



STARS

BY KONRAD WOLF

Logline

A Jewish teacher and a German sergeant fall in love in a Bulgarian camp where Greek Jews await their deportation to Auschwitz in 1943. Their love is crushed by fascism, hate and discrimination in one of the first films to confront Germany's role in the Holocaust. Based on the experiences of the Bulgarian writer Angel Wagenstein (1922-2023).





Synopsis

In 1943 Bulgaria, a German sergeant is stationed in a small town to supervise Bulgarian workers. At the same time, a camp is being established to hold Greek Jews before their deportation to Auschwitz. During a medical emergency, the imprisoned Ruth asks the sergeant for help through the barbed wire. Gradually, they begin to get to know each other: during late-night walks, they share their thoughts about humanity, hope, and their visions of the past and future. The sergeant falls in love with Ruth and tries to save her from her impending fate.

STARS established Konrad Wolf's international reputation. The Bulgarian–East German co-production won the Special Jury Prize at the 1959 Cannes Film Festival. The story is based on the experiences of Bulgarian writer Angel Wagenstein (1922–2023)

Restoration

The 4K restoration of STARS is presented by DEFA Foundation and Coproduction Office and was carried out by DEFA Foundation in collaboration with L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna. The original 35 mm camera negative was used as primary source for the image while an early, well-preserved 35mm sound negative was used for the sound. A distribution print from the film's original release served as the reference for colour grading.

The restored 4K version will premiere at Cannes 2025, marking the centenary of Konrad Wolf's birth.



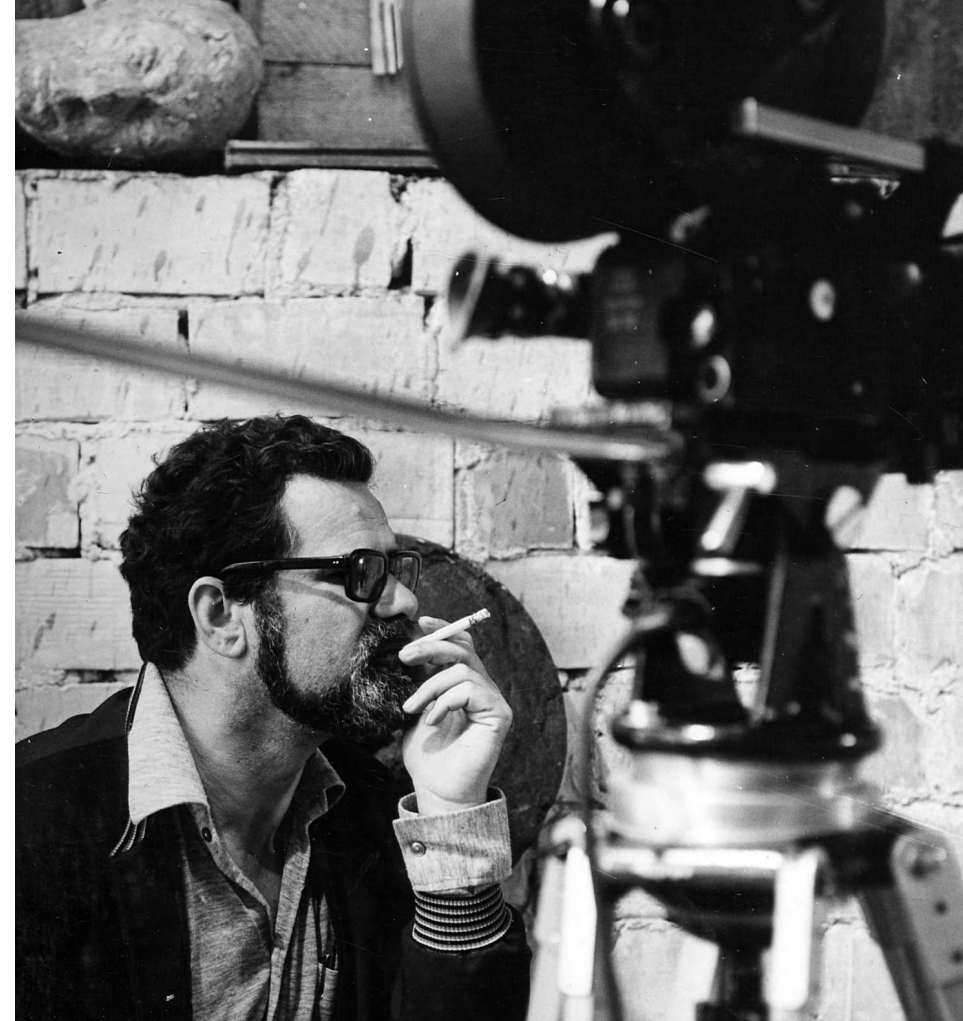
Konrad Wolf

Born in 1925, Konrad Wolf's life was shaped by his Jewish communist father being forced to escape Nazi persecution and emigrate to Moscow in the 1930s where Wolf grew up as a Soviet citizen. He then returned to Germany as a 19-year-old lieutenant in the Red Army during World War II, which inspired his acclaimed classic "I WAS NINETEEN" (1968).

Wolf's commitment to free artistic expression is reflected within his cinematic oeuvre by a strong aesthetic and a nuanced portrayal of characters and situations. His anti-fascist film "STARS" (1959) earned him the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. In "DIVIDED HEAVEN" (1964, adapted from Christa Wolf's novel), Wolf captures the complexities of life

in divided Germany. Wolf's final feature film, "SOLO SUNNY" (1980), authentically portrays the life of a young singer in East Berlin in the late 70s and its star, Renate Krößner won the Best Actress Award at the Berlinale in 1980.

Despite his background as a Red Army officer, his elder brother's position as the head of the East German foreign intelligence service, or his long tenure of the official position of president of the GDR Academy of Arts, Wolf maintained his independence, presenting a narrative that at times went beyond the expectations of GDR officials. His film "SUN SEEKERS" (1958) was banned by the authorities for more than a decade, while "DIVIDED HEAVEN" was repeatedly removed from circulation.



Filmography

SOLO SUNNY (1980)

MAMA, I'M ALIVE (1976)

THE NAKED MAN IN THE STADIUM (1974)

GOYA OR THE HARD WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT (1971)

I WAS NINETEEN (1968)

THE LITTLE PRINCE (1966)

DIVIDED HEAVEN (1964)

PROFESSOR MAMLOCK (1961)

MEN WITH WINGS (1960)

STARS (1959)

SUN SEEKERS (1958)

LISSY (1957)

RECOVERY (1956)

ONCE IS NEVER (1955)



Cast & Crew

Starring: Sascha Kruscharska, Jürgen Frohriep,
Erik S. Klein, Stefan Pejtschew, Georgi Naumow,
Ivan Kondow, Milka Tujkova, Stiljan Kunew,
Naitscho Petrow, Hannjo Hasse

Script: Angel Wagenstein

Cinematography: Werner Bergmann

Editing: Christa Wernicke

Production Design: José Sancha, Maria Iwanowa,
Alfred Drosdek

Music: Simeon Pironkow

Song: Mordechai Gebirtig

Sound: Erich Schmidt

Costume Design: Albert Seidner

Production Company: DEFA-Studio für Spielfilme,
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