



EMILY  
COX

VALENTIN  
POSTLMAYR

ANTON  
VON LUCKE

# ALMA + OSKAR

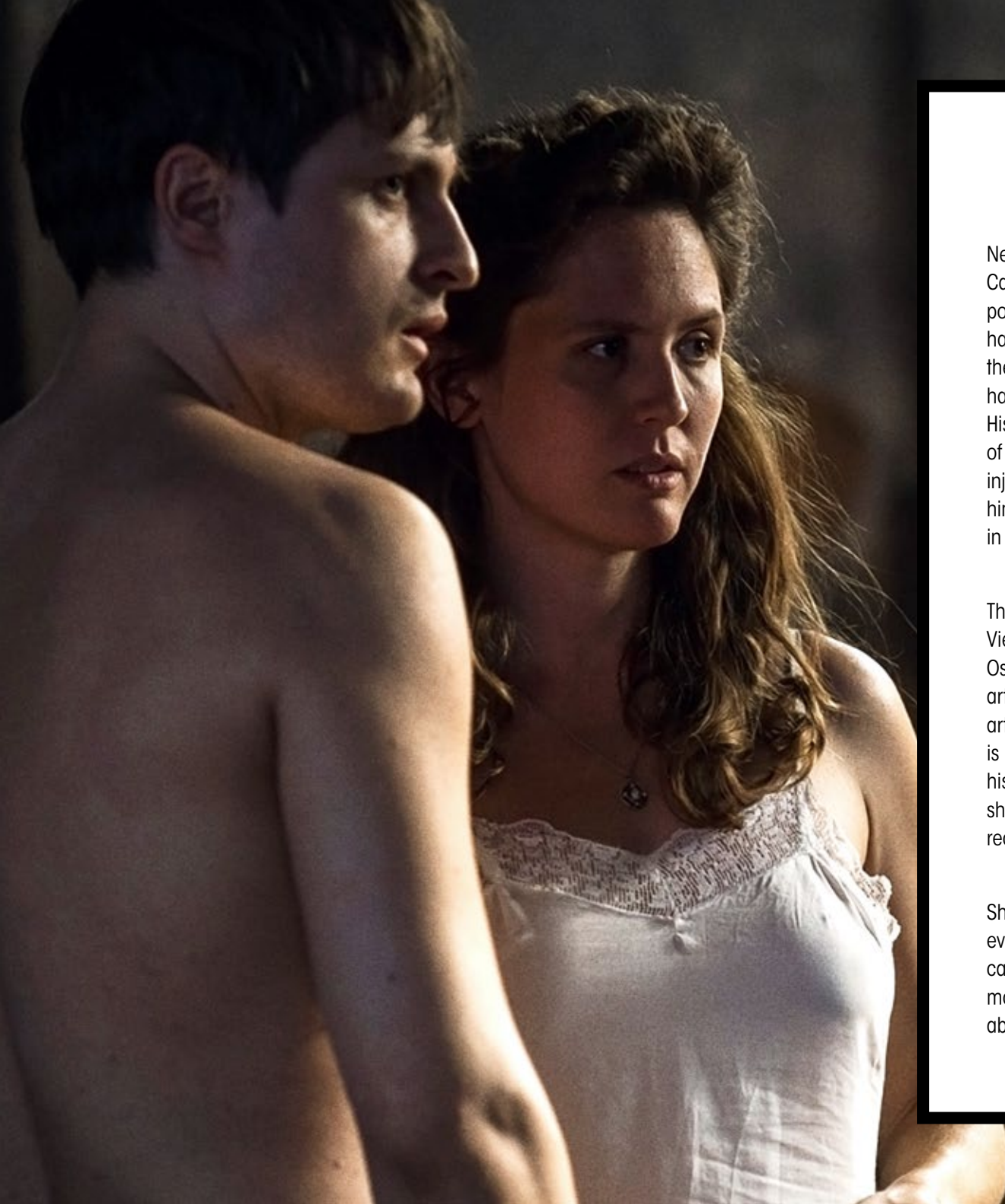
A FILM BY DIETER BERNER

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1912, the recently widowed Alma Mahler, Grand Dame of Viennese society, falls for the „Enfant Terrible“ of Vienna’s art scene, Oskar Kokoschka. But, as their passion grows, it threatens to destroy the world they have built for themselves, and to take them both down with it.

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## SYNOPSIS

New York 1910. Gustav Mahler is rehearsing his 5th Symphony at Carnegie Hall. Alma assists from the auditorium. Looking through his post during his break, he finds a love letter written to his wife which had accidentally been addressed to him. Alma admits her affair with the young architect Walter Gropius from Berlin. She is young and unhappily married to Gustav. A few months later, Gustav dies in Vienna. His body is laid out at the stately villa of Alma's parents. A student of the academy of fine arts is assigned to craft the death mask. He injures himself while doing so. Searching for help he suddenly finds himself standing before a fascinating, sensual beauty: Alma Mahler in a half-open silken dressing gown. He falls for her instantly.

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The film then follows the amour fou between the grande dame of Vienna's cultural society and the much younger expressionist artist Oskar Kokoschka. Alma allows herself to be painted by the unknown artist, seduces him and instructs the inexperienced young man in the arts of eroticism. He is merely one of many conquests to her, but she is to him his first great love. He makes her his muse; she becomes his source of inspiration. He cannot paint without her, he says. But she refuses to be there for him alone, because she too is striving for recognition in society.

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She organises the premiere of Mahler's last symphony as a large event for which she is able to recruit the Vienna Philharmonic. Oskar can feel Alma slipping away. He is hurt by the fact that Alma cares more about the memento ceremony of a dead person than she does about him. He interrupts the concert, draws the audience's attention



with a provocative performance and brutally insults Alma for everyone to hear. Alma flees Vienna and travels to her former lover Walter Gropius in Berlin. Oskar follows her and manages to win her back.

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Alma decides to get seriously involved with Oskar. She believes in Oskar's artistry, spurs him on to create a masterpiece so that she can marry him. She sets up a home for them in the Viennese alps. She is expecting his child. Oskar is happy. He works on a large painting depicting Alma and him tightly embracing aboard a boat out on a stormy sea. The Tate Gallery in London is interested in the painting. But World War I breaks out and the painting is never bought. Alma is deeply disappointed. She sends for Mahler's death mask and places it in the living room of her home. Oskar sees this as a provocation and feels humiliated. An angry quarrel ensues which ends in violence. Alma loses her child and never wants to see Oskar again. Oskar enlists in the army to go on a suicide mission. He ends up in the psychiatric hospital in Dresden, badly wounded, with a head injury and a perforated lung. He is still obsessed with Alma: he has a life-sized doll made in her image and writes a theatre piece about their love. He invites Alma to its premiere.

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She deliberates at length whether to accept the invitation, but eventually travels to Dresden. She only enters the auditorium during the last scene. Oskar comes on stage with the actors to take a bow. Alma regards the doll under his arm with horror. Oskar notices her too. A long exchange of glances. Alma turns away with tears in her eyes and leaves the theatre.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

## *1. The historical subject*

As an actor, I wanted to invite my audience to a process of identification, wanted to inspire empathy and move it emotionally, and ultimately provide it with an intense artistic experience. This goal remains the same for my work as a film director, which is why I continue to look for exciting and complex characters and their obsessions.

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Although Alma and Oskar are “historical” figures, the audience should encounter them as if they were of the “here and now”. Their conflicts are modern, and we do not need nostalgic evocations of the past to understand them. We witness a woman who will later be known by her reputation for collecting men like hunting trophies. And we witness a man who is possessed by the urge to create, not only works of art, but also his life that he shares with a woman he deeply admires. After an unfulfilled marriage, this thirty-three-year-old widowed woman enters into an adventure with the twenty-five-year-old artist. But she loses control over the situation. What starts out as an affair turns into a game of domination and dependency, a life-threatening drama, a great love story with a bitter end. Alma Mahler refuses to accept the role of mother and muse ascribed to her by society. She fights for her autonomy and social success, while Oskar and her other partners equate love with ownership, and naturally assume that pursuit of success appertains to themselves as men only.



Oskar Kokoschka has a solid sense for dramaturgy. He perceives himself as an artist within a "dramatic arc" that is hard to top, styling himself and his creative drive as a public persona and subjecting his private life to this dramatic arc. Yet with emancipative intention, the screenplay counterbalances his narrative with Alma Mahler's viewpoint. The character of Oskar Kokoschka becomes a mirror for masculine anxieties about the loss of patriarchal superiority, and Alma Mahler becomes a "role model" in which women of today can see their wish for self-fulfilment reflected.

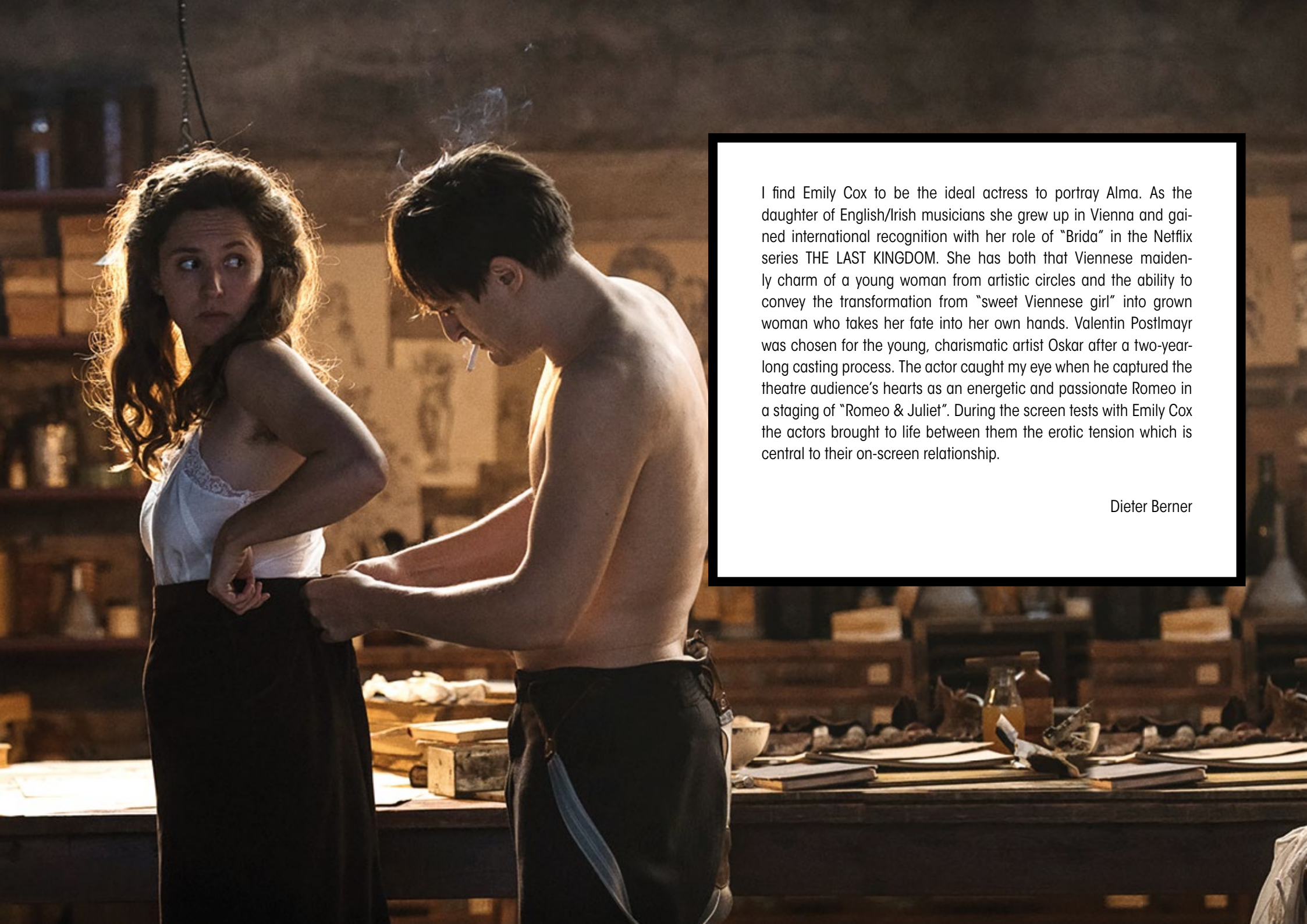
## 2. Aesthetic and cinematic approach

The screenplay writer Hilde Berger (she is also author of the novel "Die Windsbraut" on which the film is based) and I wanted to take up a side, or better yet, sides – the side of Oskar and the side of Alma. The story does not concentrate on one person's perspective but follows the internal and external experiences of both Alma and Oskar.

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I became aware of the extraordinary talent of German-Polish cinematographer Jakub Bejnarowicz back when I was studying at the Film university Babelsberg. He later won the Bavarian Film Awards for the feature film MERCY (Michael Glasner), as well as the prize for "best cinematography" by the German Film Critics Association, who furthermore honoured his work for THE RIVER USED TO BE A MAN (Jan Zabel). He was also repeatedly nominated for "best cinematography" for his work on the Netflix series PERFUME. He created highly interesting adaptations for a variety of projects (WETLANDS, TATORT by Til Schweiger, THE COLLINI CASE by Marco Kreuzpaintner or ZOO STATION: THE STORY OF CHRISTIANE F. directed by Philipp Kadelbach). With the right amount of contrast, an ambitious play with light and darkness, through individualistic camera movement and framing, as well as a clever and unusual resolution, he visualises the narrative without foregrounding the optics and their intention. In our case Jakub will neatly differentiate the distinct perspectives of Alma and Oskar with different cameras (analogue and digital) and different optics (on the one hand spheric, on the other hand anamorphic), thereby reinforcing the marked differences in scenic design and character development.





I find Emily Cox to be the ideal actress to portray Alma. As the daughter of English/Irish musicians she grew up in Vienna and gained international recognition with her role of "Brida" in the Netflix series THE LAST KINGDOM. She has both that Viennese maidenly charm of a young woman from artistic circles and the ability to convey the transformation from "sweet Viennese girl" into grown woman who takes her fate into her own hands. Valentin Postlmayr was chosen for the young, charismatic artist Oskar after a two-year-long casting process. The actor caught my eye when he captured the theatre audience's hearts as an energetic and passionate Romeo in a staging of "Romeo & Juliet". During the screen tests with Emily Cox the actors brought to life between them the erotic tension which is central to their on-screen relationship.

Dieter Berner





## CAST

*Emily Cox*

**ALMA MAHLER**

Emily Cox was born in 1985 as the daughter of a British father and an Irish mother. In 2008 she graduated from the Max-Reinhardt-Seminar, a prestigious acting school in Vienna. While studying there she played in VERWEHTE a short film by Tobias Dörr alongside Susanne Lothar and Ulrich Mühe. The role of the "Mädchen/Girl" earned her the Acting Award at the International Filmfestival of the Vienna Filmakademie. One of her most important performances are the leading role of "Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz" in the Documentary-Feature Film DUTSCHKE by Stefan Krohmers as well as "Mizzi" in THE FATHERLESS by Marie Kreutzer. THE FATHERLESS premiered at the Berlinale Panorama Special in 2011. She rose to international fame with her role as "Brida" in the critically acclaimed BBC/Netflix Series THE LAST KINGDOM. Since 2017 she also plays alongside Christian Ulmen and Fahri Yardim in the Comedy-Series JERKS by Christian Ulmen. In 2021 she played the role of "Katharina" in the feature film SAVING THE WORLD KNOWN TO US by Til Schweiger.



## *Valentin Postlmayr*

**OSKAR KOKOSCHKA**

Valentin Postlmayr was born 1993 in Upper-Austria and now lives in Vienna. He first studied biology, but later changed to the MUK (Music and Art Private school) to pursue his acting career where he graduated in 2017 with honours. He performed in movies like MADE-MOISELLE PARADIS by Barbara Albrecht and THE SACHER by Robert Dornhelm. He was a guest at the Volkstheater in Vienna and was a member of the ensemble at the prestigious Vienna Burgtheater. Since 2019 he is a freelance actor. Oskar Kokoschka is Valentin Postlmayr's first leading role in a feature film.

## *Anton Von Lucke*

**WALTER GROPIUS**

Anton von Lucke was born 1989 in Hamburg, Germany and lives in Berlin. In 2015 he graduated from the distinguished Ernst Busch Acting school in Berlin. His first role in a feature film was as "Frantz" in the eponymous film by François Ozon (2016) which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2016. Anton von Lucke also starred in the critically acclaimed crime-series BABYLON BERLIN. In GREAT FREEDOM by Sebastian Meise, the Austrian Oscar contender 2022, he plays alongside Franz Rogowski and Georg Friedrich.

# CREW

*Dieter Berner*

**WRITER & DIRECTOR**



Dieter Berner was born 1944 in Vienna. He studied acting at the prestigious Max-Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna and Berlin. Since 1973 Dieter Berner mainly works as a director and writer in film and theatre. In 1989 he played the leading role in *THE SEVENTH CONTINENT* by Michael Haneke, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Dieter Berner became famous in German speaking territories with his multiply awarded six-part TV-series *ALPENSAGA*, a history of a village in Austria, which depicted a certain part of the Austrian identity. Berner taught

Film direction and Screenwriting at different universities in Vienna, Potsdam, Munich, and Berlin. His latest feature film *EGON SCHIELE – DEATH AND THE MAIDEN* was sold in over 40 countries and received several awards e.g., Austrian Film Award for “Best Actress” – Valerie Pachner, *ROMY* (Austrian TV- and Film Award) for “Best Screenplay”, “Best Production” and “Best Newcomer” for Noah Saavedra and Valerie Pachner.

## **CINEMATIC WORK AS A DIRECTOR** (Selection)

- 2016 **EGON SCHIELE – DEATH AND THE MAIDEN** (Feature Film)
- 2010 **SICKNESS OF YOUTH** (Feature Film)
- 2007 **TATORT – DIE ANWÄLTIN** (TV-Film)
- 2006 **BERLINER REIGEN** (Feature Film)
- 2006 **TATORT – SONNENFINSTERNIS** (TV-Film)
- 2005 **TATORT – DIE SCHLAFENDE SCHÖNE** (TV-Film)
- 1999 **DIE VERHAFTUNG DES J. NESTROY** (TV-Film)
- 1994 **JOINT VENTURE** (Feature Film)
- 1990 **THE LAUGHTER OF MACA DARAC** (Feature Film)
- 1987 **DIE ARBEITERSAGA – DIE VERLOCKUNG** (TV-Film)
- 1985-86 **LENZ ODER DIE FREIHEIT** (TV-Mini Series)
- 1984 **ME OR YOU** (Feature Film)
- 1981 **DER RICHTIGE MANN** (Feature Film)
- 1976-80 **ALPENSAGA** (TV-Mini Series)

# Hilde Berger

WRITER



Hilde Berger was born 1946 in Austria. She studied German Studies as well as Theatre Studies in Vienna and Salzburg. In 1968 she founded the Viennese Avantgarde stage "Cafétheater hinterm Graben" with her colleagues Götz Fritsch und Dieter Haspel. From 1970 to 1973 she ran the theatre group "torso" together with Reiner Finke which specialises on premiers of Austrian writers and from 1973 to 1978 she was involved with the theaterlab "A.mo.k". In 1989 Berger founded the "Drehbuchforum Vienna", the first Austrian

screenplay association together with Thomas Pluch and Gustav Ernst. Besides screenplays for several Austrian and German feature films, Hilde Berger published her first book "Ob es Hass ist solche Liebe" about Oskar Kokoschka and Alma Mahler-Werfel in 1999. In 2009 her second book with the title "Egon Schiele – Death and the Maiden" was published. Based on this book, she wrote the screenplay for the Austrian-Luxembourg production of the eponymous film in 2016 together with Dieter Berner. She taught Theatre, Film and Media studies at the University of Vienna as well as at the University in Potsdam at the Babelsberg Studio.

## SCREENPLAY (Selection)

- 2016 **EGON SCHIELE – DEATH AND THE MAIDEN**  
Feature Film, D: Dieter Berner
- 2010 **SICKNESS OF YOUTH**  
Feature Film, D: Dieter Berner
- 2006 **BERLINER REIGEN**  
Feature Film, D: Dieter Berner
- 2002 **AUGUST DER GLÜCKLICHE**  
TV-Comedy, D: Joseph Vilsmaier
- 1994 **JOINT VENTURE**  
Feature Film, D: Dieter Berner
- 1984 **LENZ ODER DIE FREIHEIT**  
Mini-Series, D: Dieter Berner
- 1981 **DER RICHTIGE MANN**  
TV-Film, D: Dieter Berner



## Jakub Bejnarowicz

DOP

Jakub Bejnarowicz was born 1980 in Poland and lives in Germany since 1983. In 2001 he went back to Poland to study at the Film Academy in Warsaw. In 2003 he moved back to Germany to continue his studies at the University for Film and TV Konrad Wolf in Potsdam/Babelsberg. His graduation film ENTZAUBERT was nominated for the Special Award at the First Steps Film Festival. In the same year he was nominated for the German Camera Award for the Short film WÜSTE/AUSSEN/TAG. For MERCY by Matthias Glasner, he received the Bavarian Film Award in 2012 as well as the Award from the German Film critics and he was nominated for the German Film Award in the Category "Best Cinematography". In 2016 Jakub Bejnarowicz was awarded the price for "Best Cinematography" from the Germany Academy of Film for the film POINT BLANK.

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The last few years Jakub Bejnarowicz shot several High-End Series and movies such as ICEMAN with Jürgen Vogel, the Netflix series PERFUME, the feature film THE COLLINI CASE with Elyas M'Barek as well as the Amazon miniseries WE CHILDREN FROM BAHNHOF ZOO with which he was nominated for "Best Cinematography" at the ROMY (Austrian TV- and Film Awards).

### FILMOGRAPHY (Selection)

- 2021 **WIR KINDER VOM BAHNHOF ZOO**  
Amazon-Prime-Series, D: Philipp Kadelbach
  - 2019 **THE COLLINI CASE**  
Feature Film, D: Marco Kreuzpaintner
  - 2018 **BLOCHIN – DIE LEBENDEN UND DIE TOTEN**  
Mini-Series, D: Matthias Glasner
  - 2018 **PERFUME**  
Netflix – Series, D: Philipp Kadelbach
  - 2017 **ICEMAN**  
Feature Film, D: Felix Randau
  - 2016 **POINT BLANK**  
TV-Film, D: Philipp Kadelbach
  - 2016 **TATORT FEGEFUEHR**  
TV-Film, D: Christian Alvarat
  - 2012 **MERCY**  
Feature Film, D: Matthias Glasner
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# COMPANY PROFILES

## FILM AG

FILM AG (formerly Novotny & Novotny Film production) is a production company based in Vienna and since 1997 has produced films such as JEW SUSS: RISE AND FALL by Oskar Roehler (Competition Berlinale 2010), THE FATHERLESS by Marie Kreutzer (Berlinale Panorama Special 2011), SICK-FUCKPEOPLE by Yuri Rechinsky (Best Documentary Sarajevo Film Festival and Raindance 2013), EGON SCHIELE - DEATH AND THE MAIDEN by Dieter Berner (Austrian Film Award for Valerie Pachner as Best Actress), ANGELO by Markus Schleinzer (Toronto and San Sebastian International Film Festival) and THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET by Marie Kreutzer (Competition Berlinale 2019, German Acting Award for Valerie Pachner). Since October 2018, the producer Alexander Glehr has been the sole owner and managing director of the company together with the producer Johanna Scherz. In July 2019, the company was renamed FILM AG. WHAT WE WANTED by Ulrike Kofler is the first feature film to be pro-

duced under the new company name FILM AG. The film was selected as the Austrian Entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 93rd Academy Awards and was licenced by Netflix worldwide.

[www.film-ag.at](http://www.film-ag.at)

## WÜSTE FILM

Wüste Film GmbH, founded in 1989 in Hamburg, is one of the leading German film production companies and develops and (co-)produces feature films, documentaries, and TV films for the German and international market. They produced films like IN THE ABYSS with Tobias Moretti, several TATORT Episodes (Crime Series) and multiple award-winning films such as SHORT SHARP SHOCK and HEAD-ON by Fatih Akin, OFF-SIDE by Buket Alakuş or THE DOOR starring Mads Mikkelsen and Jessica Schwarz and directed by Anno Saul. Wüste Film's focus is on discovering and supporting new talents and on long term collaborations with filmmakers.

## TURNUS FILM AG

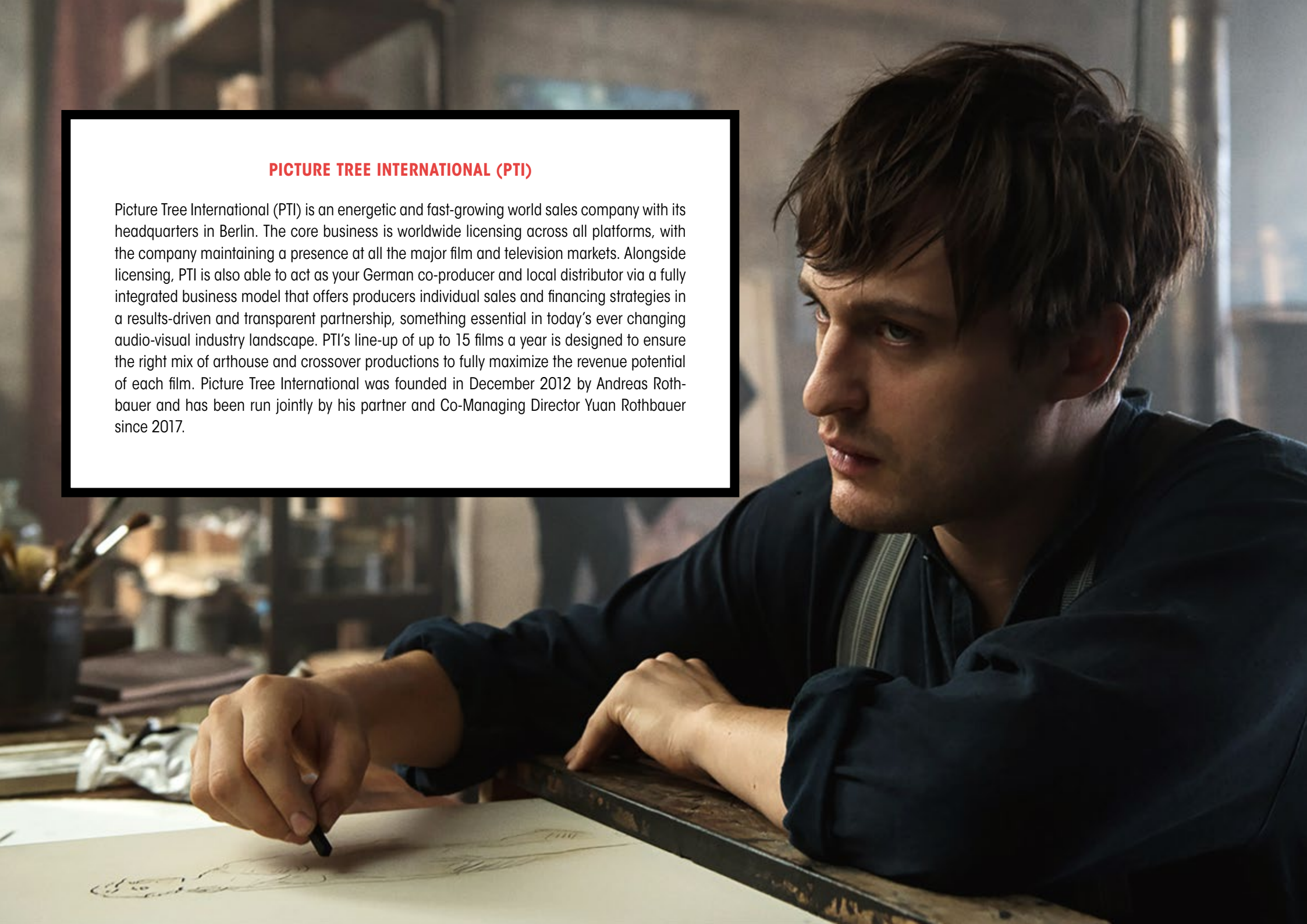
Turnus Film AG is an independent Swiss film production company based in Zurich. They produce national and international feature films for cinema and television in the arthouse and upscale mainstream sector. Turnus Film is committed to the continuous expansion of its network with international production partners and is a member of the European Producers Club. Today, Turnus Film AG exclusively develops and produces feature films and documentaries for cinema and television such as SENNENTUNTSCHI, several TATORT Episodes (Crime Series) and THE AWAKENING OF MOTTI WOLKENBRUCH by Michael Steiner which was selected as the Swiss entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards.

## DAWSON FILMS

Dawson Films is an independent production company based in the Czech Republic established in 2013 and focuses on the development and (co-)production of feature films and TV productions. Dawson Films was a division of Dawson Productions, one of the most prestigious local commercial production companies. Dawson already Co-Produced CODENAME HOLEC with Film AG in 2016. They also produced films like ON THE ROOF by Jiří Mádln and 3 SEASONS IN HELL by Tomáš Mašín.

### **PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL (PTI)**

Picture Tree International (PTI) is an energetic and fast-growing world sales company with its headquarters in Berlin. The core business is worldwide licensing across all platforms, with the company maintaining a presence at all the major film and television markets. Alongside licensing, PTI is also able to act as your German co-producer and local distributor via a fully integrated business model that offers producers individual sales and financing strategies in a results-driven and transparent partnership, something essential in today's ever changing audio-visual industry landscape. PTI's line-up of up to 15 films a year is designed to ensure the right mix of arthouse and crossover productions to fully maximize the revenue potential of each film. Picture Tree International was founded in December 2012 by Andreas Rothbauer and has been run jointly by his partner and Co-Managing Director Yuan Rothbauer since 2017.



# ALMA+ OSKAR

Feature Film

Austria | Switzerland | Germany | Czech Republic  
in German

A **Film AG** production In Co-production with  
**Turnus Film AG, Wüste Film GmbH** and **Dawson Films**  
s.r.o.



| turnusfilm



DAWSONFILMS

Produced with financial support of  
**Austrian Film Institute, FISA – Film Industry Support Austria,**  
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**MOIN Film Fund Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein,**  
**Czech Film Fund** and **Prague Film Fund**  
In collaboration with **ORF, ZDF** and **SRF**

## CAST

**EMILY COX** Alma Mahler  
**VALENTIN POSTLMAYR** Oskar Kokoschka  
**ANTON VON LUCKE** Walter Gropius  
**TÁŇA PAUHOFOVÁ** Lilly Lieser  
**BRIGITTE KARNER** Anna Moll  
**WILFRIED HOCHHOLDINGER** Adolf Loos  
**MARCELLO DE NARDO** Gustav Mahler  
**MEHMET ATEŞÇİ** Bruno Walter  
and **ROLAND KOCH** Carl Moll  
and **CORNELIUS OBONYA** Franz Ferdinand

Written by **HILDE BERGER & DIETER BERNER**

Directed by **DIETER BERNER**

Producers **ALEXANDER GLEHR, JOHANNA SCHERZ (AT)**

Co-Producers **ANITA WASSER, MICHAEL STEIGER (CH);**

**STEFAN SCHUBERT (D), MONIKA KRISTL (CZ)**

Director of Photography **JAKUB BEJNAROWICZ**

Edited by **BRITTA NAHLER, CHRISTOPH BRUNNER**

Original Score **STEFAN WILL**

Production Designer **SU ERDT**

Costume Designer **KATARÍNA ŠTRBOVÁ BIELIKOVÁ**

Makeup Designer **MARC HOLLENSTEIN**

Production Sound Mixer **PATRICK STORCK**

Line Producer **BEATRICE HALLENBARTER**

Casting **RITA WASZILOVICS**





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