



Exclusive interview with Carl G. Hardt by Robin Valtot:



Present at the meeting on 9 July 2016 in Berlin (from left to right):
Morgan Bourven (FR), Bernhard Freutel (GER), Robin Valtot (FR),
Andree K. Krause (GER), Nastassja Herrmann (GER), Carl G. Hardt (GER),
Antonin Dománek (CZE), Linda Niemi (FIN)

When and how did you meet Rammstein? How did you come up with the idea of making a documentary on this band from East Germany?

Every story has a back story. So does the film
“LOOK OUT! WE’RE COMING TO GET YOU.”

And it starts with: Once upon a time...

In the summer of 1987 an East German documentary was being filmed. It dealt with: “Young People and Music.” I was the producer of this movie. My team was using large equipment – a crane, rails, a sound trolley and an array of 35 mm cameras – to shoot the “Bathtub Boat Regatta” during a folk festival at Lake Schwerin. Anything purported to float was bustling happy-as-can-be, with absurd gear, on the water. Several thousand people were bathing in high sprits. On the brink of this thoroughly splashy event, a shabby garage band called “Feeling B” was playing. All you could hear was colossal sound on overdrive – a deafening noise – at least that’s how I perceived it, at the time. I was ticked off by this, because I couldn’t communicate on the walkie-talkies with my film crew of almost 40 people. It began to get chaotic. Drenched in sweat, I panted back and forth across the huge area to try to somehow coordinate the shooting.

The highlight of the funfair, a concert with famous East Berlin rock bands, was scheduled for late afternoon. Since the musicians still weren’t there, but the stage was already good to go with the all the instruments in place, we definitely wanted to do a sound



check to avoid further chaos. All of a sudden, as if heaven-sent, a local teenager stood before me, and asked shyly: "Excuse me, could I try out a song with my band?" "Up on stage with you, of course you can!" I answered, sincerely grateful. A few minutes later a musical hurricane broke loose. An absolutely hard sound, a tremendous force rocked the stage! In the meantime we tested and recorded everything to our satisfaction.

Of course, after the song I had to report to the police, who had their commando tent hidden behind a small wooded area. There I was told that I had let a band called "PVC" perform that the "Socialist Law Enforcement Organs" had explicitly prohibited. Due to this, the entire event was now banned. After me, the "person in charge of the Bathtub Regatta" was called in by the police and ordered to make sure the premises were vacated immediately. This did indeed happen. Angrily and with their heads down, the audience trudged home. A half an hour later, the formerly cheerful site was almost devoid of people, and the police had disappeared. While we dismantled our equipment and grumbled about the "Socialist Law Enforcement Organs", the "Feeling B" musicians had set up a campfire nearby. Soon, we heard silly laughter coming from these totally weird creatures. Bratwurst and other meat was already sizzling. There were several crates of beer. Wine bottles were passed around. And so began a new, fun party at the lake in Schwerin. It lasted till the early hours of the morning—without further disturbance from any Organs of State Enforcement.

I got to know Aljoscha that evening. He was the lead singer of "Feeling B". A week later, he invited himself to my house and explained, in a way that was both insistent and persuasive, that his band absolutely had to be in the movie. Due in great part to the presence of "Feeling B" on ORWO COLOR (35 mm) the film "whisper & SHOUT," (DEFA 1988) became a national, as well as an international, success, showered with prizes. Aljoscha and I became friends.

And then the Berlin Wall came down. If you wanted to make movies conscientiously and with a purpose, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of a world order you would have to be both stupid and ignorant not to keep on filming musicians like the "Feeling B" ones, that is – Aljoscha, Paul and Flake. That's what I said to myself, back then. It would certainly be exciting for moviegoers to experience how musicians from "whisper & SHOUT" came to terms with the next, radically different political system, how their musical careers developed from there. The idea that "Feeling B" would become internationally successful was beyond our wildest imagination in 1989. But to give you a quick answer, Mr. Valtot: No, there was no so-called "idea" to make that film. We just kept on shooting!



*Please tell us about your first day of filming Rammstein!
I'm extremely interested in that, and so are the fans.*

Can we stick to first names, Robin, it'll make it easier to talk about this.

Sure, Carl!

It might be fun to tell you the story of why, at one of the first concerts of the band in Rostock, a good-looking young woman hopped around on stage and sang along. By the way, you can now see her in the film. Looking like a "Hausfrau," it's as if someone pushed her on stage directly from some cafeteria.

But back to the very first day of filming: It was on the 4th of August 1994. I had talked over everything with Paul and Flake. Both boasted: "There's this old cottage, this cool property out in the open, on the outskirts of town, it has a built-in studio. That's where we're gonna make our first tape!" I envisioned something along the lines of "Abbey Road Studios" and was thrilled to finally bring some color to the movie; so far we had always been shooting in and outside occupied houses, back courtyards or cellars. I thought Paul and Flake were also geniuses when it came to organization, and was really looking forward to filming their new band.

Arriving at the appointed location, my cameraman and I found a small cabin in a wildly overgrown garden. The crumbling fence was actually superfluous. We were under the impression that the former owner – "the cottage" was too small for a family – had, head over heels, abandoned the ruins a long time ago. The only hint that there was something not quite right with Paul and Flake's "feudal estate" was the loud music bursting through every crack of the house.

As we set foot, with great reservations, on the not so attractive property, a full-grown, furiously barking dog came racing around the corner, headed straight for us. Terrified, I shoved my cameraman in front of me. But I was actually the one the dog jumped all over. Alerted by the angry barking, the musicians appeared and called back the high-strung animal. Six good-looking men stood before us, bare-chested, suntanned, their bare feet sunk deep into the knee-high grass.

Helplessly and still a little dazed by the dog's stormy greeting, my cameraman and I stood there in front of the musicians – with our camera and a huge ripe melon in our hands. I had absolutely no idea how I was supposed to deal with this wacky and totally unattractive location.

Meanwhile, the dog was having a great time licking my leg, growling in the process, and sniffing my entire body. With no idea how to film at this location, and with my calves fully slobbered, I grew uneasy and just as edgy as the dog. While we shared the melon in the garden, I constantly kept a wary eye out for the excitable



dog, who was barking and running in and out of the house. You never know: better safe than sorry. The sun was scorching, there was no breeze. A garden hose was on full blast, the musicians sprayed each other with it.

My relationship to dogs is primarily wrought with anxiety. I haven't the least desire to spend time petting a four-legged creature. And then it happened! The dog calmed down, the upper half of his body was in the house, the back half outside. I was stunned to see the animal wagging his hairy tail rhythmically against the open door. It was the idea I had been waiting for, the dog's gift to me! I immediately asked who could handle the dog best, and Paul raised his hand and said: "Me!"

So Paul held the German Shepherd's head, and kept him steady, while we filmed his tail beating. People watching the movie today are amused to see the dog knock politely at the musicians' door, wagging his tail, curious to peek into the cabin. Then the camera shifts to the "dog-eyed view" and in place of the German Shepherd, my cameraman runs through the house. During the dog's "tour of the place" the musicians are introduced individually from the animal's perspective. I still consider this a successful approach to the band in our film.

Afterwards, we all drove our "clunkers" to a nearby lake, and plunged our bodies, in our birthday suits, into the lukewarm water, screaming and eager to cool off, elated over our first successful day of shooting.

My thanks goes to the kind dog, who was actually a bitch named "Lady" for being smart enough to think for me, bewildered as I was, and on behalf of the film!

Nice story. Could you now tell me about the conflict you had with the former manager of Rammstein? Ultimately, the release of the film was, in fact, held back by almost 20 years.

Well, it's always a question of a person's basic attitude, how they deal with the problems life deals them, isn't it? To me these, often, seem to be imaginary problems. Of course, the former manager's attacks affected the completion of the film, with all its numerous cut versions, featuring the band, and then not featuring it, and then finally including it again in the film. But overall, I have to say that the actual final version is in complete accord with my vision and that of my colleagues. In a way, this can also be credited to the former manager. One of the many reasons for preventing the film was the harmless stipulation by the ex-manager to insert the year of each shot. I couldn't allow that, however, because it would have disturbed the narration. The greatest challenge for me was bringing together all the footage of past decades, including the extensive archive material, to form one structure, so that the story unravels harmoniously for the viewer. That is: without a sense of abrupt chronological leaps. In the end, we produced a timeless film that documents the story of musicians, and allows

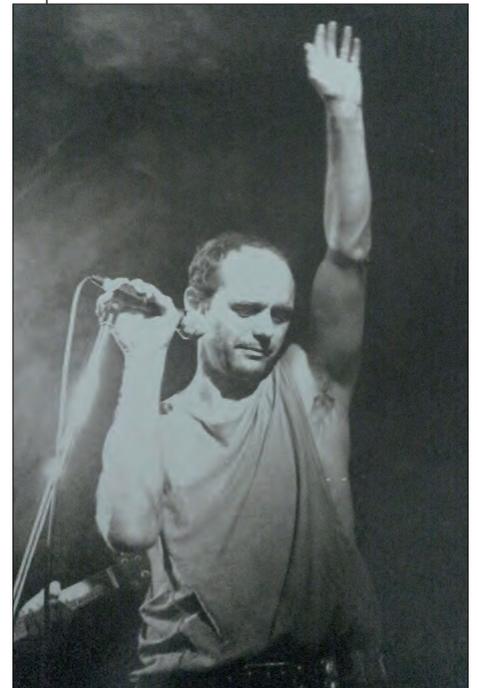


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contemporary movie-goers to catch a glimpse and experience moments in time. The next aspect: The ex-manager can also be credited, and rightly so, to greatly contributing to the band's continual rise in worldwide popularity. And it was clear to me, already from their first bout of success, that the film "to-be-completed-at-some-point" would thus stand a better chance of gathering an audience without first having to find it, at a huge financial cost. And the first audience will be you, the fans, Robin!

Taking a more complex look: Ingeniously, the former manager, not only managed the band, but in a way also our film. But no one in the world will ever tell me how to make my movie, be he a successful band manager, or a state appointed highly commissioned censor, or even an alien forced to make an emergency landing on earth! I've known enough regimentation from time spent in the "Socialist Fatherland, the German Democratic Republic" into which I was born. You can say, I've even developed a chronic allergy to it. It makes me break out in hives and feel like throwing up. Wherever we went, my friend Aljoscha preached these wise words: "There are no problems, just solutions!" In this sense, I also believe, that the time the movie was held back should not necessarily be considered a fundamental problem. Especially because we made use of this time to diligently craft an optimally edited version – so that the film now, confident and teeming with energy, can be set loose on its audience. Something for you to look forward to!



Are you still in touch with the Rammstein musicians? If so, what do they think of your documentary film?

On 11 September 2015, the film "LOOK OUT! WE'RE COMING" in its present last-edited version had its first and, so far, last German screening in the UFO-Studios of the Berlin "Musikbrauerei" (Music Brewery) in Prenzlauer Berg. In the first row of the full house, sat Flake with his grown-up daughter. I was incredibly pleased, particularly because Flake, has continually been engaged, in a conciliatory way on behalf of the movie and me. The two of us always kept in loose touch, mostly by mail or mobile phone, but if we thought it was necessary we also met up in person. If you work with people, in front of or behind the camera, there is no pressure or responsibility to hold hands for the rest of your life. I think it would be terrible to still have to stay personally in touch today with all the film protagonists I met along the way. Since the filming, I haven't had any regular contact with the other musicians. You see each other, from across the room, at events, and nod a greeting, or you walk together, in a long procession across the cemetery, to bid a last farewell to one of your mutual companions. That's how life goes on in most parts of the world.



*Did you personally attend the Rostock concert in your film?
If so, can you tell us some stories about the shooting?*

Of course I was present on the 27th of August 1994, as producer and director, at the M.A.U. Club concert in Rostock. My cameramen and I had already watched the concert in Potsdam, on the previous day, so we could plan the shooting in Rostock. Since I only had three cameras at my disposal, we had to meticulously discuss and organize every detail beforehand.

Well, and now I'll reveal an inside story: Shortly before the concert began, I arranged with Till and Paul to ONLY completely record five songs. The decision as to which five was theirs. All the other songs would only be filmed, so that we could have enough footage for the five songs. That meant my cameramen were only passively filming the cross sections; they just had to record bold body movements and not deliver any footage that had to be synchronized later, i.e. guitar strumming, Till's singing or Schneider's drumming arias. I also wanted footage of the uneasy and astonished concert audience. The five songs were: »DU RIECHST SO GUT« (YOU SMELL SO GOOD), »WEIßES FLEISCH« (WHITE MEAT), »SCHWARZES GLAS« (BLACK GLASS), »RAMMSTEIN« and the first version of »WOLLT IHR DAS BETT IN FLAMMEN SEHN« (DO YOU WANT TO SEE THE BED IN FLAMES).

Today, we can say: What a pity that the concert was not filmed in its entirety. But at that time, the film project didn't have a single source of financing. For, the country we originated from had gone down, and a new country had not yet emerged. Later, I was reproached for having started the project already, because in the new Germany there were no subsidies, in retrospect, for projects of this nature.

All the shooting had to be arranged so that, when the film was shown later, I wouldn't have to apologize for a lack of quality due to insufficient funds. And when you see the film today and experience the high quality of the footage, you might even think we were rolling in money. This was certainly not the case! All my other projects had to hold out and be sold for a profit, for over two decades, in order to continue the work on LOOK OUT! WE'RE COMING! But then, doesn't lack of money always call for ingenuity and improvisation? And at that we East Germans were world experts, because, from childhood on, we faced the limitations of the "Socialist Economy of Scarcity" and learned to deal with this, successfully, no matter what.

A little anecdote about that. If, while shooting, we had our heart set on a luxurious, extravagant camera tracking along rails, for which we had no money, we improvised and politely asked a person passing in a wheelchair to step out of the vehicle and sit on a bench for a while. In return we treated them to some ice-cream. Meanwhile my cameraman sat in the wheelchair while I pushed him at a slow and steady pace, treading like a "Golem". Even today, I can still see the shy faces of pedestrians, casting curious,



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but mostly compassionate, gazes at our brilliant improvisations. We, however, were overjoyed and satisfied. For the owner of the wheelchair this was a highlight and we had our camera tracking.

The image composition and sound quality are really impressive. But how did you manage to shoot all these stories about Rammstein?

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, content-wise the basic idea of the film, for me, was as rock-solid as the “Pillars of Hercules.” A film should never be started without an idea. But in order to draw a clear line for this project, after recognizing the direction the journey would take, I came up with a screenplay in 1993/94, after consulting the musicians and working it out with them. Then we slaved away at it diligently. At the same time, we were open to real stories; they often work better in film, than the made-up ones set down in the screenplay.

I was always interested in world history, and looking back you discover that countless cultures, giant empires and dynasties simply disappeared, barely leaving any traces. For, there were no cameras and films at that time to tell us about them today. Among them, I count the collapse of the political system in Eastern Europe, because with the political collapse of the Eastern system, the Western system also became superfluous. That means, a system of order spanning the globe imploded in 1989, and I found it highly exciting to pursue this phenomena with a microphone and camera, wherever the journey went with regard to the development of society. What kind of system will replace the old system? Today, people call it “globalization” or “turbo capitalism.” The fact is, however, that currently in our world, everywhere we look, we see people’s existential loss of security – increasingly accompanied by crises and wars.

Understandably enough, at first, the audience will take in the film as a music documentary. It would make me very happy if it were also seen, a little bit, as a philosophy of life, something which brings into more critical focus the political developments that surround us and influence our own lives – whether we like it to or not.

As to the quality of the cinematic work throughout the entire project, I’d like to add that all the cameramen who worked on the main footage, without exception, were graduates of the steeped-in-tradition Babelsberg Film University. When it comes to learning the craft of filmmaking, I consider this institution the best Germany has to offer. I was able to recruit some of the cameramen when they were in their last year of studies, the others were my cameramen from the former DEFA-Studio for Documentary Films in Berlin, who already worked with me on the shooting of “whisper & SHOUT”. They are all enthusiasts and perfectionists, who cherish and master their profession. With them I have also explored other exciting subjects in other parts of the world.

RAMMSTEIN

Im Spätherbst des Jahres 1991 erreicht ein unscheinbarer Frachter den Hamburger Hafen. Von Bord geht ein Mann der in Südafrika als Maschinenbauingenieur tätig war. Dem Kopf voller Ideen nimmt er den nächsten Zug nach Berlin und beginnt mit der Verwirklichung seines Plans. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt ahnt noch niemand etwas. Der Vater dieses Mannes ist Howard Calloway.

Im Dezember 1993 trennen sich fünf Männer von ihren Frauen, schneiden sich die Haare, beginnen Sport zu treiben und verlassen aus unerfindlichen Gründen ihre jeweiligen Berufe.

In Folge dieser Ereignisse gründen sie RAMMSTEIN und erfinden im Januar des nächsten Jahres das TANZMETALL.

- lockende deutsche Lyrik
- krachende Gitarren
- bombastische Chöre
- hartes Sampling
- typische MCDs

BILDET RAMMSTEINE !

GRÜNDET FANCLUBS !

SEID GLÜCKLICH !

Disographie

Till Lindemann	(sings)	'91 First Single "Süßer Saft"	LP
Richard Z. Kraker	(git.)	'91 die Firma "die Kinder des Maschinenbaus"	CD
Oliver Held	(git.)	'91 The Industriekultur "Was ist das?"	CD/MC/EP 8FA
Paul H. Landau	(git.)	und	
Flake	(bass)	'91 Feeling B "Blue Blue"	CD/MC/EP 8PV
		'91 Feeling B "Wir können auch alle"	CD/MC/EP 8PV
		'91 Feeling B "Das Musik des neuen Tunes"	CD/MC/EP 8PV
Schäfer	(dr.)	'91 Querschnitt "The Last One Here"	CD/MC/EP

Geboren aus den schönsten Männern von Feeling B, The Industriekultur, Organ David Grannis und der Firma versetzt RAMMSTEIN ein exzellentes Ensemble begabter Solokünstler zur Auferstehung einer Generation, die sich demotiert nach ihnen betrennen wird. RAMMSTEIN ist die neue Maßstab deutscher Kultur für abhölbare verknatter Musikstile.

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Making a movie means teamwork, so I deliberately use the terms US or ME, or else, MY or OUR. It's a great privilege to know these "passionate maniacs" and make films with them.

Did you film other Rammstein concerts? If so, will we be able to view them one day?

To put it briefly: The Rostock concert in 1994 was the only one that my film crew and I recorded.

In the trailers there are excerpts from the Rostock concert in 1994. Will the concert be shown in its full length in the film?

No, of course you won't see the whole concert. The concert was 90 minutes long and the entire film is 93 minutes. That would have left only 3 minutes for the rest of the story. As already mentioned, only five songs were recorded, the other songs exist as fragmented, but high quality, footage. I bet you want to know if it will be added as bonus material on a future DVD. The answer is: probably not. However, it would be possible to reconstruct the complete Rostock concert in an intelligent way. Because we recorded with 16 sound tracks. My three cameras filmed five whole songs, and for the other songs we have enough footage so conceivably the Rostock concert could be packed and completed with material from later concerts and footage well worth seeing. The songs are the same ones and all the songs were played at the same speed, regardless of when and where they were recorded, so they are always acoustically synchronized. If the musicians and shows should then change in outer appearance in each of the songs, since we're dealing with other concert cross sections, it would certainly go over well and just show the musical development. It would be a total blast, grabbing everyone's attention, if, for example, the song "YOU SMELL SO GOOD" from 1994 would be interspersed with shots and sounds from the Madison Square Garden concert. Or imagine an edited version of this same song from several different concerts—with the change always coming after the refrain or a verse. That's just a thought, an aside to our interview. But it's something only the band can make happen. I also think that only the six musicians have the authority to decide what to do with the extensive raw material from 1994. This does not only go for the Rostock concert, but also for the rest of the interviews, as well as other filmed stories, that (due to lack of time or reasons related to the content) were not worked into the film. Otherwise, it would've been a 20 hour movie.

How much time is devoted to Rammstein in the movie and what is the structure of the film?

I'll try to answer both questions at once. In one third of the film, the musicians of "Feeling B", that is, Aljoscha, Paul and Flake, ans-



wer questions. One of the things they talk about is why they broke up as a band and turned to new music projects. Of course, this includes a recording of their last concert together.

Another third of the movie tells of the birth of Rammstein. So, fans can closely follow their band in the initial months, in different settings: at rehearsals, in the studio, at live performances.

... In the remaining third, fellow musicians of “Feeling B” and “Rammstein” play with a ferocious sound and provide uninhibited and witty information about the music scene of Prenzlauer Berg– where all the musicians in the film have their roots. This balanced film structure offers the audience a very entertaining and amusing film. It’s definitely worth seeing. No one is going to fall asleep here!

Since you keep on asking about your band, which has many enthusiastic fans in addition to yourself, Robin, let me tell you: The final version of the film would still have been the same, even without Rammstein’s success! Only, and this I will happily concede, if the band hadn’t had a worldwide breakthrough, the film would stand less of a chance on the international circuit. It’d still be very worth seeing, but finding an audience would be much more difficult. Because, unfortunately, people mostly accept things they already know. If I had wanted to play it safe, in regard to the film’s success, I might have given your favorite band much more screen presence. But then it wouldn’t have become the film it is, the film I intended to make from the very first day of shooting: A film about our recent history.

Now, the fans of Rammstein and I believe that your work on the film has come to an end. Do you have a release date? Will it come out in 2016?

Well, the film needs to be heard at a really loud level – it should sound like a concert. And only in the cinema can you totally let it roar! Therefore, each different language version of the film will receive special treatment. We’ll begin to work on that this year, in 2016.

Since the Russian version is the first one we have ready, the movie will have its “world premiere” in a Moscow cinema. It’ll then continue to be shown only in that one cinema. That means it’ll have no competition to “itself” in other Moscow movie theaters.

Another quick question: Why is the world premiere taking place in Russia? Something like this should probably be done in New York or here in Paris.

There’s a logical explanation to this, too. During the shooting of »LOOK OUT! WE’RE COMING« we spent some time travelling with the musicians and their bands in Russia – as well as in France. And



particularly in Russia, we experienced the fall of the Soviet Union and watched, in astonishment and shame, the brutality of the social collapse accompanied by immeasurable social repercussions of unimaginable dimensions. I saw such hardship, I can't even speak of it, I get too choked up with anger and compassion.

In East Germany, of course, there were injustices as well, and a whole lot of criminal energy regarding the "redistribution of property," the ownership of land and real estate, as well as the "privatization" of the entire East German national economy. But in Russia I experienced all this as much harder and more grueling.

To cut a long story short: I believe that the Russian-speaking population will approach the film in a different way than, let's say, an Inuit from Greenland, a geisha from Nagasaki or an indigenous person from Brazil. Because the film is also an emotional component of their own lives – just like with us East Germans, who personally experienced this time of upheaval in a very conscious way.

I am convinced that »LOOK OUT! WE'RE COMING« will be good for the Russian soul – because the film itself has a Russian soul. Besides, people at concerts in Russia sing along to the texts of their favorite band. I think Moscow is the right place to start our film enterprise. Anyone interested can watch it on our website through Livestream – that's why we're always on location, with all our technical equipment, at the different language film premiers.

Who are your partners in the music industry, Carl? You need their infrastructure to launch this.

That's where you're wrong, Robin! Regarding its circulation, the film will have a distinct character: It won't be burnt down quickly and aggressively by the "machinery of film distribution." And I would never contact or cooperate with a commercial "music film multimedia group production company". I'm saying this very deliberately, out in the open – and you can verify it later. It's enough for us to make a little dough with the film, and we can earn our bread and butter with the Russian version and then aim for a larger slice of the market with the other language versions of the film.

The debut in Moscow, with other Russian cities also lined up, will be followed by premiers, first of all the Spanish, then the French and then the English version of the film. I haven't finalized my decision on the cities and countries where the film will be shown yet. But I guarantee you, the other locations should be quite a surprise. The cinema, and we as film makers, will allocate a significant part of the generated revenue of the film circulation to music instruments: guitars, trombones, violins, pianos, flutes and trumpets, etc. Those instruments will be given, free of charge, to the child/youth institutions of the host country, to promote learning an instrument and music-making.

Why did we decide to do this? We're doing it because we find it meaningful, because it makes us happy, especially living at a time when people literally worship money. As if money were the only

thing worth striving for in life. And since the movie is a declaration of love to music, that alone is reason enough to spread musical gifts around the world. As Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) said: "Without music life would be a mistake."

Just between you and me, though, Robin, who is really paying for these instruments? It's not us, but the viewers and fans of the film. This principle of distributing income that the film hopefully brings in, will spill over to other forms of cautious film distribution, i.e. streaming or downloading, DVDs or whatever else we come up with. The film project can be continued with the existing 2,000 hours of raw material. Or maybe something like a DIRECTOR'S CUT – I've already completed it in my mind.

After the movie, the film project that is, as we hope, has been embraced enthusiastically by its audience, we will set up a non-profit foundation especially for the film enterprise LOOK OUT! WE'RE COMING. The goal will be to purchase music instruments and donate them worldwide.

How did you come up with this idea of establishing a foundation? It's not something one normally does after launching a film project!

The underlying principle came from Aljoscha, the singer of "Feeling B." In 1988, he just casually tossed the idea into the room, after we had been kicking around the concept of what to do with the money, should we ever make any. And Aljoscha grinned and said, that the film was sure to be a success, and then we'd have a real financial burden on our hands. "What to do with all that dough?" I thought, aghast. Then I started to brood: Should I buy real estate or stocks, or hoard bars of gold? This surplus of money was going to mutate me, overnight, make me into a kind of species I despised with all my heart. Because those people have nothing in their shrunken heads but a yearning for money. The only thing they can think of is: "How can I make this stash of cash grow infinitely." "No, I'm not going to become one of those mutants." I decided back then, "that's for psychopaths, terrified of life – it's for people with massive inferiority complexes."

After quickly considering how he might help me solve my pending serious "money problem" Aljoscha came up with the fantastic idea of establishing a foundation. Full of conviction he told me: "You can use the flood of cash to keep musicians afloat who can't support themselves with their music, just because they don't want to go along with the musical crap – the shallow apolitical garbage for the masses, that disgusting polonaises music – and are denied access to the media because they refuse to fit in with the mainstream and want to play their own forward-thinking music!" And he added: "It'd be good to help musicians of retirement-age, who have slipped through the safety net of social benefits because the music industry ripped them off with shitty contracts, while they were still successful."

To finance a non-profit venture, I thought, was basically the right thing to do. But since I've consumed liters of beer, wine, vodka and other fun drinks with many musicians backstage, racing to wipe out the beverages, I was immediately struck by a funny notion: the film money Aljoscha anticipated could be used to bolster and sponsor an asylum for alcoholics. Because neither of Aljoscha's suggestions seemed to be of long-term merit.

At the time, I had just returned from Venezuela, having completed a movie. During the filming-making, under the sun and palm trees, I had met enthusiastic children and teenagers who were given free music instruments and learned to play them, at no cost, through a foundation called EL SISTEMA (The System). These kids mainly came from socially-vulnerable families. This was something I thought was practical, and, most of all, future-oriented. I associate learning to play an instrument and making music with mental growth and a greater capacity for getting along with other people. Which I believe to be extremely important. Because if a child has no career prospects or alternatives, and bloody professions like that of a butcher or soldier are the only options left, then it really is a pity. A butcher, with his knife and cleaver, of course, has a purposeful job, but playing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" with drums beating and trumpets sounding to keep one's fellow men marching on is something I, personally, think is much better!

Yes, and I had just met Wilfried Merle during filming in Venezuela. He was a German expat, who had the fascinating idea, in a relatively rich country with a frighteningly high level of illiteracy, to build, together with his son Thomas, schools and kindergartens. After they were constructed he also trained the personnel for these facilities. Then he sold the functioning institutions to the state at a profit. The money he earned he reinvested in new social projects such as eco-schools for children, or in eco-tourism for Venezuelans to visit wonderful beaches in the Caribbean. So, Wilfried's efforts served as proof that you could earn lots of money together with the people living in the region – and not only at their cost.

After his son Thomas' tragic death in a plane crash, Wilfried set up a foundation in his son's name and, to this day, he is active and successful in bringing about social improvements. That is something I thought, and still think, is admirable.

Well, and so the simple idea to donate music instruments and establish a charity gradually grew into its present form. Of course, only under the condition that Aljoscha's "prophecy" does indeed come true.

So you are, basically, going to hold on to the film and not leave it to the free market?

Should I throw my own offspring, in fright and despair, out the window, as if it were a leper or plague-ridden, having spent 25



years pampering, nurturing and loving it, until it reached maturity? As we did with our film. No, we're confident that the time we took, which was "conveniently" imposed upon us, has benefited the film. So, we can also spend some more time appreciating the movie, as we accompany it to international screenings. Since life should be understood as a unique journey, my colleagues and I are already looking forward to packing our proverbial suitcases ...

Carl, you were born an East German. Can you say a few words about the period the filming took place!

For people who never experienced this themselves, it is hard to imagine a country simply disappearing, geographically and politically, off the map, just like that. From one day to the next, all parties and politicians disappeared, even though they had spent an eternity proclaiming the same old phrases like mantras on the radio, on TV and in the few East German newspapers. Obviously, they thought they were immortal and an indispensable "elite," without which the citizens of the country would have no basis of existence.

Suddenly, as with the wave of a magic wand, these irritating guys are exposed as a horde of senile, tired old men, and are gone without replacements. They just grabbed their briefcases and trotted off home, like good boys. Something like this is inconceivable today. And the reason is, quite simply: They had governed too much, ordered people around too much, prohibited too much; the whole country was teeming with sweaty officials who were stepping on each other's toes. East Germany had deteriorated into one big "child-minding institution." Which is why the citizens, who had momentarily come of age, were justified in attempting a revolt against their eternally patronizing guardians.

What these politicians must be given some credit for, however, is: They did not try to use armed force to hold on to their power, privilege and property. Boggled by the hundreds of thousands of "subjects" peacefully demonstrating along the streets and squares, these politicians vanished without a whisper. These kinds of events can be counted on one hand in the history of man. It was a time of laughter and tears of joy, sighs of relief, and, for the majority of East Germans, a time of happiness. In this period of personal freedom and the absence of statehood, young people from this collapsed country took the liberty of occupying empty houses and abandoned mansions in cities and villages.

In order to live there and also to host parties, and hold theater performances, readings or concerts. It's almost impossible to describe this sense of freedom. And this, too, will be shown in the film LOOK OUT! WE'RE COMING. While remarkable numbers of pastors, lawyers and self-proclaimed economic experts came crawling out of the woodwork like cockroaches to enter the political vacuum, greedily determined to secure positions in the new parties and in the "reunited" state, there also appeared on



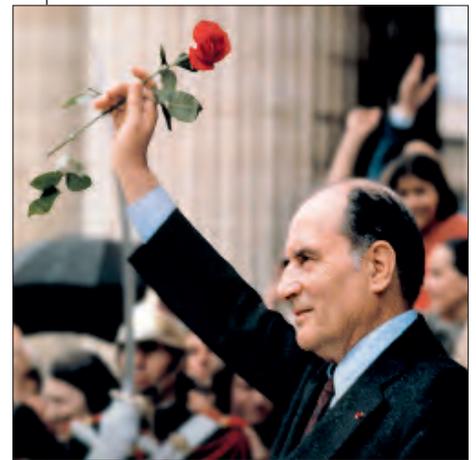
the scene tens of thousands of illegal bars and cafes: hot spots for young people in a legal limbo. The horror for any state or tax authority!

For many years this anarchy, acted out on the territory of the former “German Democratic Republic”, became the ideal breeding ground for a seemingly inexhaustible fountain of youth in all spheres of art and culture. Young people today, around the globe, can only aspire to a period as crazy as this, far away from any manipulative ideologies or religions, without any state interference or any secret service monitoring. And these “young squatters” built rehearsal rooms, music studios, broadcast their outlook on life through private stations and boldly produced the sound of their generation. They formed bands with flamboyant names like “Rammstein”, “In Extremo”, “The Inchtabokatables” and set off with their music, out into the henceforth borderless world. But at the end of the film LOOK OUT! WE’RE COMING we can also clearly witness how this refreshing time was frozen and pacified by the new reunified German state powers, with their rigid re-launch of “RIGHT” and “ORDER”.

Could you say a few final words to the French, that is the international fans, who are eagerly awaiting the outcome of your work on the film?

Sure. And here, I would like to, personally, show my respect to France and its open-hearted and loyal citizens. When the Berlin Wall came down, on November 9th, 1989, the French President, Mr. François Mitterrand, was on an official state visit to the GDR – a “socialist” country that a few days later would cease to exist. On the spur of the moment, after the Fall of the Wall, the French government organized an extraordinary three-day extravaganza, a kind of farewell party, in Paris to see off the “German Democratic Republic” from the world stage, in a way I find charming to this very day. More than 200 East German dancers, musicians, actors, visual artists, poets, fashion designers, performers, photographers and film makers participated in this. From the 19th to the 21st of January, 1990 there was fire in the air at the “Grand Halle de la Villette,” the old Paris slaughterhouse. The improvised party was called “L’autre Allemagne hors les murs” – “The Other Germany Outside the Wall.” President Mitterrand and his Minister of Cultural Affairs, Jack Lang, didn’t let anyone stop them from holding a personal reception in the Elysée palace for the illustrious delegation from the “Second German State.” And of course, from then on, no party, anywhere in the world, would have been complete without: Aljoscha, Paul and Flake of “Feeling B” – true to their long-standing motto:

“LOOK OUT! WE’RE COMING TO GET YOU.”



Carl, thank you for this very complex interview. And I wish you the best of luck for the movie and your future projects.

Thanks for your questions, Robin, and I hope that this interview will make as many readers as possible aware of the film and curious about it...



Photos: Bernhard Freutel, Andree K. Krause, Thorsten Schneider,
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