself Marlene. Why did she choose that name? Is it because her inner self couldn't help but doing so?

This little mystery story is part of an old document found by a beautiful lady who looks just like a young Jodie Foster. During her research she came to us. Because we have such good relations to all the Hollywood moguls she asked us to publish this rough outline. How will the story continue? Could it be that Marlene D. and Leni R. were twins? And that her father was no other than the Kaiser himself?

We call this idea "The Wilhelm Code or the Revenge of the Kaiser" and would sell it for no more than \$ 1.000.000 under the condition that the buyer promises to make the movie just a tiny little bit better than the "DaVinci Code". That at least shouldn't be a big problem. And here are some more secrets revealed:

#### News:

Filmmuseum Berlin on May 31<sup>st</sup> opens a new section: The Fernseh-Museum (Museum for Television). Beside all the joy and excitement there is a little problem. How do you make people know that there is a Museum for Television inside a Filmmuseum. Surely not by calling it Filmmuseum. So it was decided to re-name Filmmuseum Berlin as

"Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen". With a new name a museum needs a new corporate identity. This is going to take a while and as long as the new identity is not designed we rather use the old name. In order not to confuse our dear readers we will stick to the name Filmmuseum Berlin until the change is done completely.

#### Visiting the Filmmuseum

Bob Koster, son of Henry Koster (formerly Kosterlitz) visited Filmmuseum Berlin and laughed out loud when he read Marlenes remark on the script of his fathers "No Highway": "It's probably the lousiest script I've ever read" she wrote to her agent. Well, that was her standard remark on nearly all of the scripts she received.

Bob generously donated some letters to his father by a german girlfriend and promised to send more when he is home again.



Here Bob is trying to get hold of Barbara Stanwyck.

Here is an excerpt from a correspondence between Marlene and Henry Koster during the preparation for "No Highway". Henry Koster asks Marlene in a letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> August 1950: "Would you please tell me from which side you prefer to be photographed in Close-Ups? This might sound funny to you,

but we like to have you look pretty on the screen, and shall ask the Art Director to build the sets so that we can photograph you from your most becoming angle.”

In a cable she answered: “None of my profiles are good perhaps left one somewhat better because of hair and hat – Can you still use few suggestions I have for the part”

Here’s Henry’s very pragmatic answer: It is never too late to hear suggestions, so please shoot.



Louise Kersh-Hirschfeld (seen here with Gero Gandert from Filmmuseum Berlin) donated a caricature of Marlene by her husband, the late Al Hirschfeld, to MDCB.



Louise (seen by Al Hirschfeld) is a very charming lady and gave us the idea to think about an exhibition by the title of “Marlene in Graphic” which could combine Al Hirschfelds

sketches with those of Jean Louis and other famous artists.

Thank you Louise for donating the artwork and inspiring us.

### **New theatrical play „Mythos Marlene“**

A new theatrical play on Marlene by author and director Jo van Nelsen had its premiere on May 19th in Stuttgart. It received very good reviews and is running continuously until July 9<sup>th</sup>. More information and online-booking at [www.jovannelsen.de](http://www.jovannelsen.de)

### **Auction News:**

Poster connection in San Francisco sold a german poster of the “Blue Angel” 50s re-release for the fantastic sum of \$1.800. Might we say that this a bit overpaid?

Christie’s New York is offering at their Film and Entertainment Auction on June 23 rare photos, contracts and letters by Marlene in different lots. Among these is the personal collection of Norma Bosquet – quite a very private collection.

<http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/search/LotDetail.asp?intObjectID=4731442&SN=1681&LN=0147>

The sale number is 1681 and the Marlene Dietrich lots are 147 - 153

### **CD and DVD**

Celebrating his 60th birthday Udo Lindenberg published a new CD called „Damenwahl“. The CD is a compilation of songs and sounds recorded previously and contains the recording which Marlene Dietrich did for Lindenberg’s LP “Hermine”.

On ebay somebody is selling a DVD of the Royal Variety Performance at Royal Albert Hall in London, November 1963. It is a very long, very british show. Marlene is singing Lili Marleen, Where have all the flowers gone and Honeysuckle Rose. But you have to wait for at least two hours to see her performance.

### **Maria Riva Interview**

The Berlin newspaper “Der Tagesspiegel” published an interview with Maria Riva in their Sunday edition May 14<sup>th</sup>. The interview still is online at <http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/14.05.2006/2484373.asp>

### **Marlene Dietrich Strasse**

Marlene was born in Schöneberg at a time when Schöneberg was a city in itself and not part of Berlin. For years politicians in Schöneberg discussed the plan to name a street after Marlene and now they finally have decided to do so. No date is fixed yet but if everything is done we let you know.

## Exhibition

"Dr. Mabuse und Edgar Wallace in Wolffs Revier" (May 11 2006 – March 4 2007) is an exhibition on the history of film and cinemas. While the exhibition is focused on the fifties and the studios of famous film producer Arthur Brauner it also shows some items on the silent Marlene film "Schiff der verlorenen Menschen".

Address: Am Juliusturm, 13599 Berlin.  
Tel: 030 / 35 49 44 297

## Questions:

Jon Cohen's great grandfather was Ben-Zion Fett. In a written record commemorating the Polish town of Rzeszow Yitzchak Estreicher of Tel Aviv mentions that Ben Zion-Fett worked with Marlene on a silent film. We could not find any records on Ben and Marlene. Anybody out there who could help?

And here is a desperate letter by Danny Gougeon from Montréal, Canada:  
Would you be kind enough to tell me a way I could see two of Marlene Dietrich's films I've never been able to see no matter how hard I tried over the years? Those films in question are Manpower and The Monte Carlo Story. For many of her movies, it took me sometimes years to find them in a way or another. But I finally found them one day.

But for Manpower and The Monte Carlo Story, no use! These are the only two of her entire movies I've never seen besides a couple of silent movies.

You know, sometimes, when I want something really hard, I find people somewhere with whom I can exchange products or something in return for what I want, but in this case, no use at all! Nothing works. So, do you know a way I could see or buy a print somewhere of these two films?

*"Manpower" is not hard to find. You may catch it at ebay from time to time. But to find "Monte Carlo Story" really is difficult. We know that some of our readers had the same problem and succeeded. Anyone who would lend a helping hand please write an email to [mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de](mailto:mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de) and we will put you in contact.*

Uwe Frassl asks for the publishing date of "Near You".

*The record was published in 1957 on the Dot label. A history of Dot Records can be found at <http://www.bsnpubs.com/dot/dotstory.html>*

## Knight without armour

For no reason at all we present you a statement by director Jacques Feyder given 60 years ago.

Discovering a new Dietrich. By Jacques Feyder in an interview with J. Danvers Williams.

In: Film Weekly, November 21 1936

Marlene Dietrich is one of the most interesting problems I have ever had to deal with.



When I arrived in England to make "Knight Without Armour" I knew nothing more about her than does the average film-goer. I had seen her in "The Blue Angel", "Desire" and several other of her American pictures, but I didn't know anything about the capabilities or mental make-up of the woman I was about to direct. In all her American films, with the exception of "Desire", Dietrich had played the part of a temptress. I knew that she could do this extremely well; I knew that she was glamorous; and I knew, if only because of the endless close-ups which Josef Von Sternberg has given us of her face and figure, that she was extravagantly beautiful.

There was another thing I knew about her: that, in "Desire", she had played a comedy role with apparent distinction. But then, Lubitsch was the producer, and Lubitsch can make almost any actor or actress appear good.

Her work in Sternberg's pictures had all been set in one low atmospheric key, reminiscent of her role in "The Blue Angel". Her part in the Lubitsch film was pitched in a fairly high, satirical treble. She had never been allowed to touch on the thousands of emotions which lay between these two distinct keys.

I had a shrewd suspicion that, in different hands, Marlene might prove a sensitive instrument capable of a whole symphony of acting; but von Sternberg and Lubitsch had both been so eager to express their own ideas, and so intent on taking close-ups of her lovely face that they had never given her a chance to display the full range of her ability.

I well remember our first meeting. Dietrich had just arrived and was surrounded by newspaper men. She sat in her hotel suite looking magnificently, irritatingly beautiful, saying "yes" or "no" to the myriads of questions being put to her. She can be sublimely dumb when she likes.

When the Press had departed we sat down in a corner and tried to sum one another up. For a time our conversation was excessively polite. She was, she said, glad to be in one of my productions. I said how glad I was to have her, and so on....

Later, she gradually dropped her "Press" face, and I began to glimpse the real Dietrich—a richly human and intelligent woman with a strong masculine streak, who had grown a little weary of five years of continued adulation. Yet this side of Dietrich had never been seen in a film. In an effort to preserve her glamour her American producers had decreed that she must not even smile naturally on the screen.



I saw a good deal of Marlene during the next few days; and the more I saw of her the better I liked her. I ceased to consider her glamorous. I perceived beneath the superficial shell which the newspapers and publicity men had built up around her an amiable Hausfrau who was far too human and intelligent to be anything as unaesthetic as a temptress.

It was then I decided what to do. I would deglamourise the Dietrich. I would strip her of her synthetic attraction and give the world a picture of the real woman.

In the early sequences of the film I have shown her in a role typical of all those she has ever played, as a glamorous and wealthy Russian countess; a woman to whom all Europe was a playground.

Then comes the Revolution. The Countess finds that, in the new world of Communism and concrete, there is no place for a woman of her kind. She is forced to leave her jewels and riches behind her and fly for her life. Her fine clothes turn to rags. From that point the story develops into a rich human drama. Poverty gives her a proper sense of values, and for the first time she really begins to feel things.

I have designed the picture so as to give Marlene an opportunity to express every emotion of which she is capable. After the first few sequences I have permitted no close-ups to interfere with the trend of the drama. The story is powerful, and full of action, but it must succeed - or fail - on the strength of Marlene's characterisation.



I employed much the same policy when I directed Garbo in "The Kiss". I had always felt that her producers had never given her sufficient scope. Hollywood has created a number of stock expressions for every emotion. Such-and-such a glance means love. Another gesture means hatred, and so on. Garbo, like many other stars, had been forced to employ these cinematic clichés, with the result that (in my opinion) she had never given a perfectly natural performance. - In "The Kiss" I gave Garbo a part vibrant with every feminine emotion, and then asked her to make the characterisation as natural as she could. The result was that she gave a performance heralded by many as the best of her career. Dietrich has also suffered from this cliché treatment. It is a sin to drive actresses like her and Garbo down these banal channels of expression, when they are capable of creating something new with every performance.

We have this stupid idea that Marlene not especially liked being compared with Garbo. Dietrich: "Oh Garbo was a great actress. I used to see her films when I was young."

According to Marlene's memoirs this is what really happened during the production of "Knight without armour":

"Jacques Feyder, the great French director, displayed a violent jealousy of my other directors and took a devilish delight in tormenting me in the presence of my leading man, until one day (I was to be filmed naked with my hair upwards in an old bathtub) he broke down and asked repeatedly to be forgiven."

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