



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

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Dear friends and fans,

it has been a while since our last regular newsletter. Yes, there have been some Extras to keep you up to date. The reason for the delay is quite simple. We have been heavily involved in producing two books, a DVD, a CD-Rom and an exhibition in two parts beside our regular work.

And there is more to come: A retrospective of Marlenes films, a special screening on December 27, the premiere of David Rivas film "Her own song" in Berlin in December. The opening ceremonies of the exhibition took place on October 17th including the presentation of the books and a trailer of the "Blue Angel" DVD. Peter Riva, Marlenes grandson, came all the way from New York to help us feed the media which covered the opening in articles and TV prime time news.

For all those who had questions we have to postpone those answers as this here is a short description of what you will miss if you do not come to Berlin to see the exhibition.

Forever Young.

Marlene Dietrich's 100th birthday.

An exhibition at the Filmmuseum Berlin, 18. 10. 2001 - 17. 2. 2002.

Mention "Marlene" and there's no need to add the name "Dietrich". Marlene created herself, and her director Josef von Sternberg helped her find the definitive screen image the world would identify her with. What made Marlene unique – what do we associate with her name? There's the film actress who became famous for the characters she played: Lola-Lola, Amy Jolly, Shanghai Lily, Blonde Venus. These are exotic, perhaps slightly disreputable-sounding synonyms for erotic energy, danger, temptation, self-assurance, coolness, luxury and the seedy nightclub, open secrets and siren songs. The name Marlene always conjures up the same film titles: of course *The Blue Angel*, then *Morocco* and *Shanghai Express*; perhaps also, because of its title, *Blonde Venus*. For those who know her only from television, *Witness for the Prosecution* could be added. Five films, or for the more experienced cinema-goer perhaps eight or ten, are etched in our memory – yet Marlene acted in over fifty. Put another way, around 45 films were unable to wipe out the memory of her five to eight major works. In 1932, after *Shanghai Express*, Marlene became the icon out of which her myth would soon arise. That myth had much to do with the capacity to survive: she succeeded in being both Marlene and Shanghai Lily, both Marlene and Blonde Venus, both Marlene and every other character in her films.

When Marlene Dietrich died, aged over ninety, the personal belongings she left behind mirror her century in all its facets. She was and is a universal star of modern cultural history, and the city's acquisition of her estate allowed Berlin to rebuild its association with her, this time for good. The bequest would help repair



Berlin's – and Germany's – troubled relationship with its worldwide star. In recent years Marlene's estate, managed by the Filmmuseum Berlin as the "Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin", has provided the material for a variety of Dietrich exhibitions. In 1995, the first large presentation on Marlene Dietrich was held in the Martin Gropius gallery as part of the celebrations of the centenary of film. That show later set off for Bonn, Hagen, Frankfurt and Rome. An exhibition of photographs organized by the Goethe Institut, Munich, has been on international tour since 1998. And in 2000, the Filmmuseum Berlin opened its permanent exhibition, where three rooms are dedicated to Marlene Dietrich.



© Filmmuseum Berlin - MDCB

Performing at Hotel Sahara, Las Vegas 1953

For Marlene's 100th birthday, the Filmmuseum Berlin decided to host a party. If Marlene Dietrich were still alive and acknowledged this as her 100th birthday, whom would she invite to celebrate? At the top of the list are bound to be her husband Rudolf Sieber, her daughter Maria, and her director Josef von Sternberg. Of her friends, she'd invite Maurice Chevalier, perhaps Willi Forst, certainly Ernest Hemingway, Jean Cocteau and Erich Maria Remarque. No doubt Jean Gabin will be there, as will her director and arranger Burt Bacharach and her friend Edith Piaf; there are invitations too for fellow artists like Hans Albers, Elisabeth Bergner, Grace Kelly, Maximilian Schell, Frank Sinatra and Billy Wilder. Marlene wouldn't be a true star if she didn't also invite people not

personally close to her but whose fame matches her image. Thus, the Beatles or David Bowie may have the pleasure of attending. The birthday chorus is joined by politicians like Willy Brandt and Ronald Reagan, George Bush Senior and Richard Nixon, and couturiers Jean Louis, Christian Dior and Karl Lagerfeld.

As for the birthday girl herself, she'll be partying too, if only in photos and movie excerpts. Actors of the caliber of Liza Minnelli, Helmut Berger and Uma Thurman will pay their tribute with interpretations of key scenes from Dietrich films. Singers Madonna, Brian Ferry, Ute Lemper, Udo Lindenberg and David Bowie will serenade the diva with her own unforgettable songs. And the hostess's outfit has already been picked: as a reminiscence of the beginnings of her night-club career, the ringmaster suit worn at Madison Square Garden, New York, in 1954 and the leaf gown (see photo left) from her 1953 Las Vegas show will be exhibited.



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Marlene Dietrich as a circus ringmaster at a charity gala, Madison Square Garden, New York, March 31st 1954

Apart from this temporary exhibition, the Filmmuseum Berlin is also taking Marlene's birthday as an opportunity to fully overhaul the permanent exhibition's Marlene Dietrich section. A new selection of dresses and costumes will be on show – from *Martin Roumagnac* (1946), *Pittsburgh* (1942), *Destry Rides Again* (1939) and *Morocco* (1930) – along with new photos and other new exhibits, including objects from *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *Dishonored* (1930). In other words, the visitor will find two new exhibitions in one trip.

End of Newsletter