



Arrow Academy
presents

Eight Hours Don't Make a Day

by
Rainer Werner Fassbinder



Eight Hours Don't Make a Day

A Family Series

Contents

- 4** Cast and Crew
- 7** Life and Nothing More 2017
David Jenkins
- 15** Eight Hours Are Not a Day 1976
Manuel Alvarado
- 25** Fassbinder: The Life and Work of a
Provocative Genius (an extract) 1991
Christian Braad Thomsen
- 49** A Conversation with Juliane Lorenz 2017
David Jenkins
- 56** About the Restoration

Cast and Crew

Gottfried John ... Jochen
Hanna Schygulla ... Marion
Luise Ullrich ... Grandma
Werner Finck ... Gregor
Anita Bucher ... Käthe
Wolfgang Lier ... Wolf
Christine Oesterlein ... Klara
Renate Roland ... Monika
Kurt Raab ... Harald
Andrea Schober ... Sylvia
Thorsten Massinger ... Manni
Irm Hermann ... Irmgard Erbkönig
Wolfgang Zerlett ... Manfred
Wolfgang Schenck ... Franz
Herb Andress ... Rüdiger
Rudolf Waldemar Brem ... Rolf
Hans Hirschmüller ... Jürgen
Peter Gauhe ... Ernst
Grigorios Karipidis ... Giuseppe
Karl Scheydt ... Peter
Victor Curland ... Foreman Kretzschmer
Rainer Hauer ... Supervisor Gross

**with Margit Carstensen, Ruth Drexel,
Helga Feddersen, Valeska Gert, Ulli Lommel,
Klaus Löwitsch, Eva Mattes, Heinz Meier,
Brigitte Mira and Lilo Pempeit**

Director Rainer Werner Fassbinder
Screenplay Rainer Werner Fassbinder
Director of Photography Dietrich Lohmann
Music Jean Gepoint aka Fuzzy
Editor Marie Anne Gerhardt
Set Design Kurt Raab, Manfred Lütz and
Gisela Röcken
Producer WDR, Peter Märthesheimer

Episodes

- 1 JOCHEN AND MARION 103 mins**
- 2 GRANDMA AND GREGOR 101 mins**
- 3 FRANZ AND ERNST 93 mins**
- 4 HARALD AND MONIKA 91 mins**
- 5 IRMGARD AND ROLF 90 mins**

478 mins in total



Life and Nothing More

by David Jenkins

A family gather around a table piled high with cakes and drinks. The occasion: Grandma's birthday tea. All are kitted out in Sunday best and spirits are high, momentarily at least. The beloved Jochen (Gottfried John) leans in to the huddle and pops the cork on a bottle of Sect. Liquid erupts over the lap of Aunt Klara (Christine Oesterlein) who, with a startling quickness, slaps Jochen about the face. If that wasn't buzzkill enough, Kurt Raab's preposterously severe Harald (wire framed specs, pencil moustache, a 'kill me now' countenance) slaps his pre-teen daughter for mis-speaking at the table. Laughter turns to violence in the space of 30 seconds.

With some seven-and-a-half hours remaining of this five-part serial made by Rainer Werner Fassbinder in 1973 for West German television, the almost comically swift dissolution of family geniality foretells rough seas ahead. Only a year earlier, in his critical and commercial breakthrough feature, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (*Händler der vier Jahreszeiten*), a similarly styled lower-middle-class family is seen during a period of prolonged meltdown, with the pathetic patriarch opting to publicly drink himself to death rather than suffer life's inexorable torments. Desolation and decline had been recurring motifs in virtually everything the director made. His films were characterised by soporific sex, public beatings, humiliation, bigotry and the stacked, beautiful corpses of dreamers living beyond their means.

Yet the opening minutes of *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* are soon revealed to be a playful red herring, as if Fassbinder wanted to lure the viewer into a false sense of security before embarking on what is a prolonged charm offensive. Taken as a single, flowing narrative, this is without doubt the most unabashedly affirmative work Fassbinder ever put his name to. Let's not go so far as to say that it offers a vision of unalloyed happiness, but it certainly dances within that buoyant tonal spectrum. An understatement perhaps, but this is also, by some margin, Fassbinder's funniest movie. You might even refer to it as a comedy. There's a mad wedding party sequence at the climax of the fourth episode that would've slotted very cleanly into one of Jacques Tati's experimental farces, for example.

This wonderfully jolly serial chronicles the prosaic tribulations of an extended proletarian family and plays out as a meandering Sirkian soap opera – Sirkian in that its politics are woven deep within the fabric of the drama. The setting is sunny Cologne and the central figure is the avuncular Jochen. He plies an honest trade as an industrial tool maker and his colleagues look up to him for advice and kinship. Without knowing it, Jochen bares the political hallmarks of a utopian socialist, in that he strives for collective (rather than personal) happiness and is never shy when it comes to putting forward ideas for streamlining workplace practices. His ultimate goal is to benignly assume the means of production and prove to company brass that independence within a bureaucratic order can have its advantages, both in terms of staff morale and access to financial spoils.

This is a simplified overview of Jochen's professional odyssey, as Fassbinder is more interested in the tensions that arise in attempting to achieve these ambitious goals. Each new decision is preceded with an exhaustive discussion as co-workers try to convince themselves that their desires are both practical and achievable. The discourse

never descends into bloated political theorising. These men converse in simple, emotional terms and the binary matter of what is fair and what isn't remains paramount to their cause.

Politically, the series is always less interested in taking broad swipes at policy or rules than it is in carefully circling the minutiae of a problem. It celebrates the essential political dimension of banal working reality – the notion that everything we do and say plays into something bigger. There's a continuous commentary inherent in the tiniest of gestures. It's tragic that Jochen is someone who will never be able to comprehend that his actions play into this broader political canvas. Yet Fassbinder uses film to take the viewer through the looking glass and make that aspect explicit. It's not just about how politics affect people, but how people affect politics. In one heartbreaking moment, the introverted Franz (Wolfgang Schenck) revises mathematics at home ahead of a make-or-break foreman's exam. The action is framed against the bewildered expressions of his wife, who wants to improve her economic lot, but not at the cost of her husband's sanity. Her pride radiates from the screen and drives him towards success.

In realising these humdrum struggles in the most plainspoken and earthy ways, *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* operates as a trenchant political tract in its own right. Heated debates occur behind giant steins of pilsner beer as a jukebox blares out Leonard Cohen or Janis Joplin. Concerns come to a head while the entire staff line up naked in the shower, devising strategies while soaping their unmentionables. It is a vision of life that is dominated by professional anxiety, but is also powered by a feeling more tangible and bankable than blind hope – that reasonable change is possible. The series is cautiously critical of the capitalist system, which sees people splintered off into roles where some are dominant and others subservient. Yet, as part of its affirmative streak, *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* grudgingly

accepts capitalism as a necessary evil. It searches for examples of how it can work for those trapped within its sprawling, sticky web.

On a visual level, the series exemplifies the same notion of working within the confines of a system, yet it also pokes at the dark corners and presses against the boundary walls. Gone are the excruciating static takes and sculpted Antitheater formations of, say, 1969's *Katzelmacher*, and, in their place, are rapid cuts, fluid transitions, swooping zooms, careful tracks and busy scenes of domestic life that glow with rich vitality. The conventions of television drama are largely adhered to, but also subtly manipulated. What appears as an off-the-cuff grace note at the end of a scene, such as a zoom into a background detail or character, is often loaded with a sly gag or bizarre juxtaposition. To see what Fassbinder is doing here as a rejection of style is to misinterpret his method. With an endless succession of immaculate compositions and exquisitely choreographed sequences, he hoists the innocuous formal grammar of mass-market small-screen soap to the level of high art.

The inference of the title is that we aren't wholly defined by our working lives, and so the machinations of the series also take in all manner of personal interludes. Jochen's idealism is tempered by his peppy girlfriend, Marion (Hanna Schygulla), who always seems to have the rational counterpoint to his latest, wide-eyed ploy. Her affectionate checks and balances are what bind the pair together, as if Jochen's puppyish need for moral council is a true expression of their love. This idea that confrontation is not only healthy, but a necessary, positive facet of professional and private lives underpins the entire story – a possible reflection of the creative, openly hostile dynamic that fuelled Fassbinder's band of regular collaborators.

This isn't, however, just Jochen's tale. A parallel plot strand traces Grandma (Luise Ullrich) through various hare-brained schemes of her own. Where the newly empowered Jochen chips away at remodelling his working life, Grandma does the same during the twilight years of retirement. Her decision to no longer exist as an ageing ornament in the home of daughter Käthe (Anita Bucher) and cantankerous son-in-law Wolf (Wolfgang Lier) leads to a spell of fiery self-determination. She strolls through the park and strikes up a conversation with lovable pushover Gregor (Werner Finck). His attentions are drawn away from a well-thumbed copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and towards her cocksure patter. They fall in love and head off to rent an apartment.

There's comedy in the way Jochen and Grandma's travails subtly intersect. His life is a gamble, with future prospects hanging in the balance of his ability to see three or four power plays down the line. She, on the other hand, embraces impulsive action, knowing that her future is what she makes of it. She represents freedom, but a freedom that is limited by the strictures of capitalism. Her and Gregor's modest combined pension allows for only so much fun, but she remains on constant watch for ways to smash the system. Though her early life is seldom alluded to, Grandma is a joyous maternal figure who appears immune to sadness and regret. As someone who likely lived through the war, she sees no reason for sorrow in a Germany that's once more on the make, where citizens of all classes have a voice that can be heard.

But not everyone is content with life. In previous work, Fassbinder often relied on character archetypes (usually employed ironically) to fill out his stories. The TV format allows him room to breathe, and to lift potentially stock individuals to a more rounded plain. Raab's Harald, for instance, is depicted in the first three episodes as an

absurd stuffed-shirt conservative who stands by his antiquated belief that women should cook, tend to children and stay away from real work. Why his enlightened wife Monika (Jochen's sister, played by Renate Roland) ever married this foul man in the first place suggests a gradual lapse towards patriarchal villainy.

Even though Harald is the closest thing to an antagonist in the series, Fassbinder digs deep to eventually unearth the fragile soul beneath the scads of self-loathing. But this is not contrived redemption – it is humanist reality. He does this many more times: with the ill-tempered Wolf; with newbie factory foreman, Ernst (Peter Gauhe), who is introduced underneath a ridiculously ominous music cue that paints him as pure evil; to Marion's traditionally-minded mother (Brigitte Mira); and to Marion's snot-nosed work colleague Irmgard (Irm Hermann), who professes to despise working-class men but eventually reveals that even she is not immune to their salty, booze-swilling charms. All suppress their natural sense of empathy, but Fassbinder searches for it and extracts it from them any which way.

As a director of film and theatre, Fassbinder's career was characterised by a relentless drive to create. *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* can be read as a manifesto for identifying opportunity and grabbing it, whatever the mitigating circumstances. Unlike Hans in *The Merchant of Four Seasons*, Jochen and Grandma don't accept their lowly lot or allow festering resentments to send them to an early grave. They are in constant search for change and improvement. There is flexibility within the system for them to move, and this is due to Fassbinder's belief that those in positions of power are sometimes open to a similarly spontaneous way of thinking. In 1974's *Fear Eats the Soul* (*Angst essen Seele auf*), concerning an interracial/intergenerational love affair between an elderly white spinster and a young Moroccan

labourer, the only person who accepts this taboo relationship is their landlord – anything is permissible, as long as money is forthcoming. In the same manner, Jochen's boss gladly accepts this upstart's proposal for independent working arrangements, keeping the underlings happy while making a tidy profit on the side. Jochen's victory is hollow, but his desire to keep fighting the good fight remains undimmed.

Things eventually wind down and, as the final episode draws to a close, the prospect of having to part company with these lovely people is bittersweet indeed. What's miraculous, however, is that Fassbinder avoids a neat summation, and instead succinctly infers that these stories will continue on without us. So vivid and detailed are these characters that the very idea that they might reach a moment of sublime satisfaction, where the struggle for prosperity or improvement is complete, is simply absurd. Will Jochen become embittered with having to rail against his coldly methodical paymasters? Perhaps. Will Grandma be forced to slow things down as age and infirmity sap her physical strength? Probably. Will Irmgard's relationship with Rudolf Waldemar Brem's affable machinist, Rolf, last out the year? Will Wolf ever find a replacement for Grandma? Will Harald ever see his daughter again after Monika leaves him? This series is a small fragment of life that contains all life. It spirals off into the infinite. ■

David Jenkins is the editor of *Little White Lies* magazine. He has written on film for *Time Out London*, the *Guardian* and *Sight & Sound*.



Eight Hours Are Not a Day

by **Manuel Alvarado**

The following article was originally published in *Fassbinder* (ed. Tony Rayns, BFI Publishing, 1976) and is reprinted with permission. In keeping with the original essay, we have retained the use of the series' alternative English-language title, *Eight Hours Are Not a Day*.

'We had started that week talking about the novels of working-class life. We'd been discussing why life in a working-class home is so described, (but) the work itself hardly ever.'

Raymond Williams

'The Teaching Relationship: Both Sides of the Wall'
Education in Democracy, 1970

In 1972, having produced thirteen feature films in three years, Fassbinder was commissioned by WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, one of the stations of the first German TV channel, the ARD) to make a family series. This was the first time that he had worked directly for a TV company, and the series he was to produce – *Acht Stunden sind kein Tag* (*Eight Hours Are Not a Day*) – marked a new development

in his work, in that he was aiming to attract a mass audience. At the time, it certainly seemed strange that a director who had gained some critical attention for a group of highly stylised 'art house' films should become involved in the production of a 'family series', a genre particularly despised by critics yet attracting the highest TV audience ratings.

It is not entirely clear whether the term 'family series' denotes that the series is about families, watched by families, or both. Whatever the case, it will be useful to compare *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* with its closest British counterpart, *Coronation Street*, as the similarities and differences are both interesting and illuminating. I shall briefly indicate some of the more obvious points of comparison, but an exhaustive analysis would clearly require extensive research work.

Coronation Street and *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* fulfil both interpretations of the term 'family series': they are about families, and are (well) screened at peak family viewing times. More significantly, they are 'about' working-class families. As such, they make an important contribution to the generation of dominant working-class images, characters and situations, which, though not unique to TV, are remarkably rare in our middle-class dominated media. (The fact that both series were created by middle-class producers, though undoubtedly important, will not be my direct concern here.)

The important initial questions to ask are: *how* are the working class depicted in *Coronation Street*, and how differently is their presentation in *Eight Hours Are Not a Day*? The location of the action in *Coronation Street* is mainly the enclosed world of the street itself. The community contains no children and its members are rarely seen at work. In fact, the work that we do see could be loosely described as petit-bourgeois: shopkeeping; the running of a public house; Len

Fairclough (a self-employed builder) banging a nail into a wall. The 'world' of *Coronation Street* (and we are encouraged to think of it as a microcosm of the world, a representative sample; witness, for example, the title sequence, showing the street as just one among many thousands of similar streets) is safe, secure, 'apolitical', a place where nothing more than petty bickering, gossip and the occasional feud is allowed to disturb the nature and structure of the characters' lives. They are essentially locked into, and resigned to, their position and role in society. The families, apparently lacking children, relatives and employment, lead insular, isolated and static lives. Their dynamic potential for any action that might transform their own or anyone else's existence is entirely absent. By describing *Coronation Street* in this way, I am not simply arguing that the series is 'unrealistic', but that the structured absences are deliberate and significant. Their significance lies in the negative and paralysed portrayal of the working class, a portrayal that is reinforced by the occasional 'social realist' TV documentary, where the images depict a sad and acquiescent group of people.

The 'world' of *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* is strikingly different. Clearly the constraints under which the series was produced are not the same as those in force at Granada, where *Coronation Street* is made. Westdeutscher Rundfunk provided a fairly large amount of money to produce a series of predetermined length; originally there existed the possibility of making eight long episodes, but eventually only five were made.

Eight Hours Are Not a Day set out to present a total view of workers' lives and problems: the characters are seen in a number of locations – home, friends' homes, bars, clubs, the factory floor and the factory yard. Furthermore, the intention was explicitly to contradict the conventional 'social realist' image of the worker, because however sincere such

sympathy with workers might be, to attach such a representation to people themselves as something accurate and inescapable is clearly wrong. The project of *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* was therefore not to create positive images to demonstrate the possibility of living within those conditions and, more importantly, of changing them. Thus we see Jochen and his mates at work, experiencing all the problems of work (working conditions, pressure of output, bonus schemes, wages), and in bars discussing these problems. All of this forms a context for Jochen's domestic life. Social relationships within a family are shown through the ways they deal with and reflect on the problems they experience at a domestic level: the rent they pay for their flat; the establishment of a kindergarten; the use of the bathroom. While disagreements are shown, what is clearly indicated is a solidarity among the different inter-related groups: for instance, the unity of the workers in their negotiations with the management, the exchange of flats in episode five; the help provided for the elderly couple Grandma and Gregor in episode two; Grandma 'protecting' Monika in episode five. In general, the members of the working class are depicted positively as beginning to control, organise and change their apparent destiny.

Interestingly, the isolated, weak and potentially alienated people in the series are representatives of the ruling class: the factory boss, remote in his 'op-art' office; the 'smooth' confidence trickster in episode five. It is worth pointing out that the working class presented is not 'lumpen proletariat' but the labour 'aristocracy' (skilled tool workers), but the important aspect is that they are treated as *subjects* of the narrative and not as *objects* (that is, capable of action, and not the passive recipients of other people's actions). Fassbinder clearly determined that it was the turn of the ruling class to be treated as objects. This is probably an oversimplification of the role of the boss, but in an interview Fassbinder did state explicitly that his aims were "to make things which are dangerous to the so-called ruling class".



Cologne, 1972, filming *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*

Although the subject's political implications are foregrounded, Fassbinder was very concerned about the popularity of the series. Well aware of the fact that a large proportion of the public tend to evade serious political discussion, he realised that the series had to have entertainment value to ensure that it would be transmitted, let alone be successful in audience ratings. This is the classic dilemma that anyone who tries to make political programmes within a capitalist system has to confront. In the case of *Eight Hours Are Not a Day*, it results in a number of interesting features. For instance, there is a notable absence of institutions like trade unions and political parties, which means that their importance and influence in working-class life is ignored. At the time, Fassbinder received heavy criticism for this omission, but he claimed that their inclusion would have reduced the popular appeal of the programmes. In fact, he did intend to introduce such organisations in episodes six to eight, which was perhaps one of

the reasons that WDR decided not to continue the series. If that was the case, it would clearly reinforce Fassbinder's argument.

The intention was first to 'capture' an audience by entertaining them, and only then to encourage the viewers to reflect on the problems raised. Thus the first episode begins with a number of amusing domestic situations, which by episode five have largely (but significantly not totally) been displaced by a concentration on problems related to the work situation. As all the characters, throughout the series, have been changing and developing their personal relationships, so have they also been developing and changing their situations at work. Both processes involve their development of a clearer and better understanding of the world.

Just as Fassbinder places the potential for this analysis and change with the workers, thus subverting the dominant media image of the working class, so he also places it with the representatives of two other oppressed groups in our society: woman and old people. Marion's role in *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* is crucial because she is seen to be a central agent in the development of the workers' consciousness. She is a middle-class secretary who leaves her stereotypically handsome, middle-class boyfriend for a not conventionally handsome factory worker, much against her mother's wishes. She becomes part of the workers' milieu (as eventually does her office girlfriend), and at times even sits in the controlling position at the head of the table. It is important that, in order to present a positive image of women, a conventionally beautiful woman be seen to offer an intelligent, political critique of the workers' actions. Similarly, Grandma and Gregor are presented as operating in a positive and dynamic way (for instance, the opening of the kindergarten), and are shown to have a warm *sexual* relationship. This counters the traditional media depictions of old people as either comic caricatures (e.g., Clive Dunn

in British TV programmes) or drab, helpless figures in 'social realist' documentaries. The warm humour of the scenes with Grandma and Gregor depends on the situational comedy of family life – a life of which they are very much a part – and never works at the expense of them or old people in general. A fourth area of oppression – racial prejudice – is confronted in the workers' discussion about the position of *gastarbeiter* (immigrant workers) in the factory, but this is not of such central concern in this particular series.

Although the *content* of *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* is concerned with recognising the political nature of all aspects of life, the *form* of the series clearly does not have the status of radical filmmaking of the type represented by a director like Godard. In Godard's later films, narrative and stylistic breaks and ruptures are designed to interrogate and 'deconstruct' bourgeois conventions of representation. Godard foregrounds the production of the film itself in an attempt to force the audience to positively confront, reflect and act upon the political problems presented.

Fassbinder, on the other hand, works in a melodramatic tradition, deriving directly from films like those of Douglas Sirk. But the very fact that he adopts an obviously self-conscious, aesthetically beautiful style and applies it to the presentation of working-class problems foregrounds the artificiality of all construction; the method is very different from Godard's 'deconstruction' tactics, but very useful given Fassbinder's desire to achieve popular appeal.

A great deal of work needs to be carried out on the analysis of Fassbinder's style; I will simply indicate some of the techniques he adopts. He employs very complicated camera movement: there is frequently tracking, panning, craning and sudden zooming of the camera, sometimes in combination within a single shot. The almost



constant movement is coupled with highly organised framing of each shot to produce an obviously artificial, self-conscious mode of representation. For example, characters are often shot with an out-of-focus object on the table in front of them, or 'framed' by plants, doorways, etc. The women, in particular, often have carnations or other flowers in front or to the side of them, creating stereotypical 'romantic' images. It is in relation to this that the scene in the bar in episode five shows Marion with the workers' half-empty beer glasses in front of her to such significant effect. Camera positioning makes the factory boss appear dominated by the expensive objects that surround him. Similarly, every time a worker walks across the factory floor, the camera tracks alongside him, but on the other side of the machines that he is walking past, so that he is continually first isolated and then hidden by the camera movement. The apparent domination of man by machine is eventually reversed in the scene in episode five where (to a background of music) the workers are shown controlling the machinery and happy to be in that position of control – what much be the most lyrical and yet seemingly bizarre sequence in the whole series.

One question that must be raised in the context of *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* is: how radical can popular film be? To what extent has Fassbinder managed to create a potentially radical, popular film practice? It's worth pointing out now that the series was produced by a group of media workers, and that it is therefore not linked to a specific struggle or situation. Also that it is not concerned with interrogating capitalist methods of production. What the series does attempt to do is to offer a critique of bourgeois culture that is class-ridden, sexist, racist and ageist. *Eight Hours Are Not a Day* represents an interesting attempt to create a popular TV series that reformulates the modes of representing that culture through its media productions. ■



Fassbinder: The Life and Work of a Provocative Genius (An Extract)

by Christian Braad Thomsen

Fassbinder: The Life and Work of a Provocative Genius was first published in Denmark in 1991. It was subsequently translated into English (by Martin Chalmers) and published in the United Kingdom in 1997. Reprinted with permission.

A film can be popular even when a larger audience does not at first notice it. This was, to some extent, the fate of *The Merchant of Four Seasons* and *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. Both films are immediately accessible and entertaining, and, quite unjustly, public recognition was slow in coming, which was probably due to Fassbinder's reputation as a rough and inaccessible avant-gardist.

In order to overcome these prejudices, Fassbinder resolved to face the mass audience head-on and made two television series: the five-part family drama *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* and the two-part science-fiction film *World on a Wire*. And with both he had the audience in his hand.

In *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*, Fassbinder started out with the clichés of the family drama which at the same time he undermined by placing his characters in situations that related directly to recognisable, everyday family and working life. Without abandoning direct entertainment, Fassbinder succeeded in turning prejudices and habits of thoughts upside-down and in offering simple, surprising, easily comprehensible solutions to political problems which, in the wake of the student movement, were more often subject to sloganizing and phrase-mongering.

Fassbinder doesn't pretend to be any smarter or better than his audience. He shows that with the help of a petit-bourgeois grasp of life and of simple reflection, it is possible to act in a more revolutionary way than those who have learned all the 'revolutionary' phrases, but use them more for self-affirmation than with any thought of putting them into practice. And he shows that it is possible to make meaningful entertainment and to say something meaningful in an entertaining way.

Fassbinder, of course, didn't just make the series for a big audience, but also for his own pleasure and to learn more about the problems that concerned him. Out of that arose his solidarity with the public. He carries out an experiment *with* the public: *if* we did this and not what we are used to, then we *could* perhaps achieve something. The elegiac world-weariness of the earlier films has given way to a high-spirited optimism, which never appears artificial, because he is constantly putting it to the test. And this is precisely the difference between his work and normal TV entertainment.



1. 'Jochen and Marion'

The first episode begins with a scene that can be regarded as a signature to the whole series. We find ourselves at Grandma's birthday party; Grandma lives with her daughter Käthe and her husband Wolf. Their grown-up son, the engineering worker Jochen, also lives at home. He fetches a bottle of sparkling wine and, without thinking, carries it in front of him like a phallic symbol, and accidentally squirts the contents into the lap of sour Aunt Klara, who slaps him in return. In this series, love is as sparkling as champagne. And the whole series is a bit like this introduction. Other slaps are handed out on this particular evening: Harald, the son-in-law, smacks his little daughter because she isn't sitting properly at the table. Finally, the queen of

the evening, Granny, calls out in annoyance to ask whether this is a brawl or a party, and then she and Jochen dance together. They are the two principal characters in the series. They get on better than all the others and cover for each other all the time in their more or less crazy schemes. They drive the others to despair and create meaningful plotting and entertainment for all.

Late in the evening, Jochen goes out to get yet another bottle of sparkling wine from a vending machine. Here he meets Marion. Gottfried John and Hanna Schygulla play the two parts in a way that goes straight back to Humphrey Bogart/Lauren Bacall or Cary Grant/Katharine Hepburn couples in the Hollywood films Fassbinder loved so much. Jochen invites Marion home and introduces her to everyone – and viewers to the main characters of the series. During the evening, Jochen and Marion find they like one another, and events take their course.

In the factory where Jochen works, he and his mates have to carry out a job, for whose completion the management has set aside very little time. If they succeed in finishing within the allotted time, they'll get a productivity bonus. Jochen invents a mechanism with the help of which the job can be carried out more quickly than expected; the management is satisfied, but cuts the bonus the workers had been counting on. The management justifies the decision, saying that now they won't, after all, need to do so much work to finish the job, then the most curious accidents suddenly start occurring in the factory: the material breaks as it's being worked on, and it looks as if the workers won't finish on time after all, unless...! Fassbinder shows that the workers, if they only stick together and use all the possibilities at their disposal (for example, sabotaging production, so that the sabotage looks like an accident) then they can achieve their primary objective – that the management keeps the agreements it reached with them.

The workplace problem is clearly and entertainingly presented. Characteristic is the scene in which Jochen explains the problems in the factory to Marion's six-year-old brother. The scene serves two purposes: the problem is explained very naturally, so that not only a six-year-old, but also the audience can understand what's at stake. Fassbinder carries it off in masterful fashion, without resorting to textbook theorising or condescension towards the viewer. Apart from that, the scene shows that it is possible to have a serious and reasonable conversation with children, and to draw them into everyday life, just as there is an emphasis on showing that children can be treated as equals, and not as adults have been shown behaving towards them in Fassbinder's previous films. After Jochen has moved in with Marion and her little brother, and is lying naked in bed with Marion one evening, the brother knocks on the bedroom door and asks with the most unaffected expression in the world, "Are you finished?", before sitting down on the bed beside them. That certainly doesn't happen in every family series – or family.

Marion works in an office with her friend Irmgard (Irm Hermann), a respectable, straight-laced girl, who is introduced in the following dialogue:

IRMGARD: You've only known him since yesterday, Marion.

MARION: I know how I feel, Irmgard. I really do. He's the right one. Him and no one else.

IRMGARD: Well, what does he do?

MARION: What do you mean – what does he do?

IRMGARD: What he does?

MARION: What he does. What he does?

IRMGARD: What's his job? My God.

MARION: Oh, you want to know what his job is.

IRMGARD: Yes, I want to know what his job is.

MARION: He... He... I don't know.

IRMGARD: So! You love somebody and you don't even know what his job is. That could be fun.

MARION: That's right – it's going to be fun.

IRMGARD: And what are you going to do about Peter?

MARION: Yes. About Peter.

IRMGARD: Yes. About Peter.

MARION: I'll tell him.

IRMGARD: You can't just tell him, Marion. Tell him! Something like that... Something like that, you break it to them very carefully. With something like that, you leave yourself a loophole, with something like that there's...

MARION: Stop it, stop it, Irmgard. I'm going to tell him. Just tell him. I don't like these... these dirty tricks!

IRMGARD: Dirty tricks! How mean! How mean you are.

MARION: I don't like dirty tricks. Not with men either.

IRMGARD: Look, later on Peter will have a guaranteed income. Peter has a job, where he doesn't get his hands dirty. Peter doesn't drink his money away on Fridays and hit you. Peter is...

MARION: Peter is Peter and Jochen is Jochen.

IRMGARD: Jochen! Even the name.

The dialogue contains hidden quotations from Fassbinder's two previous features. From *The Merchant of Four Seasons*, there's the phrase, spoken by the mother, that it's important to have a job where you don't get your hands dirty, and from *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, there's an exchange about dirty tricks in a fight for and against men, a quote that turns up again in a corresponding sequence in *Martha*. Fassbinder quotes himself again and again, but it's not intended to be an inside joke nor is it a sign of lack of inspiration. The quotations

express the continuity in an oeuvre, whose individual films are very different from one another, at the same time making clear that all these characters are products of the same society. Their habitual ways of thinking, prejudices and clichés are the same, to some extent, but the characters, nevertheless, deal differently with their problems: Petra is the everyday bourgeois, suffering defeats, but not giving up; Marion is adventurous, ready for every situation; Martha develops into a pathological case and perishes.

Just as Jochen meets Marion, Grandma also gets to know her Gregor. She meets him in a park, where he's sitting alone on a bench and reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a very precise picture of a dear old lonely man reading about things, in contrast to Grandma, who always wants to make things happen. Their meeting takes place in the course of one of Grandma's little 'actions'. She's watching a park keeper chasing children off the grass; playing on the grass isn't allowed, even though there's nowhere else to play and there's nothing else the grass can be used for. Grandma intervenes indignantly. She drags Gregor, who is reading peacefully, to the park keeper, introduces herself as a representative of the town council and Gregor as an inspector, and boldly confirms her false identity with her pensioner's pass, which the keeper, in his confusion, doesn't look at properly. Grandma complains that he obviously hasn't read the new council circular, which henceforth permits children to play on public green spaces. It's part of the new national long-term project of training good, healthy competitors for future Olympic games. The man gets a telling-off for his ignorance, which he accepts with military obedience, and from now on the children are allowed to play there.

If any character in the series is Fassbinder's mouthpiece, then it is Grandma. This little scene demonstrates that Fassbinder's principles of action and hers are largely identical. Grandma uses the average



German's trust in authority to assert her anarchist ideas; Fassbinder uses the average German enthusiasm about soap operas to present his radical ideas about family and society. Both work pragmatically within the existing system and exploit the system's weakness in order to undermine it. More dogmatic left-wingers shook their heads pityingly at Grandma's and Fassbinder's naïve 'reformism' and preferred – like Gregor, before he met Grandma – to study how things could be, instead of changing them. Against them, Fassbinder believes that, as Grandma says to Gregor, "Learning never did any harm, but thinking is better." And by thinking, Grandma/Fassbinder doesn't mean some kind of sterile theoretical brainwork, but an activity which constantly renews itself in practice. This always involves the risk of making a mistake and getting into embarrassing situations, of which there are several examples in the series. Grandma changes things. And where

things are done, mistakes occur. Where people only theorise, it's always possible to believe oneself in the right, because one's never contradicted in practice.

If most of Fassbinder's previous works dealt with people's concrete living experiences and developed a critique of their limited possibilities, then the TV series again and again provides alternative designs for living. Consequently, the series is also stylistically different from all of Fassbinder's previous films. The slow, hesitant rhythm of his earlier editing, and the unbelievably long takes have been replaced by a fast and livelier cutting rhythm and a flood of emphatic zooms, without the style becoming incoherent. The series has many comedy elements, for example the well-worn joke in which the couple (Jochen and Marion) kiss in the middle of the street, without noticing that they're holding up traffic, and only emerge from the euphoria when a friendly policeman taps them on the shoulder. Or the eternal family dispute about who can have first use of the permanently occupied bathroom in the morning. Stylistically, the series is perhaps most reminiscent of Howard Hawks comedies such as *Bringing Up Baby*. The difference is, however, that Hawks – and Fassbinder's other classic models – describes human feelings and conflicts in a socially empty space, while Fassbinder always situates his characters in relationship to the class struggle, the struggle not as a phenomenon in a Marxist textbook, but one which consists of countless, small, practical everyday details.

This means, for example, that Jochen and Marion, when they meet again for the first time after Grandma's birthday party, don't primarily talk about their feelings and the like, but about their everyday work; and when Jochen and his friends go into town in the evening, they don't tell each other far-fetched jokes, but – even when they're happily drunk – talk about their daily problems at work. But not for a moment

during these dialogues does one sense a pedagogic tone. Fassbinder's direction is so masterful and his command of dialogue so certain that the lines emerge organically out of the given situation.

When Fassbinder works for television, the individual image cannot, of course, be as artfully composed as in his films for the big screen. Instead of composing individual images, Fassbinder now often constructs sequences with a large number of rapid cuts. This does not, however, exclude carefully composing the images. He can't quite do without mirror effects. An example is the scene in which Marion is supposed to tell her previous boyfriend that she's fallen in love with Jochen. She is seen doubled by a mirror, which shows her standing between two men, one of whom she'd like to keep as a good friend and the other of whom she'd like to have as a husband. And frequently Jochen and Marion are framed in close-ups by gloriously bright flowers. In the scene in the fourth episode, when they eventually decide to marry, the camera zooms on to the picture of an idyllic village on the wall behind them, as if Fassbinder is trying to say that in reality this situation is taking place in a distant Italian dream village and not in provincial Germany. Nor can Fassbinder quite give up his tendency to macabre realism, even if he tries: in another scene, in which Jochen and Marion are kissing, he zooms on to a waitress in the background, who, as she looks enviously at the lovers, applies red lipstick to her mouth with feverish, masturbatory movements. She resembles one of those small-town girls from Ingolstadt, who has got into this dream series by mistake.



2. 'Grandma and Gregor'

The second episode of the series deals mainly with Grandma's craziest and most constructive idea – a proper squat. She and Gregor decide to move in together and look for an apartment, which is easier said than done because, with their small pensions, they can't afford most rents. Grandma therefore sensibly decides only to pay an average rent, 20% of net income, that is, 217 marks and not a pfennig more. They look at one apartment after another, but find nothing suitable at this price.

"Things just are as they are," sighs Gregor in resignation. "They just aren't. They aren't at all!" responds Grandma, and gets it into her head to prove it to him. Outraged by one landlord, whom she

and Gregor meet as they're flat-hunting, she shouts the truth in his face: "You know what you are? You're a pig, an exploiter. You're a bloodsucker, a leech, a rat, a... Words fail me."

Viewers may hear something similar about young squatters in TV news reports. Fassbinder takes the words out of their familiar and hence safe context, puts them in the mouth of a likeable granny and shows that she has every reason to talk like that. It gets worse: in the next scene, she even becomes a squatter herself. While they're flat-hunting, she and Gregor constantly meet children playing on the street. There are no kindergarten places for them and the children are constantly in danger of being run down by cars. They also pass a library, which is to be shut down. The old maid-ish librarian says bitterly that the people in this working-class area just don't want to read. Uneducated rabble! Well, says Grandma, that's maybe because they work so much. There's not enough time to read.

The empty library gives Grandma a good idea: she and Gregor could not only open a kindergarten, they could also live here. And with Grandma it's never far from the idea to the deed.

The housewives of the district are somewhat surprised when their children crowd into the new kindergarten, which is run by two unknown old people. Is it all above board? Everybody has heard about mysterious strangers, who lure children to kill them secretly and perhaps even sell them as meat. (Fassbinder once even produced a film about it, *Tenderness of the Wolves*, with Ulli Lommel as director and Kurt Raab as screenwriter.) So the housewives approach in closed ranks, to the accompaniment of a march on the soundtrack, to inspect the kindergarten. There could be no better cinematic metaphor for the women's slightly comical mistrust than this company of marching housewives, but the troop quickly dissolves again, as they get to

know Grandma and Gregor better and listen to Grandma's soberly reasonable arguments – "If the council isn't doing anything, then we have to help ourselves." Of course, say the women, and even Wolf, Grandma's stubborn son-in-law, agrees with the Fassbinder/Grandma sentence: "If you do something, you're always right."

The right thing is always to do something, and put one's ideas into practice, to find out whether they're workable or not. And the squat turns out to be a good idea. When the police arrive, send the children home and arrest Grandma and Gregor, the housewives of the street take action. They have grasped what Jochen and his workmates already grasped in the first episode – "United we are strong!" So the mothers and their children sit in at the town hall and don't leave until they're allowed to keep their new kindergarten run by Grandma and Gregor. And even the somewhat unworldly Gregor, who would prefer to read about everything rather than do anything, now finds a place where he can pursue his interests and be useful to others. He is the ideal person to read stories to the children, who crowd round the old eccentric.

In this episode we also see that Grandma's kindergarten had an effect on an ordinary family, that of Harald and Monika. Harald wants Monika to stay at home and look after their child, and Monika has given in, even though she'd rather have a job. Now she gets her chance, when she registers the child at the new kindergarten. That's not entirely unproblematic, however, as emerges from the following dialogue between Monika and her daughter on the way to the kindergarten:

MONIKA: But... you mustn't say anything to Daddy about it, because... he's got something against it.

SYLVIA: But why?

MONIKA: Because there are lots of things your father doesn't understand.

SYLVIA: But he's grown up.

MONIKA: Oh, you know, adults aren't always smarter than children. Sometimes, even, they're stupider, you know.

SYLVIA: Mm.

MONIKA: So – you won't tell him anything, about being with Granny and things, right?

SYLVIA: No, Mummy. I won't tell him. Really not.

But, of course, it can't be kept from Harald that his daughter is going to the kindergarten, nor that Monika has brought herself a new hat:

HARALD: You bought yourself a hat? For ninety-five marks fifty? But why, but why? Why are you buying hats?

MONIKA: I'm not buying hats, Harald. I bought one hat. And I bought it because I felt like buying it. I felt like it, d'you understand?

HARALD: No. No, I don't understand. I slave away all day long, so that you can buy a hat, is that it?

MONIKA: Well, I want to go to work. You just have to let me, then I can buy my own things. That's the simplest solution.

HARALD: I'll buy you what you need. Which means, I decide what you need. That's the way it is in this house. And that's the way it's going to stay.

And that's the way it goes on in the second episode. But Monika's timid attempt at emancipation, stimulated by Grandma's kindergarten initiative, is taken against her. And here again Grandma is the person who ensures that everything comes out right.



3. 'Franz and Ernst'

The third episode deals with conflicts in the factory. After the old foreman dies, the workers want Franz to get the job, but, for psychological reasons, the management want someone from outside. The shop manager can't – theoretically, at least – exclude Franz, if he can show he has the appropriate technical and mathematical qualifications. When, shortly afterwards, Franz miscalculates an angle and, as a result, the material they're working on is unusable, the matter is settled – to his disadvantage.

An outside applicant, Ernst, is appointed, and Jochen, Marion and Franz drown their sorrows in one of the many liberating drinking

sessions that run through the whole series. Most of the characters get really drunk at some point, and even Grandma doesn't say no to a small schnapps. The puritanical grandmother in the typical family soap would be more likely to say, "I don't allow my husband to drink." With Grandma, things are more sociable: "I don't allow Gregor to drink without me."

When the new foreman arrives, the workers go into action once more. They consistently behave as if he isn't there, and when it's impossible to ignore his instructions, they misunderstand him as far as they can, so that not only does production constantly suffer but the young, and really quite likeable, foreman does as well. He started the job with the best intentions, hoping to establish a good and equal relationship with workers. Ernst is all right. He has got involved in the conflict between workers and management through no fault of his own. And he succeeds in winning the trust of the workers when he unexpectedly stands up for an Italian gastarbeiter, who has to be fired because of a prank which was played on Ernst himself.

After that, it turns out – as is right and proper in every good popular play – that in reality Ernst doesn't want to be foreman at all, but would rather have another job. And while he's waiting for the new job, he teaches Franz mathematics. Franz passes the exam, whereupon the management, as promised, must appoint him foreman. Once more, the fact that something can be achieved if everyone sticks together is sealed with a decent drinking session.

Grandma and Jochen move away from Jochen's parents and move in with their new partners, which is a blow to Jochen's father in particular. "The house was always full and suddenly there's no one he can argue with. Now he has to rely on his own imagination. And that's something he never learned," explains Grandma, who certainly does not lack

a flourishing imagination. But this time her imagination carries her away to an unintentionally macabre joke. To console Jochen's father, she advertises in the paper for a new granny to take her place. An innocent elderly lady responds to the advert and suddenly turns up in front of Jochen's appalled parents, who had no idea about Grandma's initiative. Grandma recognises that it does no harm to think one's ideas over critically from time to time.



4. 'Harald and Monika'

At the beginning of the fourth episode, Jochen goes around his relations to report on his wedding plans, and discovers that all the married couples are arguing. At the same time, his married workmates tell him what a terrible arrangement marriage is and how hysterical the wife

gets if one comes home only half an hour late. After thinking about it for a long time, he decides nevertheless to marry Marion, who, for her part, believes that quarrels keep married couples on their toes.

At the wedding, friends and relatives come together once again for a giant party, which occupies the last third of the episode. During the party, Harald and Monika's divorce is sorted out. Harald consented long ago, but on condition that he's allowed to bring up Sylvia, who is desperate at the thought. Thanks to Grandma's intervention, he gives way on this point as well.

A couple of other unions comes to pass during the wedding: Monika and Manfred, Jochen's workmate, take a liking to one another, as do Marion's previously unbearable office colleague Irmgard and Rolf, another of Jochen's mates. Up to now, Irmgard looked down on women who get involved with workers, but she seems ready at last to follow Marion's stern advice not to interfere so much in other people's sex lives, but pay more attention to her own.

'Harald and Monika' is not quite as impressive as the preceding episodes, which is perhaps because the principle of integrating private life and the world of work is not maintained here. In addition, the central feature of this part, Grandma's intervention in the divorce business, is a bit weak. Grandma's solution doesn't quite fulfil the expectations that, by this time, we have of Grandma's luxuriant and restless imagination.



5. 'Irmgard and Rolf'

The title of the fifth episode serves more to maintain symmetry than to describe the content. It deals less with private than with work problems, and so this part cannot be as optimistic as the previous four.

The message of the earlier sections was that, with imagination and civic common sense, a great deal can be changed, and life in the family and at work can be made more bearable. From a dogmatic or puritanical standpoint, Fassbinder could certainly be accused of left populism and excessive optimism. The fifth part, however, describes the limits which the existing ownership of the means of production sets to imagination and common sense. Here, thinking has to be done in

terms of clear economic and political concepts, and Jochen and his mates are not used to that. Hence, they come off worst.

Events start moving when the Italian gastarbeiter gets a letter from home, saying that, in the course of the strike, Italian workers had organised their work themselves and so did their jobs in a better and more pleasant way. Jochen takes up the idea and, together with his workmates, suggests to the management that, from now on, they too organise their work themselves. Then, if they produce more, they should get half of the increase in earnings. Nobody believes that the management will agree, but they want to fight for their new idea. To everyone's astonishment, however, the director accepts their proposal.

The workers get their way because management sees a clear advantage for itself. The workers believe they have won a victory, and set to work with renewed enthusiasm. Work goes more quickly if one thinks one is one's own master. The noise of machinery becomes sweet music, and the workers really do succeed in finishing their task more quickly than planned. The jubilation is great, but when the money is to be distributed unprecedented problems arise. Now – at least as far as the bonus is concerned – they themselves can determine how much each person is to get. That leads to an argument, which can, however, be resolved: on a vote, everyone, with one exception, supports an equal payment for all. The workers know from experience that having different wage groups is unjust and that proper work must be rewarded according to the same standard.

Suddenly, another problem occurs to the Italian gastarbeiter: the company was satisfied if the work could be finished in 2,600 hours. Now it's being completed in considerably less time, not thanks to the company, but to the workers. Why should the company have a share

of the increased profits at all? And when Jochen and Rolf come home to Marion and Irmgard – they are all living together in a shared flat – Marion has the same idea. The woman and the immigrant grasp that the others have been taken for a ride.

With recognition stirring, that the root of the evil is to be found in the ownership of the means of production, this family series about labour and market problems comes to an end. Jochen and his friends have made considerable progress, but have to halt at the boundaries of the social order. Ultimately, their ideas of co-determination have led to them being taken for a ride by capitalism, but they have learnt from their mistakes. And Fassbinder's sympathy tends to be more with those who do things and make mistakes than those who are theoretically correct. Jochen and his workmates have made a mistake, but they are no longer blind. Through their activity, they have understood certain societal mechanisms, of which previously they were solely victims. The next step will be more difficult, but if the difficulties are well known, then perhaps they can be overcome.

When Fassbinder took over the Theater am Turm in August 1974, a provocative poster, with this text 'Is Co-Determination a Vicious Capitalist Invention?' was put up. Fassbinder's family drama shows that co-determination can, of course, be exploited by capitalism, but it also shows that the problem has two sides, which Fassbinder confirmed in Frankfurt:

It's possible to look at it in two ways. On the one hand, it's true at the moment that labour power is more subtly exploited through co-determination, but on the other hand, the exploited worker becomes more aware as a result of such a co-determination model and will not so readily put up with the usual mechanisms of oppression. That's

why I believe that co-determination is ultimately very important and, in fact, the only possible way forward. I no longer believe in an armed revolution in our part of the world.¹

The scripts of Fassbinder's earlier feature films were the result of an isolated creative process. However, with this TV series about the potential of community, Fassbinder broke out of his isolation while working on the script. Fassbinder and his team carried out research for almost a year, held conversations with trade unionists and workers, and visited factories. It was important that the series matched the workers' wishes as to how their situation should be described. Fassbinder wrote the scripts, starting from what he had learned with regard to solid desires and ideas, and then showed them to a group of workers. Following the group's critical remarks, some things were cut, others added. After that, the scripts were rewritten two or three times.

Fassbinder had originally planned three more episodes, but the series was suddenly stopped by Dr Günther Rohrbach, the head of drama at WDR Television. This intervention was never explained to Fassbinder, which was all the more curious, as the fee for the following three scripts had already been paid, and actors and technicians had already received contracts for filming the episodes. Fassbinder was convinced that the cancelling of the series by "the lonely decision of a powerful man" was politically motivated. On the content of the three planned but unexecuted parts, Fassbinder said:

They dealt with trade union activity and were an encouragement to take up concrete political work. More so than the previous episodes. In the final three parts, the characters no longer try to fight in isolation in a small group, but join together and work with the existing forms of organisation – the trade unions – and try to lead them back to the grass roots. And in Germany that's a revolutionary idea. Apart from that,

things go wrong in Jochen and Marion's marriage. They are introduced as a dream couple, and subsequently I wanted to show that they have problems too, serious ones. But that didn't suit Dr Rohrbach at WDR. He said a dream couple must stay a dream couple. Furthermore, I wanted Monika to commit suicide. The whole thing was supposed to develop more pessimistically, but also more concretely, than in the first five parts. The private circumstances get even bleaker, and the political matters ever more concrete, so that the dream or fairy tale tone which the first five episodes had is left behind. In the fifth episode, I already suggested that not all problems can be solved as in a fairy tale, but that was the most that was possible on West German television.²

That WDR stopped the series is, of course, symptomatic fate for something that tries to break the bounds of what is acceptable within a family drama. Fassbinder was concerned with the possibilities of community, and his stubborn insistence on these possibilities, *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* becomes a work that transcends boundaries. A ban from the highest authority then becomes necessary in order to re-establish those boundaries. ■

Footnotes

¹ Interview with Christian Braad Thomsen, Frankfurt am Main, 1984.

² Interview with Christian Braad Thomsen, Frankfurt am Main, 1984. The three banned scripts have been edited by Michael Töteberg and appear as part of the collected edition of Fassbinder's theatre and film texts published by Verlag der Autoren, Frankfurt am Main.



A Conversation With Juliane Lorenz

by David Jenkins

Juliane Lorenz is a celebrated film editor known for her work with Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Her first credit was as assistant editor on *Chinese Roulette* [*Chinesisches Roulette*, 1976] and, following 1978's *Despair*, Fassbinder announced that she would become his in-house editor. Lorenz is currently head of the Fassbinder Foundation whose mission includes curation and upkeep of the Fassbinder legacy, and she has also made a number of documentaries about the director's life and work. Lorenz came to London in March 2017 to be involved in a Fassbinder retrospective held at the BFI Southbank, and our meeting was made possible by Liz Parkinson.

David Jenkins: How long have you been working on the restoration of *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*?

Juliane Lorenz: It took nearly 20 years of work to get it all together. It's always difficult to get the money for a project like this. During the making of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* [1980], we sometimes held screenings of this because Rainer wanted the team to see his previous

work – to get them in the mood. We got WDR [German TV station Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln] to send us the only 16mm print. And I was so astonished in 1979 that he had made it. Rainer was astonished that he managed it too.

DJ: What's astonishing also is that it's such a funny work.

JL: But that was Rainer. He was a funny guy. Or at least he could be. Of course, his early films were very different. With *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*, he became looser. As he used to say with *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, from that moment on, he really knew that he could do the business of film. And this was his first step forward to being an artist. I'm very proud that he made it. Rainer really loved learning. He took a lot from watching films. Even in the final years, we watched many, many films. If we hadn't seen it, he wanted to watch it. He was a collector in that way. German TV at that time showed lots of old films, so that helped.

DJ: How did he find the time?

JL: He didn't sleep so much. He was always in a good mood when he watched films. And I was the same. We started in the cinema, but later it was VHS cassettes, and Rainer would meticulously set the timer to record films from the TV. And when we would come home and see that we had the film, we'd be so excited. This was the start of the digital revolution in many ways, which I don't think is the best for film as a medium. But you had the possibility of immersing yourself in the culture.

DJ: With *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*, you also get the sense that he was consuming a lot of mainstream television as well.

JL: He saw everything. At that time, Peter Märthesheimer and the WDR

commissioning team were young. But Rainer was really young. He was 26 and had already made 12 films. It was a good time. Channel 4 in the UK, when it started up, was a follower of WDR, because by the mid-'60s, its programming became very innovative and forward-looking. And they wanted to bring in these young people from the so-called 'New German Cinema'. Fassbinder had done so many films, he was in every newspaper, so they thought it would be only natural to connect him with a mass audience. And he loved that idea.

DJ: Was it the idea of connecting with the working classes rather than middle-class cinéphiles?

JL: Absolutely. It was screened at primetime and it was very successful – 25 million people watched it. It was the early days of colour television, and the early days of these family serials. WDR was founded in 1962, and in the middle of the '60s they started buying up all these American series like *Bonanza* and *Flipper*. Then they moved towards stories of family life, but it was never working-class people – always middle and upper classes. *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* was the first working-class series, which was WDR's idea. They wanted a story from the perspective of ordinary workers.

DJ: It's a unique series in that, from a character standpoint, there are no good or evil characters.

JL: Rainer said of his characters in this, "I love them all." Everyone has a good side and a bad side, but everyone is looking forward. This was a story about people trying to have fun. Depictions of the working classes on screen were often linked to the idea of struggle or hardship, but this was different. And that actually affected the critical response to the series. A few critics in Germany were rather rude. They described it as "*geschminkt* proletarian" [painted proletarians, or proletarians in make-up], because Hanna Schygulla's character

was very beautiful. But Rainer didn't aspire to realism. He wanted his characters to be heroes. And for the public it worked.

DJ: It seems rare for a piece of mainstream art to be so openly celebratory about working-class life.

JL: The reason for that is because he loved Hollywood so much. And this marked a transition towards more a Hollywood-ian filmmaking style, but always with a German source. For him, stories had to touch the heart. A film like *The Marriage of Maria Braun* [*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, 1979] is quite a Hollywood-style film, but in an extremely sophisticated way. For me, *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* – and this is something we discovered during the restoration – is really his first film made for the public. Everything up to then was just made for private consumption. It's the point that he realised you have to respect the spectator – he was a worker and they were his boss. I think that's the reason he got so into Douglas Sirk, because Sirk was making Hollywood films that didn't feel too American. I remember when we shot a film called *Theater in Trance* [1981], between *Lola* [1981] and *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, and he was so bored. He looked over to me and just said, "Ugh, it's so realistic!" But at least we edited a little bit more to make it anti-realistic.

DJ: Returning to the restoration, considering Fassbinder's reputation, it's surprising to hear that it was difficult to get the budget for this project.

JL: It's always hard. I think I'm a kind of pioneer with restorations in Germany. I decided very early on to restore *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, which was not our film, but Rainer as a director and a scriptwriter had some rights. Nearly 20 years ago, when I started to think about *Alexanderplatz*, everyone asked me why I wanted to restore it for the screen. What does that mean? So then I had my mission. I started to look after his films that were made for TV. In the mid-'90s I made

dupe negatives of the original 16mm prints. That included *World on a Wire* [*Welt am Draht*, 1973], *Fear of Fear* [*Angst vor der Angst*, 1975] and *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*. I went in the early '90s to WDR and we watched all the material. We had some money, so we decided that would be our work. Everybody said I was crazy.

DJ: Who's everybody?

JL: The people I was asking for money. Restoration 20 years ago wasn't really a thing. There wasn't even a word for it in German. I wanted to produce new material because I already knew in the beginning that the 16mm material would become obsolete. I went to the producers in Bavaria. And then, I spent some time in America, and that's when I learned that you have to have the literary rights too. I had to try and buy the rights to the Alfred Döblin novel. The film was made in 1979, and the rights to the novel expired after 15 years, so you couldn't screen *Alexanderplatz*. I went to the Döblin heirs, and I asked them if I could buy it. Then I went to Bavaria and said that I had bought the novel rights. And they were angry with me. I bought something and they had no power any more. But then we came together.

DJ: Was it a different process with *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day*?

JL: Yes, because that was produced entirely with WDR, and I had a great relationship with them. They gave me all the materials, told me I could do whatever I wanted, but that I had to pay for it myself. They gave me the rights for 50 years. Rights expire, so you have to acquire them over and over. And that includes if you want to bring it to cinemas or Blu-ray rather than TV. Back in the '70s, the contracts weren't as clever as they are today, because of all these outside rights. You have to clear music rights, actor rights – all these bloody things.

DJ: The music rights for this must've been tough, considering there's all this Leonard Cohen and Janis Joplin in the background.

JL: In Germany, you can make TV movies without those rights. There's a company who you pay a small amount and they channel the funds back to the artists. But if you go out into the market, and want to make money with DVDs or VOD, you have to clear every single music cue. I had a whole team working on it. It's a production – the thing that takes the time.

DJ: All-in, what did the restoration cost in the end?

JL: Well, I know *Berlin Alexanderplatz* cost us €1,375,000. And I found all of that. There was a movement in the end of the '90s in Germany when the SPD [the Social Democratic Party of Germany] founded a kind of cultural department. We don't have a cultural minister, but a culture secretary. The institution is called Kulturstiftung des Bundes [German Federal Cultural Foundation] and they helped me. And also my friend Susan Sontag helped me. I lived in New York for a while and she was a big admirer of Fassbinder. She wrote this beautiful essay about *Alexanderplatz*. The longer the films were, the more she liked them. She got a prize in Germany in 2003 and the secretary of the minister was there, and so Susan went over with me and just said, "You have to help her! She needs money!" And we got €320,000. The Fassbinder Foundation put money into it. And then the government realised you could make money from these things. When *Alexanderplatz* was originally released on DVD in Germany in 2007, they sold 30,000 copies in six months. And I had a lot of shit on my hands because people said that I lightened it up and that it was supposed to be darker. But I survived. I didn't do what they said.

DJ: How much were the original cinematographers involved in these restorations?

JL: The original director of photography, Xaver Schwarzenberger, was overseeing the restoration of *Alexanderplatz*. The next one was Michael Ballhaus, who did the restoration of *World on a Wire*. Dietrich Lohmann, who was DoP on *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* passed away a long time ago, so I did it with Günter Rohrbach [the head of drama at WDR during *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day's* production]. We did 20 of Rainer's films in standard definition about 15 years ago, and now we're doing them in 4K, and it goes on and on. In the end, *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* cost us €800,000, because it's five feature films. This time it was really breathtaking, because I had a lot of help from people. We have a source now called Film Heritage Content, where you get €15,000 towards a restoration. To give you an idea, a feature-length restoration starts at about €45,000, so you have to get the rest. And that is my life. I like it. Especially when it's finished. But ever since the mid-'90s when we originally went to WDR, I have kept a list. I'm a socialist in that respect. I always know what I want to restore next. When this is ready, the next one is coming.

DJ: Is 1973's *Jailbait* [*Wildwechsel*] on the list, as for many Fassbinder fans that remains very tough to see?

JL: Yep, it's next. It rarely screens in cinemas because I don't yet have the rights for it. So that is the next goal, but I need a little break. This is a promise I gave to [*Jailbait's* lead actor] Eva Mattes when I met her a few weeks ago. It's a great film. But 25 years ago, when I was organising a big retrospective in Berlin, Kroetz was asking for DM 25,000 for a single screening. He doesn't like the film. People say it's because he thinks it's too different to his play. But it's not different at all. It is the play, but he doesn't want to accept it. Rainer wanted to work with him, and we have correspondences between them. He asked him to co-write the script, and Kroetz refused. That's normal, though. One hero kills the other hero. ■

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Eight Hours Don't Make a Day was shot between April and August 1972 for Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in 1.37:1. The series was preserved as an original 16mm reverse positive, the colours of which had faded in parts after more than 40 years. Under the artistic direction of Juliane Maria Lorenz, this film material was digitized and restored by ARRI in 2K. In the process, a scene was retained that had been preserved in its entirety only in the original reverse positive: a short excerpt from the film *Liebelei* (Max Ophuls, 1933) featuring Luise Ullrich as Mizi Schlager – evidently Fassbinder's homage to the actress. The soundtrack had been preserved on the original 16mm mixed sound rolls and was replaced in a few places by an earlier transfer to DA88 where the mixed sound tape was damaged. Clearly audible clicks and static noise resulting from long term storage were reduced, and the dynamics and tonal colours of the original mix were carefully retained.

Producer and Artistic Director Juliane Maria Lorenz
Production Management Frank Graf
Administration Livia Anita Fiorio
Colour Grading Traudl Nicholson
Film Restoration Supervisor Matteo Lepore
Producer ARRI Thilo Gottschling
Audio Transfer Michael Fürstenberg
Sound Restoration Matthias Lempert

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Discs and Book Produced by Anthony Nield
Executive Producers Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni
Technical Producer James White
QC Manager Nora Mehenni
Blu-ray and DVD Mastering Digital Cinema United
Design Nick Wrigley / enthusiasm.org

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Christine Berg, Christina Bentlage, Peter Dinges, Walter Donohue, Antonio Exacoustos, Livia Fiorio, Gebhard Henke, David Jenkins, Laurence Kadish, Markus Kirsch, Dieter Kosslick, Juliane Lorenz, Ian Mantgani, Petra Müller, Bernd Neumann, Tony Rayns, Josef Reidinger, Annette Reschke, Jon Robertson, Rajendra Roy, Achim Strack, Andreas Streitmüller, Frank Wienands and Günter Rohrbach.

