

At

MOUNT HOLYOKE.

Department of German Studies

German Filmfest – Spring 2009

## The Lust of Transgression: Sex and Madness

(All films have subtitles, unless otherwise noted)

7:30 pm, Ciruti 9

Free, all welcome!

Tuesday, February 3:

*Woyzeck*

(1979, Werner Herzog)

In WOYZECK, Werner Herzog crafts yet another tale of madness and obsession and for the first time in his oeuvre injects a love story (tortured though it is) into the equation. Based on Georg Büchner's unfinished play, the film is a dark study of a lowly German flunky (Klaus Kinski) who toils as an orderly in the army. Cowering pathetically in front of his superiors, who constantly push him around, he struggles and rushes through his daily duties. In order to earn much-needed extra money, Woyzeck volunteers for a local doctor's strange experiments, which require Woyzeck to stay on a strict diet of peas and push him to murderous insanity. In addition, Woyzeck has a son with a lusty young woman, Marie (Eva Mattes), who is seduced by a stout drum major. Publicly humiliated by the officer, Woyzeck is propelled into a rage.

Tuesday, Feb. 10: *Faust: eine deutsche Volkssage*

(1926, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau)

**Digitally mastered Kino International version with digital score, in conjunction with F. W. Murnau Foundation.** Mobilizing the full resources of the Ufa Studios, F. W. Murnau (Nosferatur, Sunrise) orchestrated a colossal adaptation of Goethe's FAUST that ranks alongside Fritz Lang's Metropolis as the greatest achievement of the German silent cinema. Gösta Ekman stars as the titular alchemist who, struggling with his faith amidst a devastating plague, is offered the power to cure and the gift of youth...in exchange for his soul. As the diabolical Mephisto, Emil Jannings (The Last Laugh) delivers a performance of operatic scale and intensity, by turns charming, comical, and horrific.

Tuesday, Feb. 17: *M: eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*

(1931, Fritz Lang)

A highly structured and stylized film about a serial killer. It created the serial killer genre, which includes such entries as Psycho and Silence of the Lambs. Alfred Hitchcock (the director of Psycho) was a disciple of Lang, as were Jacques Tourneur (The Leopard Man [1943]) and Michael Powell (Peeping Tom [1960]). M was not only the originator of the genre, but arguably remains its preeminent entry. Highly recommended for those in the mood for a Hitchcockian-style thriller with a great performance by Peter Lorre and great story-telling technique by Fritz Lang.

Tuesday, Feb. 24: *Faust* (1960, Peter Gorski & Gustaf Gründgens)

Tastefully staged by Gründgens in a simple, impressionistic style, all within the hollow, vaulted area of a sparsely set studio stage, this is purposely a frank example of a color-photographed play, which derives its visual characteristics more from stagecraft than cinema. Its eloquence comes from the richness with which the actors deliver the classic verse, its glitter and bounce from the resilience with which Gründgens plays Mephisto.

**Tuesday, Mar. 3:** *Ich möchte kein Mann sein*

(1918, Ernst Lubitsch)

Lively young Ossi, a tomboy full of a fun-loving spirit, she likes to smoke, drink booze, stick out her tongue, and play poker with her male chums - but her guardian and governess want her to behave like a "proper young lady". Wishing she were "born a boy" she heads to a local men's store and has herself fitted for an evening suit. Soon she's out on the streets in top hat, white tie, and tails, her hair groomed like a boy's, she rides the street car, and goes to a ballroom where she's soon drinking champagne and smoking cigars, flirting with (and even kissing) her own guardian - and he thinks she's a fellow!

**Monday, March 9 (Ciruti 109):** *Mädchen in Uniform*

(1931, Leontine Sagan)

After the death of her parents young girl Manuela von Meinhardis is sent to a boarding school where Prussian drill rules the education. Desperately seeking love and warmth in Manuela's heart special emotions for the only human lady teacher, Fraeulein von Bernburg, start growing. Manuela falls in love with her. It's just a matter of time until that forbidden love becomes known what immediately leads to disaster. Though Elisabeth von Bernburg has never returned the love she is forced to leave the school; Manuela gets a severe punishment, like someone who has committed a crime.

**Tuesday, March 10:** *Mädchen in Uniform*

(1958, Geza von Radvanyi)

(see description above)

**Tuesday, April 7:** *Mephisto* (Istvan Szabo)

Reflects on Gründgens' collaborative stance during Third Reich; title because of Gründgens's famous role in Faustfilm, see 24 Feb.

A German stage actor finds unexpected success and mixed blessings in the popularity of his performance in a Faustian play as the Nazis take power in pre-WWII Germany. As his associates and friends flee or are ground under by the Nazi terror, the popularity of his character supercedes his own existence until he finds that his best performance is keeping up appearances for his Nazi patrons.

**Tuesday, April 14:**

*Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

(1975, Volker Schlöndorff & Margarethe von Trotta)

A striking examination of the power of the police and excesses of the media, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* grows more pertinent every day. When the police burst into Katharina Blum's apartment, they fail to find the suspected terrorist they've been tracking and arrest Blum for harboring a fugitive. Immediately she becomes a media sensation; between the ruthless interrogation of the police, the even more invasive muckraking of a notorious tabloid, and harassment from the sensation-hungry public, Blum's ordinary life is turned inside out until she has to lash out to defend her own sanity. A German film made in 1975, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* could have been made today in the U.S. Angela Winkler gives a compelling performance as Katharina, but the entire movie is superbly realized: suspenseful, compassionate, and shot through with dark humor.