

Picture Tree Intl. Picks Up Leander Haussmann’s ‘A Stasi Comedy’ (EXCLUSIVE)

By ED MEZA



CREDIT: UFA FICTION

Berlin-based Picture Tree International (PTI) has acquired global sales rights to Leander Haussmann’s highly anticipated East German laffer “A Stasi Comedy.”

Set in the early 1980s, the film centers on East Germany’s infamous state security service, the Staatssicherheitsdienst or Stasi, and young agent Ludger, played by David Kross (“Balloon,” “The Reader”), who is sent to infiltrate the counterculture scene in East Berlin’s Prenzlauer Berg district, home to artists, bohemians and free-thinking radicals. Decades later, Ludger is confronted with the possibility of his secret Stasi past coming to light.

Written and directed by Haussmann, “A Stasi Comedy” is the third installment in the celebrated filmmaker’s East German-themed comedy trilogy that began with “Sonnenallee” (“Sun Alley”) in 2000 and followed with “NVA” in 2004.

“After 30 years, it should be finally allowed to laugh about the Stasi,” Haussmann said.

“A Stasi Comedy” is produced by UFA Fiction in co-production with Constantin Film, which is also distributing the pic in German-speaking territories. Serving as producers on the film, which is currently in post, are UFA Fiction’s Sebastian Werninger, Herman Weigel and Constantin Film’s Christoph Müller.

The production is backed by regional and federal funders Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB), the German Federal Film Board (FFA), Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (MDM) and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF).

PTI is presenting a first promo of the film, which is currently in post, at the upcoming European Film Market in Berlin.

“A Stasi Comedy” shot on location in Berlin, Gera and the Polish city of Wroclaw. The film’s cast also features Tom Schilling (“Never Look Away,” “Oh Boy”), Jörg Schüttauf (“Berlin is in Germany”), Henry Hübchen (“Go for Zucker!”) and actor-director Detlev Buck (“Same Same But Different”).

One of Germany's most prolific creative voices in film and stage, Hausmann counts among his works "Berlin Blues," "Robert Zimmermann Is Tangled Up in Love," "Hotel Lux" and the 2017 hit comedy "Teenosaurus Rex."

PTI's EFM lineup this year likewise includes local Warner Bros. comedies "Nightlife," by Simon Verhoeven, and Florian Ross' "Takeover," about two identical-looking teens who swap identities.

The company is also handling international titles such as Antti Jokinen's "Helene," about acclaimed Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck; Dag Johan Haugerud's Göteborg Film Festival award winner "Beware Of Children" and Edward Af Sillén's hit Swedish musical "A Piece of My Heart," starring Malin Akerman.

Other titles include Mexican coming-of-age drama "Go Youth!" by Carlos Armella ("Land of Silence"), and Romanian helmer Marian Crisan's "The Campaign," a topical comedy about a populist politician and his quest for a seat in the European Parliament.