

Wir Werden Uns Wiederseh'n
So long, my heart!

A tragic comedy about loving, longing and losing your mind.

World Sales:

AVALON ENTERTAINMENT® GRUPPE

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So long, my heart!

Genre: **Tragic comedy**
Duration: **90 minutes**
Format: **35mm – 1:1,85 – colour – Dolby Digital SR-D**
Language: **German**
Production Countries: **Switzerland / Germany**
First public screening: **27th of September 2006**
San Sebastián International Film Festival

Cast & Crew

Cast: Tom Jahn (Holger Tewe)
Pola Kinski (Barbara Henning)
Isolde Fischer (Petra Opels)
Lieselotte Langer (Mrs. Kramer)
Sabine Strobach (Wiebke)
Ralf Kaufmann (Werner Wolpers)
Einhardt Klucke (Wolfgang)
Sonja Hondralis (Saskia Henning)
Alice Huber (Mrs. Stolte)
Dietrich Garbrecht (Mr. Neumann)
Doc Wenz and Mardi Gras.bb (the ghosts)
a.o.

Screenplay by: Stefan Hillebrand and Oliver Paulus
in collaboration with all actors and actresses

Directed by: Stefan Hillebrand and Oliver Paulus

Director of photography: Daniela Knapp
Production design: Diana Wagner

Sound: Andreas Hildebrandt
Gerrit Lucas
Thomas Lüdemann

Editing: André Bigoudi
in collaboration with Jens Prausnitz

Digital colorist: Robin Schmude

Music: Doc Wenz and Mardi Gras.bb
Sound design: Ramón Orza
Sound mix: Stefan Müller, Hendrik Wilhelms

Producer: Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand
Production: Motorfilm (Switzerland) / Frischfilm (Germany)

Production (Switzerland):

Motorfilm – Oliver Paulus
Hohlstrasse 214
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Telefon / Fax: +41-44-420 10 60
Mobil: +41-76-402 2003
motorfilm@bluewin.ch

Production (Germany):

Frischfilm – Stefan Hillebrand
Luisenstrasse 6a
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These will be the good old days, when we are looking back in ten years.
Sir Peter Ustinov

Background

An old age home or eldercare facility is a special kind of place. A place most people only enter if they have a really good reason - to visit a patient, to hold a job there, or if they themselves are in need of care. A nursing home or care facility confronts its visitors, as it does its residents, with themes of age, illness and death. Issues which can lead to heights of love or push one into deeper, darker areas. Ideas which can lead one to face the end of one's very existence.

One of the basic premises of our film is: whoever is afraid of death, is also afraid of life. And in our neighbourhood there was an elder care facility where we could pursue our ideas and make them into a film.

Synopsis

A romantic comedy set in a real working retirement home, including genuine patients. Three lonely strangers meet, fall in and out of love but ultimately find a rare tranquillity among the wise but delusional elderly folk.

The film relates the story of three people who get to know each other at their jobs at a Mannheim eldercare facility, and along the way learn the meaning of love. Viewed from the outside, things seem to be going quite well for the protagonists, though privately their reasons for being reveal themselves in permanent inner struggles. The caregiver, 42-year old Holger (Tom Jahn) spends his life seemingly following an orderly path, but is fleeing his messy, disorderly relationships in Berlin. He moves to southern Germany, where in his new surroundings, he falls in love with 49-year old Barbara (Pola Kinski), who has been employed in the same nursing home as a kitchen hand for many years.

Their affection for each other is strong, and they powerfully close ranks when head nurse Petra Opels (Isolde Fischer) begins to express her enthusiasm for Holger.

The capricious and strange world of the old age home is not only a workplace for the three protagonists, but also time and again seems to express itself in a series of "personal mirrored images". The somewhat crazy Mrs. Kramer (Lieselotte Langer) is brought to the point of seeing "pop-song singing ghosts" (mardi gras.bb). The old, feeble lady with her Zimmer frame becomes a metaphor for awakening and for life itself. The disagreements with her and the other elders push all three protagonists into more and more tragic-comic situations, leading them, in the end, to attain a certain kind of spirituality.

Why we improvise and what we understand that to mean.

Since 2000 we have jointly produced various improvised films and have continually developed our improvisational techniques and ideas. We have come to recognize that improvisation is seen to lead to a kind of accidental product. We would like to say clearly and straightforwardly that improvisation is both an art form and a craft for us. For us improvisation means a permanent involvement with the here and now, whether in the kitchen, on the stage, in music or in film. Improvisation requires an ability to relate to each other and at the same time to observe and see opportunity in our work. The interactions of jazz musicians makes that visibly clear: the teamwork of the musicians follows not only their intuition, but also clear rules, like the importance of accepting given ideas (or rhythms), and then to move beyond that into further areas of creativity.

For us - as small and independent film production companies - the improvisational process offers not only great creative potential but also the greatest economic opportunity. Thanks to the reasonable and inexpensive digital creative possibilities available, improvisation can be seen as a way of further simplifying work processes and making things more flexible. And we can realize films with a formerly unimaginable budget.

A further important feature of our work is the inclusion of amateurs, whose interaction with professional actors influences the creative process as does the use of existing, functioning real locations. In this way we enter the preparation for our projects in a similar way to documentary filmmakers, and we attempt to enter the world that lies before us. That leads to a disagreement with the central premise of a documentary film: how does one depict reality or truth? How far can we - as filmmakers - “dramatically” portray the real surroundings of real people? We visited our main shooting location, the Richard-Böttger-Heim in Mannheim, regularly for months, in order to build up some sort of trust in relationships, and at the same time, to learn how to understand the people who lived there. During these visits we could bond with our “amateurs actors”, and begin to develop character roles and develop scenes. It was important to define that in the playing of their roles, these performers never had the feeling that they were playing themselves.

Our goal is to wed these documentary principles with those of filmic fiction and move towards telling stories in a new and truthful way.

With SO LONG, MY HEART! we'd like to continue our successful work, which we began with THE BUTCHER'S BRIDE and WHEN THE RIGHT ONE COMES ALONG.

Stefan Hillebrand and Oliver Paulus

Leading actors

Tom Jahn (Holger Tewe)



Born 1965 in Berlin.

From 1987 to 1991 Tom studies acting at the HANS OTTO acting school in Leipzig.

Since 1995 member of the improvisation theatre THEATERSPORT BERLIN and DIE GORILLAS

Filmography feature films (selection):

WIR WERDEN UNS WIEDERSEH'N (2006) – Directed by Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand, ELBE (2005) – Directed by Marco Mittelstaedt, PREUSSISCH GANGSTAR (2005) – Directed by Bartosz Werner / Irma Stelmach, ONE DAY IN EUROPE (2004) – Directed by Hannes Stöhr, WIR (2002) – Directed by Martin Gypkens, GATE TO HEAVEN (2002) – Directed by Veit Helmer, LICHTER (2002) – Directed by Hans-Christian Schmid, EPSTEINS NACHT (2001) – Directed by Urs Egger, KUSCHELDOKTOR (2001) – Directed by Anja Jacobs

Filmography TV (selection):

BÄUTOLOMÄUS UND DAS SCHLOSS IM WALD (2006) – Directed by Karl-Heinz Käfer, DIE NACHT DER GROßEN FLUT (2005) – Directed by Raymond Ley, SPERLING UND DIE KATZE IN DER FALLE (2005) – Directed by Friedemann Fromm, DER LEBENSVERSICHERER (2005) – Directed by Bülent Akinci, CAN (2005) – Directed by Züli Aladag, NACHTSCHICHT IV (2005) – Directed by Lars Kraume, DER LETZTE ZEUGE (2004) – Directed by Bernhard Stephan, BELLA BLOCK - WAS HABEN SIE GESEHEN (2004) – Directed by Hans Christoph Blumenberg, ALPHATEAM (2004) – Directed by Micaela Zschieschow, GROßSTADTREVIER (2004) – Directed by Lars Jessen, TATORT - TODES-BANDE (2004) – Directed by Thomas Bohn, POLIZEIRUF 110 - NACHTFROST (2002) – Directed by Hans Werner, DIE ANSTALT - ZURÜCK INS LEBEN (2002) – Directed by diversos, DER AUFSTAND (2002) – Directed by Hans Christoph Blumenberg, BERLIN IS IN GERMANY (2000) – Directed by Hannes Stöhr

Pola Kinski (Barbara Henning)



Born in Berlin. Already as a child several appearances in feature films, as well as at the RESIDENZTHEATER MUNICH. At the age of 17 Pola starts to study acting at the OTTO FALCKENBERG SCHULE in Munich.

Filmography (selection):

WIR WERDEN UNS WIEDERSEH'N – Directed by Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand,
ZWISCHENGLEIS – Directed by Wolfgang Staudte, VALESKA GERT – Directed by
Volker Schlöndorff, SONNTAGSKINDER – Directed by Michael Verhoeven,
KOMPLIZINNEN – Directed by Margit Czenski, DER MENSCHENFEIND – Regie.
Peter Zadek

Theatre:

SCHAUSPIELHAUS HAMBURG
SCHAUSPIELHAUS BOCHUM, Peter Zadek
FREIE VOLKSBÜHNE BERLIN, Peter Zadek
THEATRE BOUFFE DU NORD (PARIS)
ÓPERA DE TRES CENTAVOS

Isolde Fischer (Petra Opels)



Born 1971 in Stuttgart.

Worked two years as an assistant director at the STAATSTHEATER STUTTGART under the artistic director Jürgen Bosse.

She studied educational science, sociology and law in Heidelberg, before studying acting in Calgary (Canada). Since 1998 working as free-lanced actress and acting coach.

Filmography (selection):

WIR WERDEN UNS WIEDERSEH'N (2006) – Directed by Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand, VIER MINUTEN (2006) – Directed by Chris Kraus, WARCHILD (2006) – Directed by Christian Wagner, WENN DER RICHTIGE KOMMT (2003) – Directed by Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand, DIE WURSTVERKÄUFERIN (2001) – Directed by Oliver Paulus / Stefan Hillebrand.

Several awards for the performance as Paula Hartnagel in WENN DER RICHTIGE KOMMT (WHEN THE RIGHT ONE COMES ALONG).

Press comments: „... this may account for this amusing acting and narrative freshness. Stage actress Fischer gives awkward Paula a note of crazy optimism ...“ (*Variety*) – „The film is superbly served by Isolde Fischer’s straightforward, sincere and unaffected performance as Paula, a woman who can walk into the jets of a city fountain with the natural enthusiasm of someone who is truly carried away on the wings of her dreams.“ (*Screen International*).

Theatre:

Since 1993 member of the improvisation theatre DRAMA LIGHT. Regular invitations as an actress and acting coach to several national and international theatres and theatre festivals. Since 2004 vice-president of the association IMPRO DEUTSCHLAND E.V.

Directors' biographies

Stefan Hillebrand

Stefan Hillebrand was born in 1969 in Verl (Germany). He studied educational science, criminology and youth psychiatry in Heidelberg, before studying directing and screenwriting at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg. Stefan is a member of the improvisation theatre DRAMA LIGHT and he attended acting classes with several teachers, a.o. Keith Johnstone, Randy Dixon, Doug Nounn, Brain Lohmann and Tracy Burns.

Filmography (choice): LASS SPRINGEN BABY (1994), TWIST MIT ANTJE (1996) – both short films, ANGST VORM GOTT (1998), ZU BESUCH (1999) – both documentaries, POGGE AUF BRAUTSCHAU (1999) – short film, ERST IM HIMMEL WIRD ES SCH(T)ILLER (2005) – doku soap.

Oliver Paulus

Oliver Paulus was born in 1969 in Dornach (Switzerland). He first attended the College of Fine Arts in Basel before he studied directing and screenwriting at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg. In 1995 Oliver was honoured with the MAX OPHULS AWARD and in 1997 with the STUDY AWARD OF THE SOLOTHURN GOVERNMENT. In 2005 he was invited to direct the latest PARISIENNE PEOPLE commercial following in the footsteps of such outstanding directors as Jean-Luc Godard, Robert Altmann, the Coen Brothers, David Lynch, Emir Kusturica and Roman Polanski.

Filmography (choice): HIS MOTHER'S VOICE (1994), ZWISCHEN PARIS UND DAKAR (1995), REALITY (1996), DER TAG AN DEM OTTO KAM (1997), ECKFLIESEN (1998), DAS GESCHENK (2001) – all short films. TANDOORI LOVE (feature film in preproduction)

Co-directed / co-produced films, developed by improvisation:

DIE WURSTVERKÄUFERIN (THE BUTCHER'S BRIDE) – 2001. This short film received a nomination for the Swiss Film Award 2002 and garnered several prizes, among them an audience award at the Short Film Festival Hamburg.

WENN DER RICHTIGE KOMMT (WHEN THE RIGHT ONE COMES ALONG) – 2003. This feature film has been shown at more than 40 international film festivals and received 10 awards, as well as a Special Mention at the 51st International Film Festival San Sebastián. Variety wrote about this first feature: "A film that proves German comedy can be funny."

WIR WERDEN UNS WIEDERSEH'N (SO LONG, MY HEART!) – 2006. World premiere at the 54th International Film Festival San Sebastián.

Festival participations of SO LONG, MY HEART!

- **San Sebastian IFF**, Spain (Zabaltegi / Altadis New Director's Competition)
- **Mannheim-Heidelberg IFF**, Germany (International Discoveries)
- **Havana FI del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano**, Cuba (Muestra del Cine Suizo)
- **Palm Springs IFF**, USA (World Cinema Now)
- **Solothurner Filmtage**, Switzerland
- **Khanty-Mansiisk, Spirit of Fire IFF**, Russia (International Competition)
- **Montevideo IFF**, Uruguay (International Competition – **Opening Film**)
- **Philadelphia Film Festival**, USA (World Focus)
- **Selb, Grenzland Filmtage**, Germany (International Competition - **Audience Award**)
- **Gibara, International Non-Budget FF**, Cuba (International Competition)
- **Verona, Schermi d'Amore**, Italia (International Competition)