

# RARE CINEMA EUROPE

Presented at The Cinema Museum

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## ICH BEI TAG UND DU BEI NACHT

(Me by Day and You by Night)

(Germany 1932 – Dir. Ludwig Berger)



THE CINEMA MUSEUM

LONDON

[www.cinemamuseum.org.uk](http://www.cinemamuseum.org.uk)

plus: the French short **LA JOIE DE VIVRE** (1934) Animated by Gross and Hoppin.

Cast:

- [Käthe von Nagy](#) as Grete
- [Willy Fritsch](#) as Hans
- [Amanda Lindner](#) as Cornelia Seidelbast
- [Julius Falkenstein](#) as Herr Krüger
- [Elisabeth Lennartz](#) as Trude Krüger
- [Albert Lieven](#) as Wolf
- [Friedrich Gnaß](#) as Helmut
- [Anton Pointner](#) as Meyer
- [Eugen Rex](#) as Peschke
- [Ida Wüst](#) as Frau Waiser
- [Ursula van Diemen](#) as Filmdarstellerin
- [Walther Ludwig](#) as Filmdarsteller
- [Helmut Forest](#) as Straßensänger
- [Carl Merznicht](#) as Straßensänger
- [Trude Lieske](#) as Gretes Kollegin
- [Gerhard Bienert](#) as Polizist
- [Werner Pledath](#) as Geschäftsführer im 'Casanova'
- [Leo Monosson](#) as Sänger im 'Casanova'
- [Comedian Harmonists](#) as Themselves



Willy Fritsch, probably the biggest German film star of his time, was closely connected to the success of the Tonfilmlustspiel (German Musical Comedies), especially regarding the lavish musical extravaganzas Erich Pommer produced for UFA in the early 1930s. In the most famous of these, Fritsch was coupled with Lilian Harvey, a supremely athletic dancer and dynamic physical comedienne. The finest hour of both the actor and the Pommer unit might be *Ich bei Tag und Du bei Nacht*, though. In “one of the crowning glories of the German musical” (Peter von Bagh), Fritsch encounters not Harvey, but Käthe von Nagy, a completely different and more versatile actress with the ability to gently poke fun at the signature cockiness of her co-star, while at the same time still falling under his spell. **Ludwig Berger**’s fluid, elegant direction does not try to emulate the expansive spectacle of UFA blockbusters such as Erik Charell’s *Der Kongress tanzt*, but opts for a smaller, more intimate framework. A tale of interiors and interiorities, a comedy of mistaken identity that folds in on itself. The designated lovers, manicurist Grete (Käthe von Nagy) and waiter Hans (Willy Fritsch), sleep in the same bed from the start, she at night and he during the day... so it’s just a question of getting both of them in there at the same time; a question of synchronizing, of blending two lives, two space-times – and also, by way of an irony-fuelled meta-filmic discourse – two movies into each other. So, in the end *Ich bei Tag und Du bei Nacht* is not about romantic conquest, but about matchmaking and filmmaking becoming one and the same: an artistic practice giving us access to our own desires. (Lukas Foerster) (*Bologna Film Festival 2022 programme note*)



Willy Fritsch and Käthe von Nagy

As was common at the time, *I by Day and You by Night* was made as a multiple-language production with the three separate versions, German, French and English, all filmed at the Babelsberg Studio in Berlin, and all directed by **Ludwig Berger**. The English language version titled *Early To Bed* was made as a co-production between the German giant UFA and Gaumont British. Future Disney director Robert Stevenson acted as a supervisor. Greta and Carl were played by Heather Angel and Fernand Gravey, with Edmund Gwenn, Sonie Hale, Donald Calthrop and Lady Tree supporting. The casting of the comedian Sonnie Hale slanted the British version in a more humorous direction than its counterparts.

**Ludwig Berger** (born Ludwig Bamberger; 6 January 1892 – 18 May 1969) was a German-Jewish film director, screenwriter and theatre director. His elder brother was the set designer Rudolf Bamberger who was killed in 1945. Berger directed 36 films between 1920 and 1969. He began working in the German film industry during the Weimar Republic. At Decla-Bioscop and later UFA he established a reputation as a leading director of silent films. When, in 1928, Mauritz Stiller died unexpected during the shooting of "The Street of Sin", Berger was tasked to finish the movie. He successfully negotiated the coming of sound with the 1930 Jeanette MacDonald musical *The Vagabond King* made for Paramount in Hollywood which he co-directed with Ernst Lubitsch. Also, at Paramount, Berger was given the Maurice Chevalier vehicle *Playboy of Paris* (1930) and the French language version titled *Le Petit Café* (1931) to direct. Returning to Germany, he made *Ich bei Tag und Du bei Nacht* in 1932 for producer Erich Pommer. He headed to the Netherlands to direct a version of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. The film was completed in 1937. Shaw spoke condescendingly about the film because he thought it outrageous that the ending was changed. Nevertheless it was a huge success and was even screened in cinemas internationally and was praised by both critics and audiences. After the film's release, Berger returned to America to again try his luck wanting to be the first director to make an American version of the film, but Shaw refused an offer to sell the film rights to Hollywood. Unable to establish himself in Hollywood, Berger returned to Europe first locating himself in Britain where he co-directed, along with Michael Powell and Tim Whelan, the much-praised 1940 version of *The Thief of Bagdad*. Subsequently, after the war, Berger returned to Germany where he made, throughout the 1950's, many feature length movies for German television. He was also a member of the jury at the 6th Berlin International Film Festival.

Next **Rare Cinema Europe** show **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October**: the rural drama-romance

***Harvest (Regain)***

(France 1937 – **Marcel Pagnol**)

starring **Fernandel, Orane Damazis, Gabriel Gabrio, Marguerite Moreno**