

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 informations write to 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>

Dear friends and fans,

it's in the local press, it's in the national and in the international media. Germany is in a state of financial crisis and the city that holds the pole position for the worst financial status is Berlin. Its debts have cumulated now to 46 billions Euro and and they grow by the minute. There was a website called berlin-ist-pleite.de (berlin is broke) which probably due to the lack of money has vanished. Never mind, if you check with Google and look for "Berlin" + "Pleite" you'll get hundreds of sites which are explaining the financial collapse of Berlin. We all know that Berlin is at its best when it is "pleite" but we are also grateful to the "Friends and Supporters of Filmmuseum Berlin" who do their utmost to help the Filmmuseum and MDCB to get along in these hard times. Based in Berlin the Friends now have a representative in Los Angeles; we welcome Corina Danckwerts (e-mail: corinadanckwerts@capturefilm.com). All our american friends now can easily become a member and support MDCB if they turn to Corina. Corina by the way is a freelancing film producer who supervised the shooting Vilsmaiers "Marlene" in Los Angeles. If you are not living in the US you can go to the website of the "Friends" at www.fffb.de and fill out your membership application form online. As the english version is still under construction here is a guideline. Click on german, on the next site click on "Werden Sie Freund" (Become a Friend) and then you get a lot of german administration lyrics which basically say that if you are a natural person (not a company) your membership will cost you 60 Euro per year. Fill out the questions and click on "abschicken" (mail) and you are done. Or just send a mail to mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de and we'll forward your message. Well, we are not ashamed to declare what is obvious to everybody living in this world. Culture needs funding and MDCB also needs your personal support. And we all regard Marlene Dietrich as part of our culture, don't we?

Donation

We got as a gift from Kelsey Perchinski the first edition of Frank Vreeland's „Dishonored“ which was published by Grosset & Dunlap in New York 1931. Thank you Kelsey!

Event

Maria Riva who is is a member of the "Friends and Supporters" greeted the Lord Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit at the Hollywood Entertainment Museum. Here is a report by Chris Horak:

Tuesday afternoon, 12 November 2002, the sun is shining on Hollywood Blvd. when the Governing Mayor of Berlin arrived at Hollywood Entertainment Museum to view the exhibition, "Forever Young: Marlene Dietrich at 100." He was greeted at the door by Maria Riva, her son Paul Riva, and her grandson, Matthew Riva.



Maria Riva, artist Matthew Riva and Lord Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit

After Phyllis Caskey, the President of Hollywood Entertainment Museum, greeted the assembled audience, Tom LeBonge, Hollywood City Councilman conveyed of few words of greeting from the Mayor of Los Angeles, Thomas Hahn. He also introduced Johnny Grant, the Honorary Mayor of Hollywood. LeBonge also emphasized the close ties between the sister cities Berlin and Los Angeles, connected both through their metropolitan character and that both are entertainment capitals.

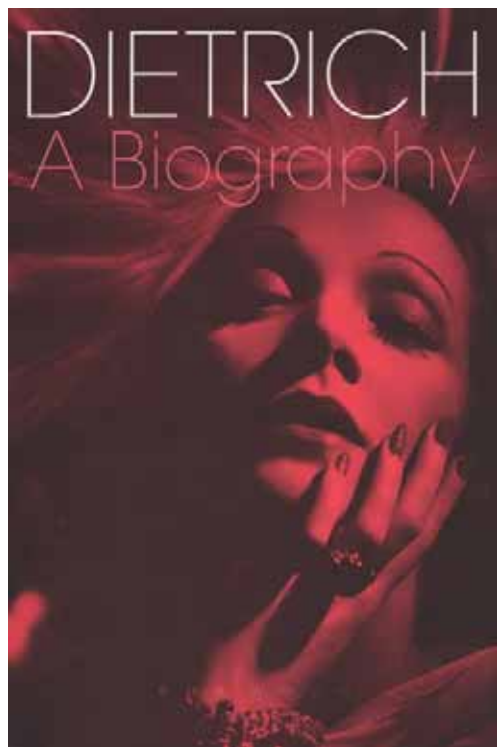
Mayor Wowereit thanked all the guests and also emphasized the close connections between the sister cities. He next related that the City of Berlin had made Marlene Dietrich an honorary citizen last Spring. The city therefore commissioned a portrait to be painted and hung in the City Hall. He then accepted a portrait of Marlene, painted by Matthew Riva, the great grandson of Marlene Dietrich.

After the official ceremony, Mayor Wowereit toured the exhibition, accompanied by Maria Riva and Jan-Christopher Horak, Curator of the Hollywood Entertainment Museum, while the other guests retired to the Small Rotunda for coffee and cookies.

After the Mayor left, the remaining guests assembled in the Multi-Media Room, where Maria Riva gave an informal but riveting talk and did a question and answer session about her life with her mother. The whole event was captured on video by the students of the HEM Center for the Entertainment Arts, a high school program for at risk youth.

And off we go to our regular column on

New Books



Ean Wood: Dietrich. A Biography
Sanctuary Publishing, London 2002, 359 pp.

Basically there are four different ways to write a biography on Marlene Dietrich. You can do it the old-fashioned style like it was done until

the eighties. You looked what biographies and articles have been written on Marlene and you put your knowledge together into a new book. It's not very inspirational but it worked until Steven Bach's biography appeared. Bach did extensive research on his subject and layed open the sources from which he quoted. Thus the appendices he supplied to his book layed the traces for those other biographers. And then Maria Rivas book is a third way of writing which only applies for one who has been very close to Marlene for a long, long time. While writing the biography of her mother Maria Riva also wrote an important part of her own biography. The fourth way is to consult MDCB and other new sources and archives and come up with some new research results.

From reading Ean Woods book we don't have the impression that he hasn't done no research. But we also find that he has done his research in a very limited way. Thus he comes up with a lot of doubtful and sometimes simply wrong statements. In the screentest for the "Blue Angel" Marlenes first song is not "Wer wird denn weinen..." to be followed by "You're the cream in my coffee". It is the other way around. The follow-up of the songs has a strong effect on the visual value of the screentest as one sees her climbing up the piano to sing "Wer wird denn weinen...". Only a shortened version of "The Devil is a woman" survived and the scenes for "The Fashion side of Hollywood" regarded as screen tests for "The Devil" were actually shot after "The Devil" was finished – is that so? No source is given for these statements but we know that the american prints of "The Devil" are all taken from the original nitrate print which Josef von Sternberg gave to UCLA. It's hard to believe that Sternberg kept a cut version and authorised it to be printed. Wood also claims that the press reception celebrating Marlenes 21st anniversary of her arrival in the USA on May 5 1951 was part of her strategy to draw public attention back to Dietrich. If that is so why didn't she do it celebrating her 20th anniversary? The point is that the production company of "Rancho Notorious" wanted to draw public attention to the Fritz Lang film under the pretence of this celebration. We could go on and on piling up those doubtful statements of Ean Wood.

No, it is not a bad book nor is it unserious. But it's not a good one either. No sources whatsoever are given except a few names of friends and supporters. And the bibliography simply is terrible. It even misses out Maria Rivas book. My darling boy, that's daring.

A few hints at other books:



Ernst Deutsch-Dryden: En Vogue!
 Edited by Peter Noever / MAK
 (Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst), MAK Studies 2, Wien 2002, 150 pp.

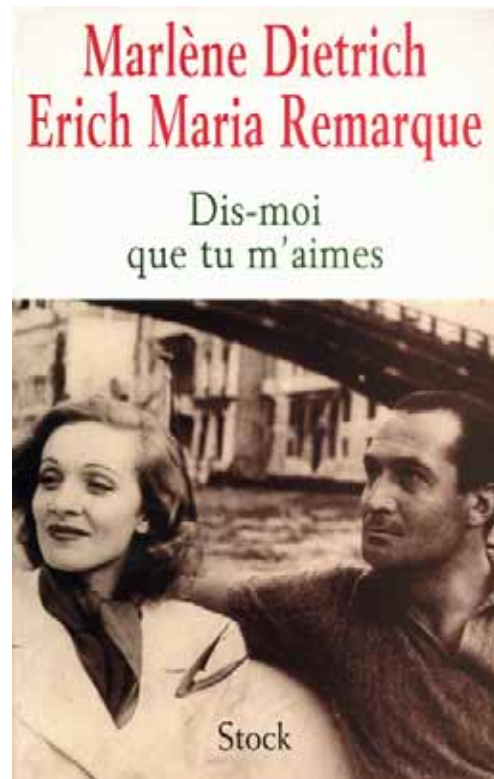
This new book on Ernst Dryden has nothing new on the Dryden/Dietrich collaboration but a lot of beautiful posters and drawings by Dryden. It also has the advantage of being printed in English. The photograph at right is taken from the book's inside and shows Ernst Deutsch-Dryden at the Set of "The Garden of Allah" plus Marlene wearing a riding dress designed by him.

Lee Miller. Begegnungen. Die Porträts einer großen Fotografin des 20. Jahrhunderts
 Edited by Richard Cavolcoressi; Nicolai, Berlin 2002 (Original English edition „Lee Miller. Portraits from a Life“ was published by Thames & Hudson Ltd., London 2002)



Again a wonderful and fine book on this lady photographer with a photo (taken from the inside of the book) of Marlene wearing a beautiful Schiaparelli dressing gown in Ritz Carlton Hotel in Paris September 1944.

The dressing gown is now part of MDCB and will be presented at a new exhibition next year.



Marlène Dietrich, Erich Maria Remarque: Dis-moi que tu m'aimes. Témoignages d'une passion
 Édition établie par Werner Fuld et Thomas F. Schneider, Traduit de l'allemand par Anne Weber, Éditions Stock, Paris 2002, 268 pp.

This is the french edition of Erich Maria Remarques letters to Marlene previously published in german. Alas, the cover does not show Remarque but another man accompanying Marlene in Venice, Italy. Does anyone have an idea who that man could be?

Elisabeth Bronfen/Barbara Straumann: DIVA. Eine Geschichte der Bewunderung
 Schirmer/Mosel, München 2002, 223 pp.

This elegant book doesn't feature Marlene as one of the Divas but it has some great fotos of and articles on other stars and artists (Sarah Bernhardt, Comtesse de Castiglione, Evita Perón, Rita Hayworth, Elvis Presley, Andy Warhol, Joseph Boys, Madonna). Marlene is mentioned here and there and you also recognize her in some poses by Madonna. A great book, the ideal christmas gift for those who read german.



Madonna from the DIVA book

The Berlin Package

arsEdition, Munich 2002.

For all those who want to take home something of Berlin "The Berlin Package" is another wonderful Christmas gift. It has a few monuments as pop-up pictures and even serves the fan with a mini-book on Marlene.



CD:

Heinz Beck made us aware of this CD which seems to be from Russia and features a live version of "Frag nicht warum" probably recorded in Russia. It is not exactly the best sound quality but an interesting performance. Available through www.amazon.de

Letters

Murray and Joel Woldman:

Thank you so much for putting us on the list for the newsletter. Joel and I have been looking over the Marlene book (photos of the collection) you wrote with Maria Riva wish such pleasure lately. Does the collection possess a burgundy skirt and matching bolero jacket with a Spanish broad-brimmed hat with hanging pop poms to match? We saw her in that ravishing outfit at a Lotte Lenya Kurt Weill concert in New York City in 1958 when we were very young. What a thrill to see her in person then. She was sitting with the composer Marc Blitzstein at a table not far from ours. It was an outdoor concert. We asked for and got her autograph on the program! She was grand, imperious, and gracious. Just what you would expect of her!

Again, danke schoen for the newsletter!

A: There is a bolero jacket made by Sanchez Vargas in the 40s and a broad brimmed lightbrown hat with a veil with poms at the collection but it seems not to be the one described one. Do you have a photograph or do you know if a photograph of Marlene at this event exists?

Rob van Dijk from Amsterdam:

Let me first say thank you for sending this incredible informative newsletter everytime, thanks !! I have a question; can you inform me which costumes are on exhibition at this moment in the Filmmuseum Berlin ?

A: Till the end of November you could see a white tuxedo, the shorts from "Morocco", an evening gown from "Pittsburgh", a Negligée from "Martin Roumagnac", a western dress from "Destry rides again" and a show dress with golden sequins. Beside this there is the so called flag dress from Marlenes time entertaining the troups and the golden sequins dress from "A Foreign Affair". Now you will enjoy the famous black tuxedo from "Morocco", a costume from "Desire", an evening costume from "The Monte Carlo Story", a costume worn at the War Bond Tour in 1942 and a uniform. To preserve the dresses we have to exchange them everyonce in a while.

Jozef Cupa from Czech wants to know:

I would like to ask you what was the relation between M.Dietrich and G.Garbo? Were they friends? Did they meet each other? Did they have a love affair?

So sorry, Josef. Nothing of that sort ever happened. The two stars avoided to collide.

End of Newsletter