

# Strong Slate of German Films Wait in the Wings of Pandemic

By **Shalini Dore** ▾



Bavaria Filmproduktion

German cinema looks set for an exciting year with forthcoming works that include a high-profile [Cannes](#) selection celebrating one of [Germany](#)'s most iconic filmmakers, an expressionistic thriller set in 1920s Vienna, a tale of Nazi seduction and a new Thomas Mann adaptation.

The COVID-19 pandemic dashed the excitement of a splashy Cannes premiere for Oskar Roehler's "Enfant Terrible," part of the festival's Official Selection, but the film is nevertheless certain to generate buzz with its portrayal of legendary filmmaker [Rainer Werner Fassbinder](#), and his turbulent film career that spanned 1969 to 1982.

In making the film, Roehler found inspiration in Fassbinder's own work.

"We didn't want to do your standard biopic," says producer Markus Zimmer, managing director of Bavaria Filmproduktion. "I think we did come very close to what Fassbinder would have made out of his own life. We tried to be in line with the artistic means that he had in his films. I think it looks a little bit like a Fassbinder film."

“It’s very stylized and comes close to what he did in ‘Querelle,’ also with the use of color and lighting.”

While Oliver Masucci may not be an obvious choice, his talent made him ideal for the part, says Zimmer. “We asked him because we think he’s one of the great German actors of all time. We just thought he was the right actor to portray this manic director.”

Zimmer is also producing the upcoming adaptation of Thomas Mann’s classic “Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man,” about a handsome and gifted swindler who, unhampered by moral principles, manages to swiftly rise from poverty to affluence.

The film is due to resume production in June and finish shooting by the end of summer for a 2021 release via Warner Bros.

“I would say ‘Felix Krull’ is like a bottle of Champagne, light in tone, and very French also, in a way,” Zimmer says.

Jannis Niewöhner (“Narcissus and Goldmund”), one of Germany’s busiest young actors, stars as the title character alongside Liv Lisa Fries (“Babylon Berlin”), and David Kross (“A Stasi Comedy”). Detlev Buck (“Measuring the World”) is directing from a script by “Measuring the World” scribe Daniel Kehlmann.

Zimmer, who has been developing “Felix Krull” for the past five years, says he always had Niewöhner in mind for the role. “He’s good-looking, he’s charming, he’s a great actor. He brings together a lot of elements that only a few male actors of that age in Germany have.”

Niewöhner also stars in ARRI Media Intl.’s “Cortex,” actor Moritz Bleibtreu’s directorial debut. Bleibtreu stars as a troubled man haunted by recurring dreams of his wife (Nadja Uhl) having an affair with a young criminal, played by Niewöhner.

Also heading to theaters is “Narcissus and Goldmund” director Stefan Ruzowitzky’s historical thriller “Hinterland.” Set in 1920s Vienna, the film follows a former police inspector and recently released POW who returns home to a strange new city only to be confronted by the murder of a former comrade, prompting him to track down the killer.

“It’s going to be a really strong film,” says Beta Cinema CEO Dirk Schürhoff, who notes that the VFX-heavy film was largely shot in front of bluescreen. Ruzowitzky is reportedly going for a distorted look reminiscent of the surreal expressionism of Robert Wiene’s silent classic “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari” to capture the protagonist’s troubled state of mind.

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Making its international market debut in the Marché du Film online will be Dani Levy’s hit comedy “The Kangaroo Chronicles,” which saw its hugely successful theatrical run cut short by the pandemic. Likewise repped by Beta Cinema, the film follows a struggling Berlin musician who shares his flat with a talking communist kangaroo.

Also on offer is Lena Stahl’s family drama “My Son,” starring Anke Engelke and current European Shooting Star Jonas Dassler (“The Golden Glove”) in a film about a concerned mother who sets off with her risk-taking son on a challenging journey across Germany to a rehab center in Switzerland.

In ARRI Media’s “Dear Mr. Führer,” director Christian Lerch explores the lure of fascism in a story set toward the end of World War II as a mother and her young son flee bombed-out Munich for a small village, where the boy is seduced by Nazis.