

Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

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Dear friends and fans,

we collect and prepare information for you by gathering these from newspapers, the Internet, the usenet and private sources. Luckily enough we are now getting a lot of information from you to share with other newsletter readers. To share and deepen our knowledge is one of the aims of an archive and it is certainly the aim of this Newsletter. In the process of preparing this edition we realized that it was going out of proportions. So we posted some additional/essential documents at [www.soundlikemarlene.de](http://www.soundlikemarlene.de) . This short introduction should prepare you that this edition is divided into three parts: Your letters and answers – Your information – and finally a memo by Marlene on the Rex-Reed-Interview. What interview? And who is Rex Reed? Welcome to the Newsletter.

**Letters**

Dear friends, it is strange to see "Menschen am Sonntag" described as "the first feature film by Billy - at that time Billie - Wilder". By contemporary accounts the film was credited to Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer (I've never seen a print with the original credits). Most film histories omit the Ulmer credit, as Siodmak's career and reputation went on to become more successful and more fashionable. But the even more successful and more fashionable Wilder certainly never claimed to have been more than (one of the) writer(s) within the very informal labor division of this film. If by the words "feature film by", Wilder-as-writer was intended, it would still not be hist first, since at least one screenplay credited to him opened before production was completed on "Menschen am Sonntag": the still extant "Der Teufelsreporter".But I'm sure you know all that. Best wishes, Bernard Eisenschitz

Bernard is a well-known and respected film historian. We appreciate that he reads this newsletter carefully and we have to admit that he is right in saying that "Menschen am Sonntag" is not Billy Wilders first film - especially as we have a print of his first film "Der Teufelsreporter" in our archive.



But you don't always have to see the credits in the film to know the screenwriter. Here is an invitation to the first showing on February 2 1930 at Ufa Theater Kurfürstendamm in Berlin which gives Billie Wilder his credit. And along with the invitation goes the ticket with this special programme.

Patricia Kaas  
Steven Bach wrote:  
Newsletter No. 60 has some misinformation about Patricia Kaas and Marlene. The French singer did several days of screen and sound-tests in Paris as Marlene, with French-German actor Matthieu Carriere playing opposite her in some scenes. The tests had nothing to do with the Louis Malle biopic that was never made because of Malle's too-early death, but was for a biographical film to be directed by Stanley Donen with Donen and Steven Bach producing from Bach's script. The director and writer went to Paris in the mid-90s to film Patricia Kaas's tests. They were wonderful tests, though the film was (unfortunately) never made.

Alexandre Andre was lucky enough to find the first book ever published on Marlene in Finland. It gives no author but the cover looks like the german book by Aros (Alfred Rosenthal) which was published at Scherl Verlag in Berlin in 1932. So this may well be a finnish translation.



See the Swedish book left and the Berlin one by Aros at right.

Alexandre Andre:

The main title on the cover is simply "Marlene Dietrich" but the complete title inside is "Marlene Dietrich - Greta Garbos största konkurrent" (Do I really need to translate?). It was published by Åhlén & Åkerlunds Förlag, in Stockholm in 1932, in the collection "Små filmböcker" (no author is mentioned). 52 well designed pages with a lot of pictures. Some have become mythical, some are not very well known like two very simple portraits of Marlene at the age of 23 and this childhood picture.



Marlene vid 5 års ålder

Otherwise I appreciated very much the fact file about Herta Koch in NL 61. It's this kind of things I'd like to read more often. Why wouldn't it be a regular column in each NL? That would be fine: short stories about the making of a song, an album or a show etc. Also, another nice thing would be to introduce each month a rare and original record with a picture sleeve,

as the "record of the month"...

2004 should be a "birthday year", but who noticed that? The "Café de Paris" will turn 50 in June, the albums "Berlin" and "Die Neue" will turn 40 this Summer, as well as the "Queen's Theatre" in December... It could be a great opportunity to re-release those records in de luxe editions, finely remastered with extra material. I bet record producers are not smart enough to notice this kind of thing, so why MDCB wouldn't incite them or produce those?

Thank you Alexandre for all this valuable informations and your stimulating thoughts. You certainly know the way they edited the DVD "I wish you love". Taking this into consideration why should the record industry bother to make a good edition? Because we convince them too? The record industry is not working that way. And they pay you less if you talk them into something they really don't care about. You see, it ends up being a money thing. Not that we're only in the archive to make money. It is that little reimbursement for the archive we don't want to give away. We appreciate that you liked the Herta Koch Special. We'll try to prepare more of this kind.

David Moore:

The London news reported an interview with Marlene's grandson from The Imperial War Museum in Lambeth as he presented the Museum with one of her uniforms she wore during WW2. The uniform was featured in a current exhibition entitled "Women in Wartime". The uniform will however be on permanent exhibition.

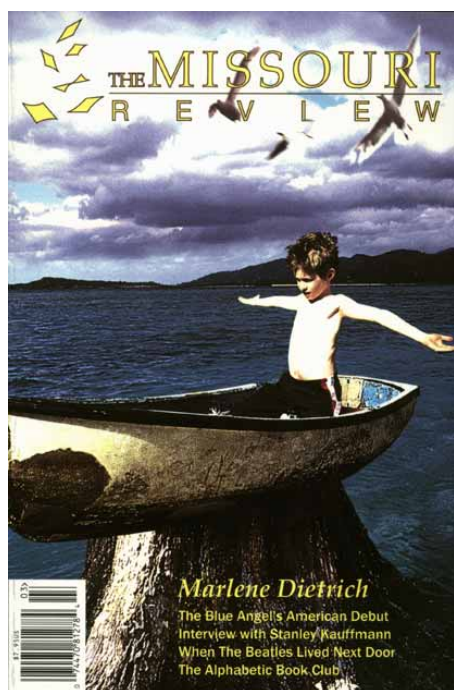


One of the wartime uniforms worn by Marlene Dietrich being presented by her grandson Paul Riva to The Imperial War Museum, London.

Another fan:

Quelle briante actrice elle était! Aussi brillante que son amie Romy Schneider que je regrette très fort aussi. Elles avaient la grace, le talent, le don de captiver le spectateur pendant des Heures, de coïncider avec la caméra...Bref tout de deux grandes actrices.si je parles des deux actrices sur le site de Marlène, c'est tout simplement parcequ'elles étaient très amies et que ce sont de superbes créatures du septième art, a tout les niveaux et points de vue. une très grande fan, sonia.H

### New books



#### The Missouri Review

Volume XXV Number 3, University of Missouri-Columbia 2002, 202 pp.

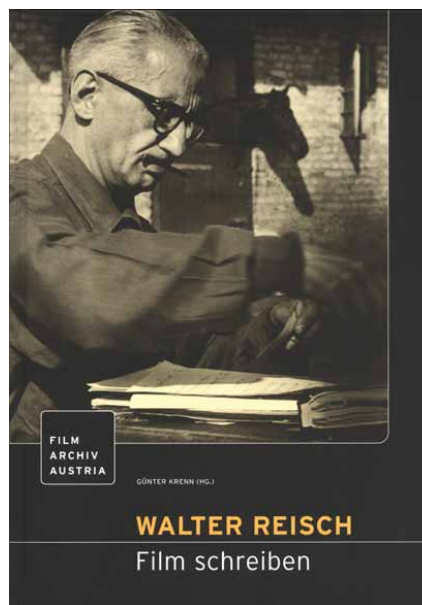
Contains the English translation of Franz Hessels "Marlene Dietrich: A Portrait" originally published at Kindt und Bucher, Berlin 1931; Translated by Isabel Fargo Cole.

The English translation of this wonderful essay by Franz Hessel finally has been published by The Missouri Review. Bravo, bravissimo. If you have never heard of Franz Hessel or this essay we envy you for the great joy of a first reading. The following short excerpt is just one example of Franz Hessels art of writing. In the Missouri Review the essay comes with an excellent introduction by Isabel Fargo Cole.

Excerpt:

I have watched the faces of her audience on the Kurfürstendamm and in a fleabag cinema in the suburb of Tegel and have seen the same delight in all classes and kinds of people. The artist has an effect like that of

the magical doll in the Persian fairy tale: carpenters, tailors, painters, Brahmans and sundry craftsmen all helped to make her; the fight over her possession, come before the Kadi, and he claims her as his long-lost wife. Whether portraying a lady or a trollop, a conqueror or a victim, Marlene Dietrich always embodies a universal wish-dream; like the heroine of one of her films, she is the woman they long for—they, not he or she, but all of us, the nation, the world, the time.



#### Walter Reisch. Film schreiben

Edited by Günter Krenn, Verlag Filmarchiv Austria, Wien 2004, 368 pp.

In its brilliant series on Austrian filmmakers Filmarchiv Austria published this new book on Walter Reisch. Reisch was a close friend of Marlene from the twenties to the seventies. The letters he wrote to Marlene are published in here (all of them are from MDCB). Alas the book has no index. So you have to read the whole book to know if there is more on your favourite.

#### **Memo by Marlene on the Rex Reed Interview.**

On July 24 1972 Marlene signed a contract with Alexander Cohens company Bentwood Television for "I wish you Love" which guaranteed her \$250.000. \$50.000 were paid after signing the contract, another \$50.000 after the taping of the show.

Outside of the contract she also agreed to make a photo sitting for Milton Greene on November 26 and to appear at a press conference in New York and also give some interviews to individual journalists. One of the interviewers was Rex Reed to whom Marlene later on referred as "the viper". Because of her behaviour at the press conference and because of the Rex Reed

interview Alexander Cohen refused to give her the rest of the money – that is \$150.000. When Marlene sued Cohen to get the money Cohen made a counter charge for \$250.000 claiming that sales of the show had been prohibited by Marlenes attitude to the journalists at the press conference and especially by the Rex Reed interview. Claims were brought to court in England and the USA. In November 1976 Cohen collected a so called "suitable sum" for damages over the Rex Reed interview by Associated Newspapers. In May 1977 a settlement was arranged between the lawyers of Marlene and Alexander Cohen. Marlene received a payment of \$60.000 (instead of \$150.000); the court action was dismissed without any costs for her; and anything what was recorded in connection with the show was handed over to Marlenes agent Terry Miller. As the copyright of the show and the tapes per contract were now in the hands of Marlene these were eventually sold to EMI. To fully understand Marlenes memo and the circumstances of the show we posted the Rex Reed interview plus a report on the press conference, reviews of the shows and the production schedule at

[www.soundsslikemarlene.de](http://www.soundsslikemarlene.de). These documents will be online for a short time only. In the following statement Marlene says: "I never saw the finished show or knew how the finished show might look. Mr. Cohen left two days after the taping together with the director of the show." In a lengthy telegram dated December 1 1972 Marlene comments the show which was taped November 24 and shown to her at BBC on November 28. This statement may eventually be published in another newsletter.

Marlenes Memo:

God how I wish I were not so naive and had a taperecorder hidden when that son of a bitch came here. I have tortured my brain to remember the exact questions and answers.

Did you do the exact show as it says in the press release, as on stage?

No, I could not because the orchestra was not in back of me but in the wings and there was a set not like the one I usually have. Therefore things were different and more difficult for me.

But why did they not do the exact show?

I don't know. I had never done television and I submitted to the demands of the television technicians.

Were you happy with this change?

No. Although I told myself that I should be able to do any-thing I was asked to do. If we had had one more day it would have been easy, but the

first performance was more or less a dress rehearsal and the second performance is the only performance they have on tape, nothing to cut to, nothing to cover up any mistakes. We had a wonderful orchestra and all the music rehearsals we needed. That part was perfect. Why did you submit to the press conference? It was in my contract. I asked them not to do it but they insisted and I flew to New York for that reason.

How about that interview you gave to Angela Taylor?

Also in my contract. I thought she came with the intention to do me harm. But what could I do. I could not throw her out of my apartment.

Wasn't there someone representing your producer while you gave interviews?

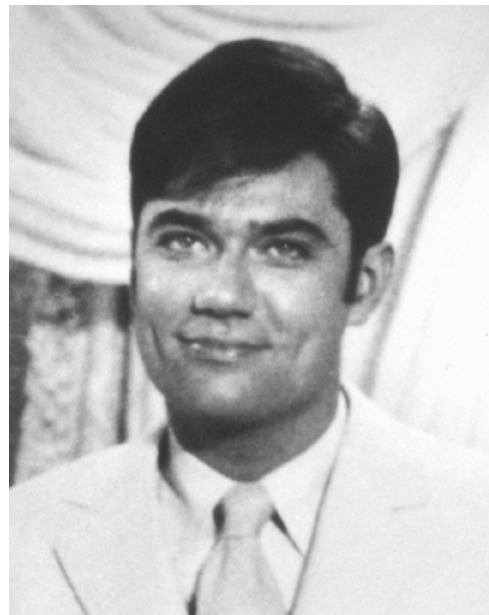
No, there was someone from CBS.

Did he interfere?

No.

How could you allow to be exposed to such treatment?

I'm an optimist and I don't foresee malice.



Rex Reed in 1970

Did you have an all american crew?

No, we had a BBC crew. Only the director and the setdesigner were American.

Then CBS had nothing to do with the show?

No, not that I know of. I met the CBS people here at the pressconference. I had a particularly interesting conversation with Mr. Silverman after the press conference.

Did they ask you anything about your political views ?

No, thank God, because I never answer those questions.

Mr. Rex Reed then went into a long tale about Nixon, the Hitler and McCarthy for the next four years, and explained to me how he knew, how his contacts with Washington made this clear. I sat there, flabberghasted, and made no comments but "I can't believe it" and such. ... Judy Garland was never mentioned. "Ask me why I did it" was never said. Money was never mentioned. My keeping my family was never mentioned. I said that I was going to spend Christmas with Noel Coward, that my family was in Switzerland too.

I was not barefooted. Mr. Reed never entered my bedroom . I don't own twentysome Vuitton luggage. The word BORE is not in my vocabulary. To be bored by flowers is ridiculous. All the quotes about the show are ficticious. How could I say that the commercials interfered with my performance. Reed makes it look as if the commercials were made at the same time as the taping of my performance. The reference to Orson Welles is also ficticious. He was mentioned by me 5 or 6 years ago when I had offers in Europe to do a T.V. Show. He was never mentioned ever since I started discussing the show with Mr. A. Cohen.

I never talked to CBS people about anything to do with the production. My contract was with A. Cohen and not with CBS. I never discussed anything about the show or the interviews I had to do by contract in London and in America with anyone but Mr. Cohen. I never saw the finished show or knew how the finished show might look. Mr. Cohen left two days after the taping together with the director of the show. Therefore I could not have made the remarks attributed to me about " holding an audience etc. etc.". The constant referring to C.B.S. is pure invention. The disturbing factors of the show were decided upon by Mr. Cohen (or by his advisers, I would not know) and I submitted to them, having only myself to blame for doing so: like allowing the orchestra to be far away from me, the conductor seeing me only on a monitor, having no contact with him or the orchestra . This I said. But, then I pointed out that the visual effect was probably better than having 29 dinner jacketed men in back of me. But nothing of this was ever imposed by C.B.S. Anyway not to me. To me it was Mr. Cohens production. Mr. Cohen even made me tape a speech for the Tony Awards at the very end of the taping and re-taping of the show itself, which certainly had nothing to do with C.B.S. The press conference is on tape. One can check on my answers. Mr. Reed had a spy in the press conference and the other 3 "MAJOR INTERVIEWERS" were at the press conference in person.

## Two Centenaries

Cecil Beaton

Until the end of May The National Portrait Gallery in London celebrates the centenary of Cecil Beaton with a great exhibition. If you go their website <http://www.npg.org.uk/live/beaton.asp> you'll see one of his many photos of Marlene. But having the privilege to be one of the Newsletter readers we show you one item which is not in the National Gallery Show – Cecil Beaton's Christmas Card to Marlene from the early thirties.



Lilo Hehner

Lilo Hehner as a young girl attended the same school as Marlene, the Auguste-Viktoria-School in Berlin-Charlottenburg. She played piano in the school orchestra together with Marlene who was playing violin. Lilo Hehner lives in Berlin. A belated Happy Birthday.



## DVDgraphy

Alexandre Andre has updated and redesigned his list of Marlene DVDs. A must-see for every collector now for download at [www.soundlikemarlene.de](http://www.soundlikemarlene.de)

### **Slightly Off-Topic, yet....**

As a congratulation to her 80th birthday Filmmuseum Berlin opened an exhibition on Ruth Leuwerik. For those who are not familiar with german film history Miss Leuwerik was one of the most popular female actors in german cinema in the fifties and early sixties. On March 28 1960 Ruth Leuwerik took part in the Royal Performance in London. Arriving late for the rehearsals she asked what song she should sing. Leuwerik: " Somebody said: The Happy Wanderer". I thought: Funny, I don't know the song. When the orchestra started to play it turned out to be "Das Wandern ist des Müllers Lust". I couldn't march as quickly as the music played and was completely broke. Then charming Noel Coward came to me and asked: 'Miss Leuwerik, you look so unhappy. Is there something wrong?' I answered: 'Yes, probably because I am german I am the only one to perform a marching song.' - 'Well, we can change that easily' Coward answered and walked to the orchestra. "Could you play anything else? Miss Leuwerik is not so happy with this marching in." But they couldn't think of anything else, these were all elderly men. Then somebody said: 'Yes, we could play Falling in Love again.'" And so they did.

For more information about the exhibition go to [www.filmmuseum-berlin.de](http://www.filmmuseum-berlin.de)



On display is the show dress which Miss Leuwerik wore at that particular night.

End of Newsletter