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## **German Cinema Film Festival Returns to Indonesia**

By Jaime Adams



The festival opens this Friday with the movie 'Labyrinth of Lies.' (Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures Germany)

Now in its fourth year, the German Cinema film festival returns to Indonesian movie screens this Friday. The festival will feature a selection of internationally acclaimed and award-winning films from Germany and will be held simultaneously across seven cities: Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Makassar, Surabaya, Denpasar and Medan.

While last year's festival attracted more than 12,000 visitors, and renowned actresses Nina Hoss and Fritzi Haberlandt as well as director Noel Dernesch graced the event with their presence and turned it into a truly glamorous experience, this year's absence of German movie stars doesn't mean the festival has become a less exciting affair, as the program looks promising indeed.

A cross-section of the German film landscape, the festival offers something for every taste, from drama and comedy to feature film and documentaries.

One of the highlights of German Cinema is undoubtedly the opening film, "Labyrinth of Lies," a drama directed by Giulio Ricciarelli that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last September and is Germany's official entry for the Foreign Language Oscar next year.

"Labyrinth of Lies" is set in Frankfurt in 1958 and follows the story of young prosecutor, Johann Radmann (Alexander Fehlig), who, against the will of his superior, begins to investigate a massive conspiracy to cover up the Nazi past of prominent public figures.

"Contrary to the Nuremberg trials, the Auschwitz trials are unknown to most people today," producer Jakob Claussen said in a statement. "In a way, we see our film as a means to prevent forgetting; it is not couched in the style of a neat, well-mannered, illustrated history lesson, however, but as the exciting and entertaining quest of a hero. Back then, it had taken more than five years from the first preliminary proceedings to the opening of the main proceedings of the first Auschwitz trial. The origins of this film also took about this long."

Director Ricciarelli said he thought the story was incredible – a tale of personal courage, of fighting for what is right and taking a stand.

"I was particularly unable to believe that many Germans in the late 1950s had never heard about Auschwitz," he said. "As a young person, I had always been under the impression that the Nazi period had been amply studied and treated in Germany after 1945 through history lessons, a variety of films and visits to concentration camp memorials.

"But the truth is, after the end of WWII, just about nothing was treated comprehensively for several years; instead, there was an attempt to silence the dark past," he added. "This was a chapter one simply did not talk about. Not about the perpetrators, nor about the victims. Of course there were people who knew about Auschwitz, but the majority of the Germans did not. This topic would have continued to be suppressed if four courageous people – a prosecutor general and three young public prosecutors – had not overcome all obstacles to push through their vision of the Frankfurt Trial. Four heroes who changed Germany forever."

Another highlight of the festival is "The Salt of the Earth" by Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribeiro Salgado, a thought-provoking documentary that highlights the work of Brazilian photographer Sebastiao Salgado.

On a lighter note, the German box-office hit "Fack Ju Goethe" ("F\*\*k You Goethe"), in which a criminal is forced to become a substitute teacher, is also part of the festival's program this year. The comedy is the latest collaboration between Turkish-German director Bora Dagtekin and actor Elyas M'Barek, who collaborated for the wildly popular TV show "Turkish for Beginners."

"There are many more exciting movies waiting which address big topics such as family, love, religion, children, solitude or history and memory," the German Cinema website states. "All of them are more than worthwhile to watch."

This year, the festival is part of German Season, an series of events organized by Goethe-Institut Indonesien, the German Embassy Jakarta and EKONID, which celebrates the friendship between the two countries and runs until early December.