

## PRESS RELEASE

# UFA Film Nights Premiere: Silent Film Classics From Early Hollywood

- **The festival will present silent-film classics on Berlin’s Museum Island from August 26 to 28, 2026**
- **First-ever program featuring early Hollywood masterpieces by leading German directors**
- **Advance ticket sales begin today**

Berlin, July 1, 2026 – Masterpieces of silent cinema, presented under the stars at one of the German capital’s most exclusive venues: Bertelsmann, in cooperation with UFA, will host the 15th UFA Film Nights in Berlin from August 26 to 28, 2026. Over the course of three evenings, audiences will enjoy open-air screenings against the spectacular backdrop of Berlin’s Museum Island, accompanied by live music.

The UFA Film Nights turn to the rising Hollywood of the 1920s for the first time this year, showcasing films by renowned German directors who were drawn to the American film capital and achieved both artistic and commercial success there. Three American masterpieces by Ernst Lubitsch, Paul Leni, and Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau bear witness to the high esteem in which German cinema was held internationally at the time. Hollywood studios offered talented German film professionals – including directors, producers, actors, cinematographers, screenwriters, and set designers – opportunities to build global careers.

This year’s UFA Film Nights pay tribute to this unique period of cinematic collaboration between Germany and the United States – an era also shaped by the clearly defined economic interests of the American studios. They recognized and harnessed the extraordinary creative potential they found in Germany during the 1920s. Reinforced by the arrival of predominantly German-Jewish émigré filmmakers fleeing Nazi persecution a decade later, this exchange would have a lasting and profoundly productive influence on Hollywood’s development.

The opening evening, Wednesday, August 26, celebrates the charm of the famous “Lubitsch Touch.” Ernst Lubitsch’s 1925 adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s social satire *LADY WINDERMERE’S FAN* (*LADY WINDERMERES FÄCHER*) tells a tale of highly intricate family entanglements. The all-female ensemble *The Roaring Dames*, under the direction of Luiza Labouriau, will perform the world premiere of a new score by Tobias Schwencke.

The second evening features Paul Leni’s *THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (*SPUK IM SCHLOSS*) from 1927, produced at the legendary Universal Studios of German-Jewish Hollywood pioneer Carl Laemmle. Paul Leni drew on the visual language of German Expressionism to create a horror comedy that remains a classic of the genre. Ensemble *Spooky Tune*, conducted by George Morton and featuring Carolina Eyck on theremin, will perform a score by Neil Brand, commissioned by Photoplay Productions for Channel 4.

The festival concludes with **SUNRISE (SONNENAUFANG)** from 1927, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's Hollywood debut and a film still widely regarded as his undisputed masterpiece. The melodrama, based on a novella by Hermann Sudermann, won three Academy Awards. The screening will be accompanied by Ekkehard Wölk & The Silent Light Orchestra.

Each film will be preceded by an introduction providing film-historical context. This year's special presenter is actress Alexandra Maria Lara.

Tickets are available for €22 at [www.ufa-filmnaechte.de/en](http://www.ufa-filmnaechte.de/en).

## Program at a glance

**Wednesday, August 26, 2026**

**Film starts at 9:00 p.m.**

### **LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN (LADY WINDERMERES FÄCHER, 1925)**

Director: Ernst Lubitsch (based on Oscar Wilde)

Cast: Irene Rich, May McAvoy, Bert Lytel

Production: Warner Bros.

Runtime: 82 min.

Music: World premiere of a new score by Tobias Schwencke, performed by The Roaring Dames under the direction of Luiza Labouriau

**Thursday, August 27, 2026**

**Film starts at 9:00 p.m.**

### **THE CAT AND THE CANARY (SPUK IM SCHLOSS, 1927)**

Director: Paul Leni

Cast: Laura La Plante, Creighton Hale, Tully Marshall

Production: Universal Pictures

Runtime: 108 min.

Music: A score by Neil Brand, performed by Ensemble Spooky Tune under the direction of George Morton and featuring Carolina Eyck on theremin

**Friday, August 28, 2026**

**Film starts at 9:00 p.m.**

### **SUNRISE (SONNENAUFANG, 1927)**

Director: Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau

Cast: George O'Brien, Janet Gaynor, Margaret Livingston

Production: Fox Film Corporation

Runtime: 106 min.

Music: Ekkehard Wölk & The Silent Light Orchestra

The UFA Film Nights are presented by Bertelsmann in cooperation with UFA. The festival is supported by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, and Velomax. Media partners include Ströer, Yorck Kinogruppe, radio3, and Maz&Movie.

As a creative content company with a history spanning more than 190 years, Bertelsmann engages in cultural activities on multiple levels – both nationally and internationally. The focus of its Culture@Bertelsmann initiatives is to support cultural diversity and preserve cultural heritage. Bertelsmann has been organizing the successful UFA Film Nights silent-film festival in Berlin for many years and has repeatedly served as the principal sponsor of digital restorations of significant silent-era films. The Group also owns the Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, which holds a rich collection of unique materials documenting 200 years of Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing and digitizing the archive according to the latest standards, making thousands of documents, stage and costume designs, libretti, and pieces of business correspondence freely available online. For more than 20 years, Bertelsmann has also provided authors with a prominent platform for presenting their latest works through its literary series “The Blue Sofa.” The Culture@Bertelsmann initiative is dedicated to making culture accessible to a broad audience.

### **About Bertelsmann**

Bertelsmann is a media, services, and education company with more than 75,000 employees that operates in some 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato Group, Bertelsmann Marketing Services, the Bertelsmann Education Group, and Bertelsmann Investments. The company generated revenues of €19 billion in the 2025 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

### **Bertelsmann online**



### Enquiries:

#### **Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA**

Mandy Berghoff

Communications Content Team

Phone: +49 (0)5241 80780 36

[mandy.berghoff@bertelsmann.de](mailto:mandy.berghoff@bertelsmann.de)

[www.bertelsmann.de](http://www.bertelsmann.de)

#### **SteinbrennerMüller Kommunikation**

Kristian Müller

Phone: +49 (0)30 4737 2192

[km@steinbrennermueller.de](mailto:km@steinbrennermueller.de)

[www.steinbrennermueller.de](http://www.steinbrennermueller.de)