

A retrospective of six films made by Percy Adlon, representative of New German Cinema to be shown

March 27, 1986

UCSD HOSTS NEW GERMAN CINEMA SERIES APRIL 17-22

In collaboration with the Goethe Institute of Los Angeles, a retrospective of six films made by Percy Adlon, a screenwriter and director who is representative of New German Cinema, will be shown on six consecutive evenings at 7:30 p.m. at the University of California, San Diego, from April 17 through April 22.

The films scheduled for screening on the evenings Thursday through Sunday, April 17-20, will be shown in the Third College Lecture Hall, Room 107; the film scheduled for Monday evening, April 21, will be shown in the Mandeville Center Auditorium; the film on Tuesday evening, April 22, will be shown in Third College Lecture Hall, Room 107.

A discussion by the filmmaker on April 18, and a subsequent question and answer period, will be held after the screening of "Five Last Days."

The six films (in order of appearance) are: "Celeste" (1981), "Five Last Days" (1982), "The Guardian and His Poet" (1978), "Herschel and the Music of the Stars," his most recent work (1985), "The Swing" (1984), and "Sugar Baby" (1985).

Adlon's feature "Celeste" (April 17) is taken from Celeste Albaret's own work, "Monsieur Proust." Albaret spent nine years as housekeeper-nursemaid-companion to French author Marcel Proust. Her reminiscences lead up to the time of Proust's death in November 1922. Albaret is credited with sustaining Proust for the time it took him to complete his famous work, "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu."

The brilliant German actress Eva Mattes plays Celeste, giving what is thought to be one of her finest performances to date. Jurgen Arndt plays Proust.

The second film, "Five Last Days" (April 18), addresses the last days in the life of 21 year-old Sophie Sohol who, in 1943, was arrested with her brother Hans at Munich University for their association in the small student resistance group, The White Rose. Adlon focuses in on Sohol's relationship with cellmate Else Gebel, a simple straightforward woman convinced of Sohol's innocence. Sohol and her brother were beheaded for high treason on Feb. 18, 1943.

Called "striking and powerful," the film stars Irm Herrman, Lena Stolze and Hans Hirschmuller. This film was shown at the New York City Museum of Modern Arts' "Recent films from West Germany" series.

"The Guardian and His Poet" (April 19), the third film in the series, was commissioned for German television, and has been included in a number of film festivals, including London, Locarno and San Francisco.

Based on Carl Seelig's book "Wanderings with Robert Walser" the film examines the relationship between the two men: Walser, a Swiss poet and chronic schizophrenic who spent the last years of his life (between 1933 and 1956) in mental institutions; and Seelig, an editor and publisher, who visited the poet through most of these years

and eventually, though unknown to Walser, became his legal guardian. The film combines documentary accuracy, using original locations, and is based on Seelig's factual writings (with artistic license).

The fourth film, "Herschel and the Music of the Stars" (April 20), is a United States premiere. The film tells about composer Joseph Haydn's first visit to England in 1792, when he went to see the giant telescope built by astronomer Friedrich Wilhelm Herschel. It was, reputedly, this visit--and Haydn's first glimpse at the cosmos--that inspired the composer to write "The Creation." Acted by Josef Meinrad, Rolf Illig, Karen Anselm and Edgar Selge.

The fifth film, "The Swing" (April 21), is based on Annette Kolb's autobiographical novel of the same name. "The Swing" is a lavish reconstruction of life in Munich towards the end of the last century. It focuses on the Lautenschlags, a Bavarian-French Catholic family and the childhood of authoress Annette Kolb. She is represented by the sharp-tongued tomboy Mathias who, along with her two sisters, Gervaise and Hespera, and a brother, Otto, come of age in turn-of-the-century Bavaria. Although the world portrayed is one of a loving and generally happy family, disturbing elements unravel throughout the film. Acted by Anja Jaenicke, Lena Stolze, Susan Herlet and Joachim Bernhard.

The final film, "Sugar Baby" (April 22), is currently enjoying successful runs in Los Angeles and New York City, and will be have a commercial run in San Diego sometime in May. Cinematography was done by Johanna Heer, who produced the American film "Subway Riders." Her original and contemporary handling of this film intrigued Adlon, causing him to invite her to shoot "Sugar Baby."

Set in present-day Munich, this original script is called a "funny sort of love story." Marianne Sagebrecht plays a rather corpulent middle-aged mortuary assistant who falls for a younger athletic subway conductor, played by Eisi Gulp. She gives up her job to track him down, and when she does she succeeds in realizing her passion and prompting his affection. Adlon calls this film, "a story of a liberation; very jagged, very modern and a curiously optimistic film."

Adlon, in his fifties, is a contemporary of Volker Schlöndorff, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders. He began his career as an actor in student theater at the University of Munich before adapting and narrating radio plays. In 1970, he turned to documentaries. In ten years he made more than 40 television documentaries before turning to the making of feature films. Although Adlon did not consciously set out to become a filmmaker, his move from actor through radio and television to director of feature films has a logical progression.

Adlon says, "For me, cinema is not about finding out who the murderer is, or whether John and Mary get it together...it's about the light and movement and music." There will be no admission charge to these films. The films will be subtitled.

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