

Love & life, German-style

by David Lumble

While it's not the full banquet of German-language film treasures we've come to expect from the long-running *Berlin and Beyond* film festival, programming wizard Ingrid Eggers has cobbled together an all-day program of new *German Gems*: five films that hint at the thematic depth and acting range of the New German Cinema, on Sunday, Feb. 28, at the Castro Theatre. The program (with a special festival pass that includes a 6 p.m. reception) features a 7 p.m. gala offering, *Vision*, showcasing the legendary Margarethe von Trotta and Fassbinder discovery Barbara Sukowa.

Tender Parasites: My pick for the diamond among the gems is Christian Becker and Oliver Schwabe's offbeat tale about a slippery young couple who drift along providing comfort to the emotionally bereft. Jacob and Manu's repertoire ranges from the usual visiting nurse's bag of tricks to doing a live sex show for a dying woman. The filmmakers shrewdly withhold the pair's back story while we discover them just as their partnership is coming off the rails. Jacob is another moody, sensual turn from Robert Stadlober, who fueled a most transcendent boy-on-boy life-altering outdoor sex scene in the 2005 rowing

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romp, *Summer Storm*. He's distracted from his gypsy life with Manu after developing an unsettling attachment to an older man whose passion is hang-gliding. Jacob's steely determination to insinuate himself into the gap left by a deceased adult son provides an odd look at empty-nest German families. Be alert for rapturous shower scenes and an ambiguous denouement.

Miss Stinnes: Before Amelia



Robert Stadlober and Sylvester Groth in Christian Becker and Oliver Schwabe's *Tender Parasites*.

Earhart sought to circle the Earth, a female racing pioneer had already survived a perilous circumnavigation by auto. Erica von Moeller (at the screening) fuses archival footage with an intimate dramatization of Clarenore Stinnes' 25-month ordeal through Siberia, the Gobi Desert and the highways of America. Set in Weimer's fad-

ing glow, this is a world unimagined in Google maps.

Being Mr. Kotschie: The onset of male menopause finds a buttoned-down businessman fleeing his sensible wife, senile dad and Ichabod Crane-like teenage son.

The Bone Man: A grumpy private eye, reduced to being a freelance repo

man, gets more than he bargained for at a rural chicken restaurant whose proprietor has a truly ghastly special ingredient. This late-night special may irritate vegetarians, while sexual gourmets will discover unexpected treats. ▼

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