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# MAX MINSKY AND ME

Germany, 2007, 94, 1:2.35

Director  
**Anna Justice**

Screenplay  
**Holly-Jane Rahlens**

Producer  
**Maria Köpf**

A production of  
**X Filme Creative Pool**

a co-production with  
**Seven Pictures**

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## SHORT DESCRIPTION

For a 13 year old, Nelly (ZOE MOORE) has little time for superficial girl talk. Her only friends are her books because she wants to be an astronomer when she grows up. Her love of the stars is her connection to her heartthrob, the sweet 16 year-old prince of Luxembourg, Edouard. When her school's girls basketball team gets invited to compete in Luxembourg, under the patronage of the Prince, her direction is clear - she has to get on the team! However Nelly is a total zero when it comes to sports and needs all the help she can get. Thank God for the kid next door, Max Minsky (EMIL REINKE), who is ready to make a deal: he will teach her basketball if she does his homework for him. Max may be a genius with a ball, but when it comes to school he is a total loser. But as Nelly practices daily on the court, she is letting her Hebrew studies slip and, much to the dismay of her mother, Lucy (ADRIANA ALTARAS), this could spell big trouble for her upcoming Bat Mitzvah. Nelly is desperately trying to juggle her family, school and sports but in the end she has to decide for herself what's truly important...

## PRESS INFORMATION

In her triumphant cinema debut, MAX MINSKY UND ICH (MAX MINSKY AND ME), director Anna Justice, presents a special kind of coming of age story: at the center is Nelly, the enterprising 13 year old heroine who is trying to navigate the chaos of her daily life in German Jewish Berlin, and then there's Max, the adolescent basketball ace, who suddenly finds himself cast in a major role in Nelly's life. And in the midst of their seemingly neverending struggle with irritating mothers, absent fathers, authoritarian teachers and, of course, basketball, they learn a few big lessons about first love and the meaning of true friendship.

The script for MAX MINSKY UND ICH (MAX MINSKY AND ME) was written by Holly-Jane Rahlens from her 2003 bestseller, and winner of the Deutsche Jugendliteraturpreis (German Award for Young Adult Literature), "Prinz William, Maximilian Minsky und ich" (Prince William, Maximilian Minsky And Me). Zoe Moore, known for her role in PIGS WILL FLY, plays the starring role with a casual, yet endearing, charm, alongside her co-star, Emil Reinke (sitcom "Türkisch für Anfänger" - Turkish for Beginners).

The film was shot in summer of 2006 and produced by Maria Köpf (RUN LOLA RUN) of X Filme Creative Pool. The phenomenal young cast is supported by a group of first class actors featuring Adriana Altaras and Jan Josef Liefers as Nelly's parents, Monica Bleibtreu, Rosemarie Fendel and Hildegard Alex as Nelly's eccentric Jewish friends, as well as Susanna Simon as Max's mother.

## SYNOPSIS

Nelly (ZOE MOORE) lives with her parents in Berlin, but in fact, this highly intelligent 13 year-old, who dreams of becoming an astronomer and discovering the secrets of the universe, inhabits a world of her own.

Her mother, Lucy (ADRIANA ALTARAS), a New York Jew, is looking forward to her daughter's upcoming Bat Mitzvah with nervous anticipation. Her father, Benny (JAN JOSEF LIEFERS), is a talented, though only marginally successful, musician earning his living playing with a band. But Nelly's life of reading and study is about to take a whole new turn. One day in her dreaded gym class, the teacher shows a video of last year's European student basketball championship in Luxembourg, under the patronage of the 16 year-old Prince Edouard - who happens to be Nelly's big heart throb. And this year, her school team has been invited to compete. Nelly knows at once what she has to do: she has to get to Luxembourg and meet her idol - himself a big astronomy fan! The only problem is that our little bookworm has got to learn to play, and she better do it fast so she can get on the team.

A solution for the problem offers itself in the person of the 15 year-old Max (EMIL REINKE). He's having a hard time with his single mom, Melissa Minsky (SUSANNA SIMON), who's just moved from Munich to Berlin and opened a bar called "Minsky's". Benny's band is playing at the opening party and Max has been drafted to help serve. Nelly overhears an argument between Max and his mother and cooks up a plan: she convinces Melissa that she can help Max, who, because of bad grades and a worse attendance record, is about to be kicked out of school, by tutoring him so he can get by. She designs an elaborate deal: instead of tutoring Max, she'll take the money Melissa would pay her for the lessons and give it to him to teach her basketball. Max, you see, is a great player... He, of course, has no interest in lessons and suggests instead that she just do his math and English homework for him. Suddenly Max's grades start to improve, and his mother is thrilled - meanwhile Nelly is fighting doggedly through a brutal training regimen.

But the more effort she puts into basketball, the less attention she gives her Hebrew lessons. Nelly skips class or comes in late and when she is caught reading a romance novel, her angry Rabbi throws her out of class. So much for her Bat Mitzvah - but Nelly doesn't care. As a future scientist she doesn't actually believe in God, and who needs a big family celebration anyway? However for Lucy, this is the end of the world. She is becoming more and more estranged from her daughter and when Benny drifts into a relationship with Melissa, their already long troubled marriage starts to crumble, making Lucy withdraw more and more into herself.

Nelly finds at least some understanding from her great aunt Risa (MONICA BLEIBTREU) and her friends, who live in an old folks home in Berlin. The cheerful old women bring Nelly closer to the central questions of Judaism. She begins to understand why it's important to have a sense of community and that it doesn't have to be governed by strict matters of faith.

While Max's mother reproaches him for lack of commitment, Max himself is beginning to admire Nelly's single mindedness and persistence. Her movements are becoming smoother and more agile, and with her growing awareness of her body, Nelly starts to feel more like a girl and pay more attention to her appearance. Both of them come to understand each other better, and notice that they have a lot to say to one another. Max shows Nelly his secret hiding place and follows, with pride, the successful training of his pupil.

Then someone blows the whistle on them in school and they get busted for the homework deal. Just as the try-outs for the basketball team are set to begin, they are called up in front of the principal. Max takes all the blame and insists that Nelly takes part in the games. He's taught her a few tricks and Nelly has now become so good that the team wants to take her. But then there's Nelly's arch enemy, Yvonne König - a blond, super athletic wonder girl! - who has her eye on Max, and an evil eye at that. She reveals Nelly's passion for the Prince. Max can't believe this is what he's been training her for - is this embarrassing, or what?

But it only gets worse: after this new reprimand from the school, his mother wants to pack him off to Munich to live with his father. But the father has no time for him and wants to send him to boarding school. That's enough reason for Max to disappear... Nelly goes out looking for him and misses her train to Luxembourg. She finds him in his secret hideout and it becomes clear to the both of them how much they mean to each other.

Nelly's mother takes her by car to the games in Luxembourg, but they arrive too late for the reception with the Prince. Nelly doesn't mind - her crush doesn't matter anymore.

In the end a joyous Bat Mitzvah takes place. By now, her parents are no longer together, but Nelly has found something for herself - instead of her prince, she has a true friend and her first love.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

About eight years ago, our reader and dramatic advisor at X Filme, Nicole Kellerhals, showed me a treatment of a novel Holly-Jane Rahlens, an American living in Berlin, called "Prinz William, Maximilian Minsky und ich" (Prince William, Maximilian Minsky And Me) was writing at the time. The material was sharp and full of humor, just like the other books and scripts of Holly's that I had read (e.g. "Becky Bernstein Goes Berlin"). In addition, I still had fond memories of her one woman show from the 80s based on Dorothy Parker. Holly understood - and in fact still does - the light touch of her American-Jewish humor and with it she is able to breathe life into her characters and create something wonderfully unique and ironic. This time she had constructed a story of a Jewish Cinderella in contemporary Berlin, who is determined to find her Prince Charming, even if it means mastering a sport to do so, and in the end finds a true friend.

To translate such a vivacious novel into an equally lively script took somewhat longer than expected. The real Prince William was getting older and becoming no longer so "useful" as an adolescent heartthrob. We went through a lot of heavy discussion and always found ourselves returning to the center of the story - the main character of Nelly. She takes on a big challenge in order to get close to her idol and, in doing so, learns the most important lesson of all - the value of true friendship. We made up our own prince and transposed him to Luxembourg, a place close enough to visit but small enough that few people know if it has a prince or not.

Out of this process came a wonderful script that differed in many ways from the original plot (in the book, Nelly never made the team, but that wouldn't work at all for a film!), but successfully concentrated on the core of Nelly's story.

I remembered Anna Justice from her first film, "Tut mir leid wegen gestern" and it was the ingenuousness of that early work that made me think of her for this project. Her TV work ("Der Sommer mit Boiler", 2000; "Ich liebe das Leben", 2002; "Noch einmal lieben", 2005) had this special style that I found - and still find today - absolutely unique. Anna was immediately excited by the project, she both resonated with its tone and loved the humor. She also connected with the Jewish setting of the family through her own background. The way in which she made the material her own, convinced me completely.

We were in complete agreement that we had to begin casting as soon as possible. Finding the right girl - and one who could also play basketball - was no easy task. Simone Bär showed us a number of girls but the combination of an ingenuous, yet self-confident, manner with the ability to show emotions was a tall order. Zoe Moore was a stroke of luck. She had everything we were looking for. Our "Max" had to be cool, but at the same time be able to display, over the course of the story, a sense of vulnerability. And he had to already be pretty good at basketball, because there wouldn't be enough time to train him from the ground up. Emil Reinke was our favorite from the start. The audition with Zoe completely sold us and from then on, Emil was sent to "Alba Berlin" to perfect his skills with the youth team.

We were preparing ourselves for some problems casting of the Jewish-American mother, "Lucy" but we were finally able to get away from the idea of trying to find an American actress and decided on the wonderful Adriana Altaras, who endeared herself to everyone with her heart and humor. With the help of a dialogue coach, she practiced an American accent, which was the source of a good deal of laughter during the filming, and in the movie her over-the-top performance gave her character a marvelously eccentric quality.

Jan Josef Liefers allowed Anna Justice to convince him to accept a cameo role. He had already worked with her in two TV projects and held her in high regard. We were also pleased that the wonderful Monica Bleibtreu liked the script and could be engaged for the role of "Risa". We were equally happy that Rosemarie Fendel said yes to the role of "Frau Goldfarb".

The film was shot on location in Berlin in summer of 2006 with a budget of 2.6 million Euros. The 37 days of shooting - a tight schedule for a children's film - took place in the hottest of weather, particularly the basketball sequences, and special care had to be taken for the actors' comfort. Many of the scenes had to be filmed with doubles because the actors under 16 years were not allowed on set for more than five hours per day. This required a masterpiece of organization for the whole production. Oftentimes Zoe could not be present to perform opposite her scene partners, something that most actors need to deliver a good take.

After the shooting followed seven months of post-production, during which we showed the film to various school classes, constantly making sure that our various decisions were going in the right direction. The fun that these young audiences had seeing the film, and the intensity with which they discussed it with me, were it's own reward and one we hope to see often repeated when the film opens publicly.

(Maria Köpf, Producer)

## INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ANNA JUSTICE

*How were the characters portrayed in relation to the original novel?*

The characters remain fundamentally the same as they were in the novel. I never felt the need to change much. My motivation was that those things I especially liked in the book, should be able to work as a film. What was admittedly very hard about the material was that it had a lot of characters - I liked them all and I didn't want to lose any of them. One character actually did fall out in the first cut. The film was running much too long and while we really needed to cut it down, losing this character really hurt.

*What was it about the book that first excited you to want to make the film?*

I really liked the humor and the simplicity of the novel and I absolutely wanted to carry this over into the film. Also when I was a girl, I had some serious conflicts with my mother - not about the same things, but I still saw a part of myself in the story. Otherwise, though there's not a direct parallel, I do share some of the background. My father's mother came from a Jewish family, which wasn't really religious, but the issue was still very present.

*What kind of a girl is Nelly?*

For me she's a hero, and I find it fascinating to watch someone who follows her path unwaveringly to her goal. Nelly is very intelligent but also horribly stubborn and also very headstrong. Naturally she suffers for it. She has no friends except for three 80 year-old women. When Nelly spends more and more time with Max, and gradually comes to realize that behind his rough facade Max has other sides to him, she herself begins to change, too. It happens because she recognizes it and accepts Max for what he is.

*How was it working with such young actors?*

Logistically it wasn't so easy. Zoe could only be on set five hours per day, though Emil could work longer because he's 16. We had to spend a lot of money on stand-ins and doubles. That's hard for the actors and in emotional scenes it just doesn't work - you need a real actor to play off of. Interestingly enough, the stand-ins also had to be 13, a 16 year-old just seemed too grown up. Only someone who is really 13 has the right air, the right feeling about them..

You have to talk to young people differently than you do with adults, because they approach the role differently. If you always remember what makes actors afraid, then you can better help them feel secure that they're not going to look ridiculous if something doesn't work, or if they don't know their lines or you had to re-write dialogue. You have to help them come out of their shell, and to not be afraid of embarrassing themselves. You have to give them courage to get into their role, to improvise and trust their intuition.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE NOVEL AND THE SCREENPLAY

From Charles to William to Edouard

by Holly-Jane Rahlens

One day when I was twelve years old — it was just before I discovered boys — I remember chancing upon a book in my school library entitled *The House of Windsor*. I had no idea what the House of Windsor was. I knew the House of Horrors in Coney Island, the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., and the House of Pancakes on the Long Island Expressway. But the House of Windsor drew a blank. I opened the book ...

... and discovered Charles Philip Arthur George Mountbatten Windsor, a dashing young royal in an elegant, three-piece herringbone suit. Okay, he was no heartthrob. He had Buddha's ears, a nose all the way from New York to Missouri, and an altogether crooked and goofy-looking face. But, hey, he was a real live prince. And he even spoke English! I was smitten.

I remember wondering what it would be like to marry a prince, a real prince, and if Charles would have to abdicate the throne to marry me, an American, and if he did, would he come and live with me in Queens, New York, or would we settle into a ranch-style house on Long Island? Or could I dare to hope to live in Buckingham Palace? I even decorated our home in my imagination. There would be 14-karat-gold fixtures in the bathroom, we would have a silk chiffon canopy over our bed, a pool in the backyard, and a tennis court behind the extensive gardens.

As the story goes, I never married the British crown prince. I ended up in Berlin with an Eberhard in a nice enough apartment with stainless steel fixtures in the bathroom.

Summer 1997: When Princess Diana was killed in the Parisian car accident and I saw how the media immediately targeted into Prince William — he was fifteen at the time and adorable — well, when I saw how the media had found a new star in William (Harry was still too young for that), when I saw how grown women melted away when they saw William, how teenage girls in England, the US, Canada, and even in Germany, were wild about this handsome young prince who had just lost his mother, when I saw all that, I remembered my own Prince Charles story and my writer's mind started spinning out a new story.

I set my novel in Berlin, the city I knew best aside from my hometown, New York; and I decided to put it into a German-American milieu as it, too, is what I know best. I made my protagonist's mother a Jewish-American as myself, and though I'm not much of a practicing Jew, I know a bunch of American women in Berlin who are. They became for me Nelly's mother, Lucy Bloom-Edelmeister.

As my story and the characters started coming to life, it struck me that there were few books about Jewish children in today's Germany. I thought my novel might help bridge that gap. I decided to make Nelly thirteen years old because thirteen is an important year for Jewish children, the year they have their bar and bat mitzvahs, the coming-of-age ceremony that makes them adults in the eyes of the Jewish community. Using Nelly's bat mitzvah as a vehicle, Jewish culture could be conveyed in a simple and realistic fashion to a young audience that knew little about it.

So now I had two themes: Nelly's infatuation with a prince, and Nelly grappling with her Jewish roots. The flip side to infatuation is "true love" or "true friendship," so I needed a love interest. Enter Max Minsky. As in

most romantic comedies, I needed to make Nelly and Max very different from one another. So Nelly became this super-intelligent nerd who's interested in the stars, and Max an intellectually-challenged beast interested in nothing — or at least that is what it seems at first. In the novel Max plays at being a goth. In the movie this was not used, but as a contrast to Nelly's fascination with the galaxy, Max is fascinated by Berlin's world under the ground.

As in all "fairy tales" you need a "fairy godmother," so I created Risa Ginsberg, a wise and reverent Polish Jew who survived the holocaust, and her wacky friends, Frau Goldfarb and Frau Levy. I added Nelly's philandering, musician father, Benny Edelmeister, and Max's divorced mother, Melissa Minsky, a woman at the end of her rope. Nelly also needed an antagonist, so Yvonne, fifteen, was created. I shook it all together and came up with the novel *Prince William, Maximilian Minsky, and Me*.

Later, we shook the novel up even more for the screenplay, moved the action up from 1997 to 2007, got rid of Prince William who at 25 was no longer the adorable star he was at fifteen, created a fictitious prince of Luxembourg, and Risa Ginsberg, originally a 75-year-old friend of the family, became a somewhat younger great aunt. Astoundingly enough, with all the changes from the novel to the screen, and, believe me, there have been so very many, the characters themselves still hold up, more or less true to themselves. Even more surprising, what I wrote in the spring of 2000 in my outline for the novel, still works for the movie:

"*Prince William, Maximilian Minsky, and Me* is the story of Nelly's coming-of-age, her search for an identity: how she learns to respect her roots, appreciate her mother, accept the weaknesses of her father, make friends, and open up to the world around her — a world full of paradoxes. It's a world in which the smartest girl in the class can actually sometimes be the dumbest. An enfant terrible can turn out to be a Prince Charming. It's a world in which we can put our faith in the laws of science, yet still embrace our religious roots. It's a world in which a city like Berlin with a dark past can become a haven of light."

## THE CAST

Nelly Sue Edelmeister  
Max Minsky  
Lucy Bloom Edelmeister  
Benny Edelmeister  
Risa Ginsberg  
Frau Goldfarb  
Frau Lewi  
Melissa Minsky

Zoe Moore  
Emil Reinke  
Adriana Altaras  
Jan Josef Liefers  
Monica Bleibtreu  
Rosemarie Fendel  
Hildegard Alex  
Susanna Simon

## THE CREW

Director  
Screenplay/Original novel  
Producer  
Director of Photography  
Editor  
Set Designer  
Costume Designer  
Make up  
Sound Design  
Line Producer  
Production Manager  
Casting

Anna Justice  
Holly-Jane Rahlens  
Maria Köpf  
Ngo the Chau  
Uta Schmidt  
Andreas Olshausen  
Beate Scheel  
Kerstin Gaecklein  
Arno Wilms  
Ulli Neumann  
Tom Sternitzke  
Simone Bär

## WHO'S WHO ON SCREEN

### ZOE MOORE

*as Nelly Sue Edelmeister*

Zoe was born into a family of filmmakers in April, 1993. She is the daughter of Elke Weber-Moore and Eoin Moore. Zoe has performed in a number of her parents' film projects including: BREAK EVEN (PLUS-MINUS NULL) (1997/98), STORNO (2001), PIGS WILL FLY (2002), PLÄNTERWALD (2005) and IM SCHWITZKASTEN (2005). Among others, she can also be seen in Max Färberböck's SEPTEMBER (2003) and Ulrike von Ribbeck's CHARLOTTE (2004). She has also appeared on stage in several theater productions. Zoe's native language is English and she loves horseback riding, reading, and dancing.

### EMIL REINKE

*as Max Minsky*

Emil Reinke was born in Berlin/Prenzlauer Berg in 1990. After having appeared in a short film and in a music video, he played the leading role in the award-winning 2005 ARD television series "Türkisch für Anfänger" (Turkish for Beginners). Emil loves sports and is a very good basketball player. The role of Max Minsky marks his cinema debut.

### ADRIANA ALTARAS

*as Lucy Bloom Edelmeister*

Adriana Altaras was born in Zagreb and grew up in Italy and Germany. She studied Drama at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin and at New York University. She was one of the founders of the Theater zum Westlichen Stadthirschen in Berlin and was involved there for a number of years as an actress, author, and director. She has also enjoyed acting engagements at the Maxim Gorki Theater and the Freie Volksbühne in Berlin, at the Theater Basel in Switzerland, and at venues in Constance and Stuttgart. She also wrote and performed her first solo piece "Jonteff" in numerous German cities and in Austria, Hungary, and Brazil. She has directed plays, operas, musicals and operettas, often staging her own versions and working in cooperation with disabled actors, children and senior citizens.

Her actor's filmography includes numerous cinema and tv productions such as Rainer Kaufmann's COLD IS THE EVENING BREEZE (1999), Claudia Prietzel's DER PUPPENGRÄBER, Dirk Kummer's GESCHLECHT WEIBLICH, Dani Levy's GO FOR ZUCKER, Dror Zahavi's SCHLIEMANN UND SOPHIA as well as several films by Rudolf Thome, such as THREE WOMEN IN LOVE (1989), and most recently RAUCHZEICHEN (2006). Adriana Altaras has been the recipient of a number of acting awards: in 1988 she won the German Federal Film Award (forerunner of the Lola Film Award); in 1993 the Theater Award of the State of Northern Rhine-Westphalia; and as a member ensemble of the film PARADISO (1999, director: Rudolf Thome) she received the Silver Bear at the 2000 Berlinale. This year Adriana Altaras also graced cinema screens in the films MEIN FÜHRER – THE TRULY TRUEST TRUTH ABOUT ADOLF HITLER and DER VOLLIDIOT.

## **JAN JOSEF LIEFERS**

*as Benny Edelmeister*

Jan Josef Liefers was born in Dresden in 1964. His father was a director and his mother an actress. He graduated from the Ernst Busch Hochschule für Schauspielkunst (Acting Academy) in East Berlin and went on to perform in theater engagements in Berlin und Hamburg. He made his cinema debut portraying the naturalist explorer Alexander von Humboldt in the historic adventure drama *DIE BESTEIGUNG DES CHIMBORAZO* (1989). Following that, he appeared in *DER FALL Ö.* (1990). After the Berlin Wall crumbled, he performed alongside Til Schweiger in his breakthrough role in *KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR* (1996). Immediately thereafter he appeared in Helmut Dietl's media satire *ROSSINI – ODER DIE MÖRDERISCHE FRAGE, WER MIT WEM SCHLIEF* (1996). That performance won him the 1997 Bavarian Film Award for Best New Actor. Other film roles include *CHARLIE & LOUISE – DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN* (1993), *NIGHT TIME* (1998), *KAI RABE VS. THE VATICAN KILLERS* (1998) as well as *666 – IN BED WITH THE DEVIL* (2001). Liefers has also won recognition for his television work - first in his role in the series "Die Partner", and, since 2002 in the "Tatort" - crime scene series in which he graces the screen with his unmistakable flair as the forensic medical doctor Prof. Dr. Karl-Friedrich Börne from Munster. Other memorable roles include the TV movies "Halt mich fest!" (1999), "Das Wunder von Lengede" (2004), "Die Nachrichten" (2005) and "Die Sturmflut" (2005). Most recently, Liefers has appeared in "Der Untergang der Pamir" (2006), „Nachtschicht: Der Ausbruch" (2006) and the G8 summit inspired bittersweet romantic comedy „Frühstück mit einer Unbekannten" (2007).

He made his debut as a director in the TV romantic comedy "Jack's Baby", a film in which he also acted the lead role opposite Veronica Ferres and for which he won the 2000 Bavarian Television award. Other awards include the Baden-Baden special prize for "Halt mich fest!" and the Adolf Grimme Award for "Das Wunder von Lengede" (2004). He also earned a nomination for the "Tatort" – crime scene episode "Der dunkle Fleck" (2003). Liefers and his partner, actress Anna Loos („Halt' mich fest!"), became proud parents of a daughter in October 2002.

## **MONICA BLEIBTREU**

*as Risa Ginsberg*

Actress Monica Bleibtreu was born into a family of artists in Vienna in 1944. She studied at the Max-Reinhardt-Seminar (Institute for Music and Performing Arts) and has been a steady presence on the theater stage ever since. She was part of the legendary "Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer" ensemble in Berlin and has performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna, the Kammerspiele in Munich, the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, and at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. Her first role in front of the camera was in the television movie "Change" in 1969, followed by a role in Peer Raben's *ADELE SPITZEDER* in 1972. That same year she was awarded the Golden Camera for her achievements as an actress. Less visible in the 1980's she nonetheless appeared in Michael Haneke's *VARIATION* (1983) and later, in 1997, in his Kafka adaption *THE CASTLE* and in Helke Sander's *LOVE IS THE BEGINNING OF ALL TERROR* (1984). From 1993 to 1998, Monica Bleibtreu was a Professor for the Performing Arts at the Hochschule in Hamburg.

She initiated her acting comeback in 1998, taking on a small film role as the mother to her real life son Moritz (from a relationship to actor Hans Brenner) in Tom Tykwer's box office hit *RUN LOLA RUN*. Her powerful stage presence has made Bleibtreu a sought after performer of strong-minded characters. She has also been a convincing presence on television: as the dominant matriarch in Heinrich Breloer's biopic miniseries about patriarch Thomas Mann and his literary family, "Die Manns – Ein Jahrhundertroman", which received the Adolf Grimme Award in Gold in 2002; as the treacherous and disgruntled farmer in "Verlorenes Land" and as Brecht's beloved, Helene Weigel, in "The Farewell". Her moving performance in Rainer Kaufmann's "Maria's Last Journey" (2005) won her the Bavarian and the German Television Awards.

On the big screen, Monica Bleibtreu played Walpurgja in the very successful children's film BIBI BLOCKSBERG (2002). She can also be seen in the upcoming cinema release by Nicolette Krebitz' THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST (2007). A highlight of Monica Bleibtreu's career was receiving the German Film Prize for best leading actress in Chris Kraus's drama FOUR MINUTES (2006), for which she also was awarded the Bavarian Film Prize.

## **ROSEMARIE FENDEL**

*as Frau Goldfarb*

This renowned theater and TV actress and director was born in Metternich (near Koblenz, Germany) in 1927. After the war, she took private acting lessons and debuted in 1964 at the Munich Kammerspiele Theater. It is above all her unforgettable voice that distinguishes Rosemarie Fendel; a voice that has made her a coveted dubbing artist for stars such as Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren and Jacqueline Bisset. She was one of the pioneers of New German Cinema in the 1960's and 1970's. Her long time partner Johannes Schaaf directed the film trio: TATTOO (1967), TROTTA (1971) and DREAM CITY (1973). She performed in MOMO (1985), ÖDIPUSSI (1987), SAMS IN GEFAHR (2003) and in the role of Frau Lenz in Helmut Dietl's SCHTONK! (1991). Her extensive television work from the past three decades includes roles in Dominik Graf's "Reise nach Weimar" (1996) as well as a role in the two part movie "Ich schenk dir meinen Mann" (1998). She has appeared in the TV series "Der Kommissar", "Polizeiruf 110", "Rosa Roth", "Das Traumschiff", "Liebe, Lüge, Leidenschaften" and "Familie Sonnenfeld". She also has performed with her daughter Suzanne von Borsody in front of the camera in (among others) "Mensch Mutter" (2004) and most recently in "Das zweite Leben" (2007). Along with her film work, Rosemarie Fendel has performed on stage, at times in her own productions, in Munich and Berlin, Frankfurt and Vienna. She won the German Federal Film Award in Gold (Lola forerunner) for TROTTA in 1972, and was also awarded the Golden Camera, the Grimme Award, and the German Federal Cross of Merit (the Bundesverdienstkreuz). Rosemarie Fendel celebrated her 80th birthday on 25 April of this year.

## **HILDEGARD ALEX**

*as Frau Lewi*

An actress in theater, film and television, Hildegard Alex was born in 1942 in the former German (now Czech Republic) region Teplitz-Schönau. Upon completion of her studies at the Ernst Busch Hochschule für Schauspielkunst (Acting Academy) she began her career performing at the Volksbühne in Berlin, the Burgtheater in Vienna, and at the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. She has over 100 film roles to her credit as well as numerous radio plays. She became familiar to a broad audience through her work in television including the series: "Polizeiruf 110" and "Die Anstalt – Zurück ins Leben" as well as in the TV movie "Der Staatsanwalt hat das Wort". Hildegard Alex also acted in the 12 part biopic series "Klemperer – Ein Leben in Deutschland" and in "SOKO Leipzig". Her most recent role was in "Hilfe, meine Tochter heiratet".

## **SUSANNA SIMON**

*as Melissa Minsky*

Susanna Simon was born in 1968 in Kazakhstan and is the older sister of the actress Maria Simon. She received her drama education at the Ernst Busch Hochschule für Schauspielkunst (Acting Academy) in Berlin. Along with Russian and English, she has perfectly mastered the Berlin and Saxon dialects. Susanna Simon has performed on various theater stages including the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, the Schiller Theater, the Deutsches Theater, as well as the Münchener Kammerspiele. Since 1990, she has performed in a large number of television roles including: Margarethe von Trotta's "Jahrestage" and "Winterkind"; "The Publisher"; "Zur Zeit zu zweit"; the two part film "The Lost Daughter" with Richard Chamberlain; "Lautlose Jagd" by Vivian Naefe; Achim von Borrie's "Der Elefant"; Zoltan Spirandelli's "Geküsst wird vor Gericht" and "Albert – mein unsichtbarer Freund". She also appeared in a number of murder mysteries including Matti Geschonneck's "Polizeiruf 110 – Lauf oder stirb", Sigi Rothmund's "Kommissar Brunetti" and Karola Hattop's "Polizeiruf 110 – Heimkehr in den Tod".

Susanna Simon has graced the big screen in such films as: LENZ (1991), which she also co-produced, MESMER (1993) by Roger Spottiswood, Hal Hartley's FLIRT (1994), LIEBE, LEBEN, TOD (1995) by Matthias Allary and WASCHEN, SCHNEIDEN, LEGEN (1999) by Adolf Winkelmann.

## WHO'S WHO BEHIND THE CAMERA

### ANNA JUSTICE

*Director*

Anna Justice was born in Münster/Germany. While training to be a translator she travelled throughout the USA, spending five years there. It was in the movie capital Los Angeles that she decided to enter the film business. She studied directing at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (dfffb) where she shot her first shorts („Lupino Brothers“, „Meryems Arbeit“ and „Tanz in Pankow“). She also attended screenplay seminars at the University of Southern California with Frank Daniel and at the dffb with Don Bohlinger. Anna Justice's television movies include „Der Sommer mit Boiler“, „Noch einmal lieben“, „Ich liebe das Leben“ and „Tut mir Leid wegen gestern“ for which she won a Golden Lion Directors' Endowment Award. Her film „Ich liebe das Leben“ was nominated for the Adolf Grimme Award in 2006. Anna Justice lives with her husband and two children near Berlin.

### HOLLY-JANE RAHLENS

*Screenplay/Original novel*

Raised in New York, Holly-Jane Rahlens studied Literature and Theater at the City University of New York. During the 80s and 90s she worked in Berlin, writing for radio and television (Prix Europa for her radio play „Daily Soap“), as well as writing a regular column and acting as an presenter at the Berlin International Film Festival. She has acted in her own one woman shows and appeared in various television and feature films under the direction of such helmers as Ken Loach, Kevin Spacey, Wim Wenders and Carl Schenkel. She also starred in the television adaptation (for the then Berlin TV channel SFB) of her own stage monologue „One Fine Day“ (GRIPS-Theater).

Her novels „Becky Bernstein Goes Berlin“ (1996) and „Mazel Tov in Las Vegas“ (1998) introduced the „trained Berliner from Brooklyn“ (FAZ daily newspaper) to the mainstream German audience. 2002 saw the release of her youth bestseller „Prince William, Maximillian Minsky and I“. The highly acclaimed novel (winner of the German Young Adult Literature Award and the award of the German Audio Critics for the audiobook read by the author herself) has been translated into seven languages. In 2005 her second youth novel „How to Really Kiss“ was published. She is currently working on the screenplay. Holly-Jane Rahlens has already written dialogue for films by directors such as Wim Wenders, Maria Schrader, Veit Helmer, Eric Till, Mark Schlichter, and Hannu Salonen.

### MARIA KÖPF

*Producer*

und dessen Kinoerstling LIEGEN LERNEN (2003) nach dem Roman von Frank Goosen sowie das 2002 für einen Deutschen Filmpreis nominierte Ost-West Jugenddrama WIE FEUER UND FLAMME (2001) von Connie Walther. Maria Köpf studied American Literature, Film and Theater Studies in Berlin and New York. She has been producing and distributing films since the late 1980s. From 1995 to May 2006 she has worked continuously for X Filme Creative Pool, from 2000 to 2006 as co-managing director. She has collaborated with Tom Tykwer since 1997, first as line producer (WINTERSLEEPERS, 1997 and RUN LOLA RUN, 1998), then as his producer on THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR (2000), HEAVEN (2002) and TRUE (2002), Tykwer's short film contribution to the portmanteau film PARIS, JE T'AIME (2007).

Maria Köpf also produced Hendrik Handloegten's widely acclaimed debut „Paul is Dead“ (1999) as well as his first feature film LEARNING TO LIE (2003), based on Frank Goosen's novel, and Connie Walther's East-West teenager drama NEVER MIND THE WALL (2001) which was nominated for a German Film Award in 2002.

Others followed: Ayse Polat's Silver Leopard (Locarno Film Festival) winning debut EN GARDE (2004) and UNDEREXPOSURE (2005) by Oday Rasheed (the first German-Iraqi coproduction) as well as ICH DICH AUCH (2005), an essay film about love by Christiane Voss and Katja Dringenberg. A FRIEND OF MINE (2006; starring Daniel Brühl and Jürgen Vogel, directed by Sebastian Schipper) she produced together with Tom Tykwer. In May 2006 she founded her own production company, „day-for-night“ Maria Köpf Filmproduktion. She is currently developing projects such as the new films by Hans Steinbichler and Hendrik Handloegten.

## **NGO THE CHAU**

*Director of Photography*

Born in Hanoi/Vietnam in 1977, Ngo the Chau graduated from high school in Berlin and worked as a lighting technician and gaffer. From 1999 to 2003 he studied cinematography at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (dffb). He directed several student shorts and worked as a cameraman on features, shorts and documentaries as well as commercials, music videos, such as for Herbert Grönemeyer. Ngo the Chau has received several awards, including a nomination for the German Cinematography Award in 2004 in the category feature for DETROIT (directed by Ludwig & Glaser), the Michael Ballhaus Endowment Award in 2003 and the „Golden tadpole 2002 camerimage“ for HING BONG – SHADOW (directed by Robin von Hardenberg). The German Television Award went to Ngo the Chau for Best Cinematography on „Folge der Feder“ (directed by Nuray Sahin) and the 600<sup>th</sup> episode of the „Tatort“ - crime scene episode, „Scheherazade“ (directed by Claudia Prietzel and Peter Henning), for which he also won the German Cinematography Award. His most recent work includes Franziska Meletzky's FREI NACH PLAN, SCHATTENKINDER by Claudia Prietzel and Peter Henning as well as „Tatort - Strahlende Zukunft“ directed by Mark Schlichter.

## **UTA SCHMIDT**

*Editor*

Born in Marburg/Germany in 1965, Uta Schmidt began her film training as an intern at the Geyer processing laboratory in Munich. Between 1987 and 1994 she worked as an assistant editor for numerous German and international productions, such as HOMO FABER (1991) and JUSTICE (1993) by H.-W. Geissendörfer. Schmidt worked as an editor on Michael Hofmann's TROUVILLE BEACH (1999), Anne Hoegh Krohn's UNKNOWN FRIEND (2001), JARGO (2004) and ALMOST HEAVEN (2005) by Ed Herzog. Most recently, she edited Chris Kraus' Bavarian Film Award winner FOUR MINUTES (2007) and Ed Herzog's TV movie „Schwesterherz“ (2006). Other television work includes „Geld macht sexy“ (2003), „Noch einmal lieben“ (2005) and for director Anna Justice „Ich liebe das Leben“ (2004). X

## FILME CREATIVE POOL

www.x-filme.de

In July 1994 the three directors Wolfgang Becker, Dani Levy and Tom Tykwer as well as producer Stefan Arndt founded X Filme. The joint production company's mission is to develop new and better possibilities for creating, producing and distributing both sophisticated and popular films. Manuela Stehr joined the company as producer and co-managing director in 2000. X Verleih distribution was founded in 2000 as the logical extension of X Filme's philosophy – directors, producers and distributors cooperating closely to develop, produce and release films, with both companies under one roof since early 2006.

	TITLE	DIRECTOR
2007	MEIN FÜHRER – THE TRULY TRUEST TRUTH ABOUT ADOLF HITLER GOODBYE BAFANA PRINCE EDOUARD, MAX MINSKY AND I THE THREE ROBBERS LOVELIVE MEINE SCHÖNE BESCHERUNG THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST DSCHINGIS FUNNY GAMES MÄRZMELODIE	Dani Levy  Bille August Anna Justice Hayo Freitag Maria Schrader Vanessa Jopp Nicolette Krebitz Sergej Bodrow Michael Haneke Martin Walz
2006	DIGGING FOR BELLADONNA A FRIEND OF MINE IMAGINE ME & YOU THE RED COCKATOO SUMMER IN BERLIN	Franka Potente Sebastian Schipper Ol Parker Dominik Graf Andreas Dresen
2005	UNDEREXPOSURE KÜSS MICH, HEXE! (TV) GO FOR ZUCKER!	Oday Rasheed Diethard Küster Dani Levy
2004	EN GARDE AGNES AND HIS BROTHERS SOUNDLESS TRUE LOVE IN THOUGHTS	Ayse Polat Oskar Roehler Mennan Yapo Tom Tykwer Achim von Borries
2003	4 FREUNDE & 4 PFOTEN LEARNING TO LIE GOOD BYE, LENIN!	Gabriele Heberling Hendrik Handloegten Wolfgang Becker

2002	HEAVEN HERZ I'M THE FATHER	Tom Tykwer Horst Sczerba Dani Levy
2001	NEVER MIND THE WALL HEIDI M.	Connie Walther Michael Klier
2000	THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR PAUL IS DEAD	Tom Tykwer Hendrik Handloegten
1999	GIGANTIC	Sebastian Schipper
1998	RUN LOLA RUN THE GIRAFFE	Tom Tykwer Dani Levy, Maria Schrader
1997	WINTERSLEEPERS LIFE IS ALL YOU GET	Tom Tykwer Wolfgang Becker

**1996**

**SILENT NIGHT Dani LevyX VERLEIH**

[www.x-verleih.de](http://www.x-verleih.de)

In February 2000 X Filme Creative Pool GmbH founded the film distribution company X Verleih AG with its seat in Berlin as the logical extension of the X philosophy: directors, authors, producers and distributors work together aesthetically and business-wise within a common infrastructure – from the first idea to the theatrical release. Instead of accepting the proverbial and counterproductive tension and antagonism between production and distribution, X understands itself as a friendly-critical group united by a love quality cinema and good films. X Verleih exclusively distributes all X Filme Creative Pool productions theatrically. Furthermore, X Verleih is heavily involved in the acquisition, theatrical release and marketing of ancillary rights, occasionally even as a coproducer, of selected other films. The company aims to build a distribution catalogue that covers the full spectrum of sophisticated and popular cinema. The company heads are Martin Kochendörfer, Manuela Stehr and Stefan Arndt

	TITLE	DIRECTOR
2007	MEIN FÜHRER – THE TRULY TRUEST TRUTH ABOUT ADOLF HITLER	Dani Levy
	LATE BLOOMERS	Bettina Oberli
	GOODBYE BAFANA	Bille August
	SHOPPEN	Ralf Westhoff
	IRINA PALM	Sam Garbarski
	AM ENDE KOMMEN TOURISTEN	Robert Thalheim
	PRINCE EDOUARD, MAX MINSKY AND I	Anna Justice
	LEROY	Armin Völckers
	THE THREE ROBBERS	Hayo Freitag
	ULZHAN	Volker Schlöndorff
	LOVELIVE	Maria Schrader
	MEINE SCHÖNE BESCHERUNG	Vanessa Jopp

	THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST MONDKALB DSCHINGIS FUNNY GAMES MÄRZMELODIE	Nicolette Krebitz Sylke Enders Sergei Bodrov Michael Haneke Martin Walz
2006	DIGGING FOR BELLADONNA WINTERREISE A FRIEND OF MINE IMAGINE ME & YOU REQUIEM THE RED COCKATOO SUMMER IN BERLIN 2005	Franka Potente Hans Steinbichler Sebastian Schipper Ol Parker Hans-Christian Schmid Dominik Graf Andreas Dresen THE GREAT SILENCE Philip
Gröning	MAD HOT BALLROOM UNDEREXPOSURE THE CAVE OF THE YELLOW DOG CREEP SOPHIE SCHOLL GO FOR ZUCKER!	Marilyn Agrelo Oday Rasheed Byambasuren Davaa Christopher Smith Marc Rothemund Dani Levy
2004	EN GARDE AGNES AND HIS BROTHERS SUMMER STORM FARLAND QUIET AS A MOUSE SOUNDLESS LOVE IN THOUGHTS	Ayse Polat Oskar Roehler Marco Kreuzpaintner Michael Klier Marcus Mittermeier Mennan Yapo Achim von Borries
2003	4 FREUNDE & 4 PFOTEN LEARNING TO LIE SEPTEMBER ANGST GOOD BYE, LENIN!	Gabriele Heberling Hendrik Handloegten Max Färberböck Oskar Roehler Wolfgang Becker
2002	JEANS SOLINO LIES – LUST UND LÜGEN I'M THE FATHER HERZ HEAVEN THE WHITE SOUND	Nicolette Krebitz Fatih Akin Jang Sun-Woo Dani Levy Horst Sczerba Tom Tykwer Hans Weingartner
2001	AMORES PERROS LE SECRET SUZHOU RIVER WAS GEHT – DIE FANTASTISCHEN VIER	Alejandro González Inárritu Virginie Wagon Lou Ye Dieter Zimmermann

VENGO  
NEVER MIND THE WALL  
BLACK BOX BRD  
HEIDI M.

Tony Gatlif  
Connie Walther  
Andres Veiel  
Michael Klier

**Winner of German Young Adult Literature Award 2003!**

**Holly-Jane Rahlens**

**«Prinz William, Maximilian Minsky und ich» („Prince William, Maximilian Minsky and Me“)  
Von der Liebe zu den Stars, den Sternen und den Irdischen (On the Love of Stars in both  
Heaven and on Earth)**

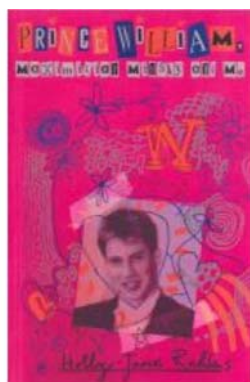
The companion book of the film will be published as **«Der Prinz, Max Minsky und ich»** („The Prince, Max Minsky and Me“) to coincide with the movie release in September 2007!

**The Story**

**Nelly Sue Edelmeister is a brilliant student and a passionate astronomer – a „nerd“ through and through, a brain with zero appeal, as she admits with considerable frustration. The stars are not exactly shining on her life right now – her mother's non-stop nagging, her parents' constant bickering and her upcoming Bat-Mitzvah, the ceremonious rite of passage for young adults into Jewish life, are really stressing her out.**

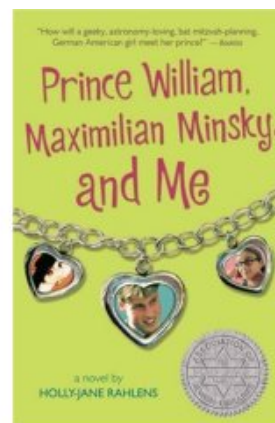
But all the stress just fades away when Nelly falls in love – for the first time and head over heels – with none other than Prince William of England. Her chosen is perfect in every way. How unfortunate that Nelly and her dream prince have not met in person. But when her school's basketball team is invited to compete in a match at Eton, Nelly sees her golden opportunity. As she has never shot a basket in her life, she asks the mysterious Maximilian Minsky for some hoop training. But if Nelly is a „nerd“, does that make Max a „monster“? Or not...

**Holly-Jane Rahlens**, „the trained Berliner from New York“, gained acclaim with her novels *«Becky Bernstein Goes Berlin»* and *«Mazel Tov in Las Vegas»*. **«Prinz William, Maximilian Minsky und ich»** („Prince William, Maximilian Minsky and Me“) is a love story that shines with slapstick and sparkling wit. In her German-Jewis-American comedy, suitable for readers from 12 years and above, the author deals with controversial subject matter with refreshing candor and frankness.



Holly-Jane Rahlens  
***Prince William, Maximilian  
Minsky and Me***  
Book to the film

Walker Books, London  
ISBN-10: 1406305472  
ISBN-13: 978-1406305470



Holly-Jane Rahlens  
***Prince William, Maximilian  
Minsky and Me***  
Book to the film

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