

CINEMIEN Film & Video Distribution
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presenteert :

Das Leben der Anderen



Een film van Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

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Das Leben der Anderen - synopsis

Oost-Berlijn, 1984. Glasnost is nog heel ver weg, de bevolking wordt onder de duim gehouden door het Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Stasi), de Oost-Duitse geheime politie. De Stasi wordt alom gezien als een van de meest effectieve inlichtingendiensten ter wereld. Het doel van de Stasi: alles te weten komen.

De succesvolle toneelschrijver Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch) en zijn geliefde, de actrice Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedeck), zijn populaire intellectuele sterren in de DDR. Maar hun acties en vooral gedachten zijn niet altijd in lijn met de ideologie van de socialistische heilstaat. De minister van Cultuur is érg geïnteresseerd in Christa-Maria en geeft Stasi-agent Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe) opdracht de twee af te luisteren. Zoals gewoonlijk begint de bureaucratische Wiesler plichtsgetrouw aan deze taak. Boven hun appartement, op zolder, luistert hij dag en nacht hun leven af. Maar hoe meer hij in hun leven wordt gezogen, des te meer moeite heeft hij zijn loyaliteit naar de staat te behouden.

Das Leben der Anderen

137 min. / 35mm / Kleur / Dolby Stereo / Duits gesproken / Duitsland, 2006

Nederlandse theatrale distributie: Cinemien

Belgische theatrale distributie: ABC Distribution

DVD uitbreng : Homescreen

Filmnummer: 755

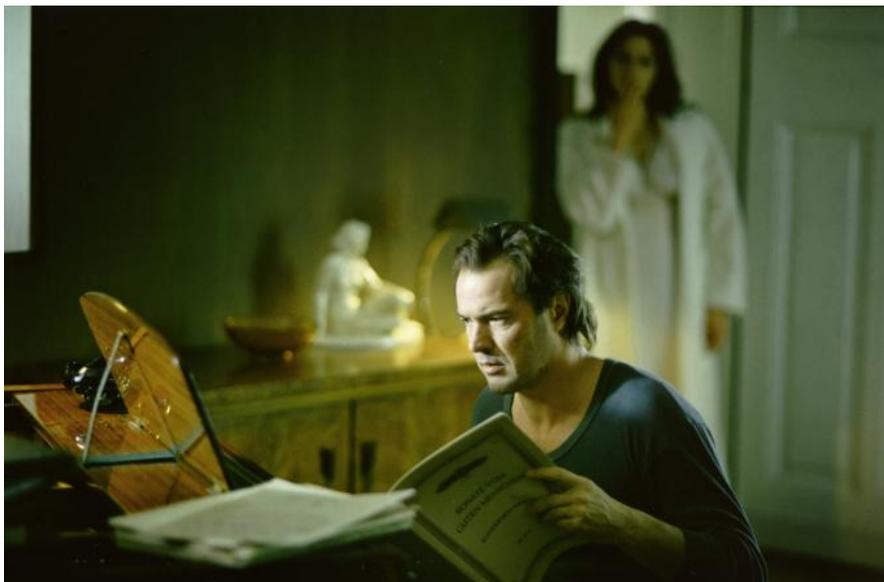


Das Leben der Anderen - Crew

Regie en scenario	: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
Cinematografie	: Hagen Bogdanski
Producenten	: Quirin Berg
	: Max Wiedemann
Set Design	: Silke Buhr
Kostuums	: Gabriele Binder
Make-up	: Annett Schulze, Sabine Schumann
Casting	: Simone Bär
Montage	: Patricia Rommel
Muziek	: Gabriel Yared, Stéphane Moucha

Das Leben der Anderen - Cast

Christa-Maria Sieland	: Martina Gedeck
Gerd Wiesler "HGW XX/7"	: Ulrich Mühe
Georg Dreyman	: Sebastian Koch
Lieutenant Colonel Anton Grubitz	: Ulrich Tukur
Minister Bruno Hempf	: Thomas Thieme
Paul Hauser	: Hans-Uwe Bauer
Albert Jerska	: Volkmar Kleinert
Karl Wallner	: Matthias Brenner



Das Leben der Anderen - Over Sebastian Koch

Koch werd geboren in 1962 in Karlsruhe in Duitsland. Tussen 1982 en 1986 volgde hij een acteeropleiding aan de gerespecteerde Otto Falckenberg-Schule in Munchen. Na een tijd in Darmstadt werkzaam te zijn geweest, verhuisde hij naar Berlijn.

Naast talrijke rollen in het theater (waaronder Lord Goring in **Der Ideale Gatte** van Oscar Wilde) en Duitse tv-series (waaronder Klaus Mann in **Die Manns** en Albert Speer in **Speer und Er**) speelde Koch ook in de recente Nederlandse film **Zwartboek**.



Das Leben der Anderen - Over Martina Gedeck

Nog tijdens haar acteeropleiding begon de filmcarrière van Martina Gedeck al met de hoofdrol in de televisiefilm *Die Beute* (1988) en de bioscoopfilm *Tiger, Lowe, Panther* (1989), beiden van Dominik Graf. Voor haar rol in *Holleisen-Gretl* (1995) van Jo Baier won zij de Beierse Televisieprijs.

Onder regie van Sandra Nettelbeck speelde Gedeck in *Bella Martha* (2002) de gelijknamige topkok zo goed, dat ze niet alleen de Duitse filmprijs en de Gouden Camera won in 2002 en 2003 voor beste actrice, maar ook genomineerd werd voor de Europese filmprijs. Ook speelt zij de hoofdrol in de film *Elementaire Deeltjes*, de verfilming van de spraakmakende roman van Houellebecq. Momenteel werkt Martina Gedeck samen met Robert de Niro in de nieuwe productie *The Good Shepard*.



Das Leben der Anderen - Over Ulrich Mühe

Mühe werd geboren in 1953 in Grimma in Duitsland. Vanaf 1975 studeerde hij aan de Hoge Theaterschool in Leipzig waarna hij als theateracteur aan het werk ging. Vanaf 1983 heeft hij in verschillende televisie- en bioscoopfilms gespeeld. Voor zijn rol in *Das Leben der Anderen* ontving Mühe de Bavaria Film Award voor beste mannelijke acteur.



Das Leben der Anderen - Over regisseur Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck



Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck werd geboren in 1973 in Keulen in Duitsland. Hij studeerde Russisch in St. Petersburg van 1991 tot 1993. Tussen 1993 en 1996 voltooide hij een studie filosofie, politieke wetenschappen en economie aan de Universiteit van Oxford en daarop volgde een regieopleiding aan de Film & Televisieacademie in München. In 2000 won hij verschillende prijzen met zijn film *Dobermann* en dit maakte volgende projecten mogelijk. Op dit moment is hij bezig met het schrijven van de scripts voor twee nieuwe lange speelfilms.

Filmografie:

2006 Das Leben der Anderen
2003 Ptits Mthes Ubains
2002 Der Templer
1999 Dobermann
1998 Das Datum
1997 Mitternacht

Das Leben der Anderen - Interview met de regisseur

How did you come up with this subject? What triggered your interest? Was there a personal motivation?

Over the years, there were two things that led me to make the film. One was the many formative childhood memories of my visits to East Berlin and the GDR. As a boy of eight, nine or ten, I found it interesting and exciting to feel the fear of adults. And they *were* afraid: my parents, when they crossed the border (they were both born in the East and were perhaps more closely controlled for this reason) and our friends from East Germany, when other people saw that they were speaking with us, from the West. Children have incredible antennae for emotions. I think that without these experiences I would have had trouble finding the right approach to this topic.

And then there was an image that I was never able to forget after it came to me in 1997 during a creativity training at the HFF: the close-medium shot of a man sitting in a bleak room, wearing headphones and listening to supernaturally beautiful music even though he does not want to hear it. This man pursued me in my dreams and evolved over the years into Captain Gerd Wiesler. Gabriel Yared always says that a creative artist is only a receiver. If that's true, then there was some kind of very strong broadcaster sending out signals non-stop.

You conducted intensive research for this film - how and where?

I went to many places where you can still feel the spirit of the past, such as the Hohenschönhausen Memorial or the former Ministry for State Security, today the Research Agency and Memorial in the Normannenstrasse, as well as the Birthler Bureau and its archives. Places can store emotions very well, and these visits often gave me more than the many books that, obviously, I also read over the years, and the documentaries that I watched. What was decisive, however, were the conversations with eyewitnesses, from Stasi Lieutenant Colonel Wolfgang Schmidt, the head of the Evaluation and Control Group of the "HA XX," to Stasi prostitutes and people who spent up to two years in a Stasi detention center. I tried to get as many perspectives as possible and I heard many contradictory stories - but in the end, I felt I had obtained a very definite feeling for this time and its problems. The last and most important element was provided by my work with the actors and team members. Most of them came from the East and brought with them many experiences and viewpoints, often very personal. For many, my research and the shooting were the occasion to speak about these things for the first time. This is amazing! Fourteen years after reunification! Some wounds truly take a very long time to heal.

Were there specific models for characters or events?

The characters were compiled from many different real-life figures, and many people will certainly be able to identify with one or the other character. But the film is not a "roman à clef" or a "film à clef." Characters and events are deliberately left in suspense. For example, Hempf is a minister without a portfolio. To me, what was important was not to lose myself in historical details. My aim was to tell a story about real people, but on a heightened level of reality and seen from an emotional viewpoint!

How did you manage to recruit an Oscar winner for the film music?

It took quite a bit of time, but whoever knows me knows that I don't take no for an answer! I had written my final project at film college on "The Talented Mr. Ripley" and always had the feeling that I had only really come to understand the film through the music. I kept writing to Gabriel Yared until I was finally able to meet him personally and give him an idea of the contents of the film. He was immediately interested. Then I was the beneficiary of a stroke of luck, as one of his big projects, Wolfgang Petersen's "Troy," fell through and he suddenly had more time. Yared's work method involves writing some music for a film already during the script phase. We got together three times in London in order to develop these approaches together. For instance, he composed the "Sonata for a Good Man" that Dreyman plays, before the shooting. Sebastian Koch said that he truly understood how to interpret Dreyman only after playing this piece. Further proof that Gabriel's method makes sense.

What aesthetic concept did you follow with respect to the sets and color schemes?

We had a very definite idea of the colors to be used. We tried to reinforce the tendencies that predominated in the GDR through reduction. Since there was more green than blue in the GDR, we

completely omitted blue. There was also more orange than red, so we eliminated red. We consistently used certain shadings of brown, beige, orange, green and gray, and thus obtained an authentic aesthetic depiction of the GDR of those years. Emptiness is an aesthetically neutral condition. Because of the low budget, we were not able to construct many sets. Thus whenever we were unable to produce authentic beauty, we relied on reduction to keep the visual quality on a high level. We did not want an overload of "GDR props."

For me, the set design has to deliver the perfect background for the emotions of the actors - no more, but also no less. I don't want the viewer to start thinking about individual props or about spots on the wall or other conceptional matters, instead of emotionally connecting with the characters. Fortunately, my team agreed with me completely here. As in just about every matter. Silke had already prophesied at the beginning of our preparations that we would all be thinking and feeling together as one whole by the latest when the shooting began. It sounded strange to me when she said it; but that's exactly what happened.



Das Leben der Anderen - Production Notes

Director and scriptwriter Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck spent nearly four years conducting intensive research and writing his screenplay before he began to shoot THE LIVES OF OTHERS in Berlin on 26 October 2004. The shooting was completed 37 days later, on 17 December 2004.

In addition to reading a great deal of specialized literature, the author also spent countless hours in conversation with eyewitnesses, former Stasi employees and their victims. Henckel von Donnersmarck was advised and supported on historical matters by a number of distinguished specialists, including Prof. Manfred Wilke, head of the Research Committee on the SED Regime; Jörg Drieselmann, head of the Research Agency and Memorial in the Normannenstrasse; former Stasi colonel Wolfgang Schmidt; Bert Neumann, the chief stage designer of the Berliner Volksbühne. The film team also numbered several people who had been personally involved with the GDR regime and whose experiences contributed to making the film as authentic as possible. The film's property master, for example, was once held in a detention center in the GDR.

Original locations are of decisive importance for a historical topic. Among the venues chosen for the filming were the former Stasi headquarters in the Normannenstrasse - a feared address during the years of the SED regime. Today there is a memorial there. This is where the scenes with Ulrich Tukur as Lieutenant Colonel Anton Grubitz were shot. His office was directly next to that of Stasi boss Mielke. The patina of the GDR had even been preserved. With their typical wood paneling, these offices have a unique "charm" and can be clearly assigned to a particular time and particular style - a situation that is both exciting and oppressive.

In order to ensure the greatest authenticity, the producers wanted to shoot on original locations as much as possible. Yet even though the film relates events that took place only fifteen years ago, much has changed since then. "Ultimately, there is not much difference, as far as costs are concerned, whether you're shooting Berlin in 1930 or Berlin in 1984," says producer Max Wiedemann. In order to recreate the backdrop of the GDR, a great deal of effort went into the sets and decors. Particularly arduous was the painting over of graffiti, which is nowadays found everywhere. No sooner had the "works of art" been painted over than they reappeared the following morning!

The production was also the first and is, to this day, the only feature film that was allowed to shoot in the original file-card archives of the former Stasi headquarters in the Normannenstrasse with the express authorization of Marianne Birthler, the "Head of the Federal Authority for Documents of the State Security Service of the Former GDR." Scenes bearing a unique eyewitness character arose amidst this gigantic mechanical filing system. The archive was restructured and digitalized after the shooting was completed. The data are preserved, but the location of the files and documents no longer exists in the form shown in the film.

The technical credits also testify to the production's high standards of quality: the producers had already admired cinematographer Hagen Bogdanski's ("No Place to Go") work through their collaboration on "The Templar." Gabriele Binder ("Doubting Thomas") was entrusted with the costumes, and Patricia Rommel ("Nowhere in Africa," "Beyond Silence") with the editing.

Music from an Oscar winner

It took quite some work and a good amount of luck, however, to win over an Oscar and Golden Globe winner to write the film score. It is unusual for a German film to go new ways for the music and to choose an international orientation: "We were convinced that the film justified this choice and that it could carry such a score."

Gabriel Yared ("The Talented Mr. Ripley"), a native French speaker, was given a translation of the script at a very early phase, and the project was presented to him in many conversations in Paris and London. The scale of the project was most untypical for this internationally acclaimed composer, who is often involved in films budgeted in the hundreds of millions. Yet Yared admired the filmmakers' commitment and agreed to do the project on the basis of the script, which convinced him.

The music was recorded in Prague with the Prague Symphony Orchestra - one of the best film-music

orchestras in the world.

With a composer living and working in London and Paris, a director and team located in Berlin and the film lab in Munich, it was necessary to master many logistical challenges. The post-production - the film is 137 minutes long - took about a year. It was shot in 35 mm Cinemascope with an ARRI camera and Kodak film material.

The possibility of shooting with a less expensive digital camera instead of on film was never seriously taken into consideration. Berg: "There are only few scripts that do justice to the demands of the cinema. You thus have to make the most of this particular quality. This subject demands the cinematic experience and aesthetic; anything else would be a waste."



Cel in voormalige Stasi-gevangenis Hohenschönhausen

Das Leben der Anderen - De DDR (1949-1989)

The rule of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED - Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) was based on a world view stamped by Marxism-Leninism and molded by class warfare. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) had expectations from "its people," which it laid down in the form of programs, plans, directives and clear restrictions, and which it manifested in, for example, political criminal law.

The conceptual eradication of even specific human individuality allowed the Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, MfS), or Stasi, to categorize the "others," whom it interrogated, spied on and battled, and thus to transform them into objects of its hatred.

To be arrested was already proof that one was dealing with an enemy or with a hostile, negative "element." The MfS understood its party program as an active and threatening involvement in the lives of others, in order to change them radically when they no longer corresponded to the party's expectations.

The central detention center of the MfS was in Berlin Hohenschönhausen; young interrogators were trained at the MfS College in Potsdam-Eiche.

The term "operative procedure" (Operativer Vorgang, OV) was used by the MfS to designate the highest level of conspiratorial monitoring of suspected individuals. The preventive character of the OV was stressed in the administrative language of the State Security of 1976.

One "offense against the system" that was punishable by two years of imprisonment was, for example, the "illegal border crossing" (§213 GDR penal code). Even the planning and attempt to "flee the republic" were punishable. The fortification of the inner-German borders and the Berlin Wall gave rise to escape agents from the West. The GDR made their activities punishable as well, and whoever contributed to taking someone "abroad" through active escape aid was menaced with a sentence of up to eight years.

In the GDR, a nation under surveillance, there were about 13,000 of the 91,000 employees of the MfS regulating an army of about 170,000 Unofficial Employees (Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter, IM) in order to realize the SED's delusional project of the total surveillance of an entire society.

The abbreviation "Stasi" designates the SED dictatorship's secret apparatus of repression.



Manfred Wilke

Text excerpt from: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck: Das Leben der anderen. Filmbuch. Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main 2006. suhrkamp taschenbuch 3786. 224 pages.

Professor Manfred Wilke is the head of the Lankwitz Division of the Research Committee SED Regime at the Freie Universität Berlin. Wilke was a historical adviser for THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

Das Leben der Anderen - Prijzen

2006: **Bavarian Film Award** voor beste regie, screenplay en mannelijke acteur Ulrich Mühe

2006: **German Film Award** voor beste regie, beste cinematografie, beste mannelijke hoofdrol voor Ulrich Mühe, beste mannelijke bijrol voor Ulrich Tukur, beste productie design en beste buitenlandse speelfilm.

2006: **Locarno International Film Festival**, publieksprijs.

2006: **New Faces Award Germany**, regie.

2006: **Vancouver International Film Festival**, ,meest populaire film.

2006: **European Film Award**, beste film, beste scenario, beste acteur (Sebastian Koch)

2007 : **Academy Award (Oscar)**, Best Foreign Language

2007 : **Donatello Award**, Best European Union Film

