

BASED ON THE TRUE STORY OF AN INSPIRING WOMAN

VALERIE PACHNER ROBERT STADLOBER

FOUR MINUS THREE



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Panorama

A FILM BY ADRIAN GOINGER

STEFANIE REINSPERGER HANNO KOFFLER RONALD ZEHRFELD

BETA CINEMA PRESENTS A PRODUCTION OF 2010 ENTERTAINMENT AND ORGANIKEN FILM IN COLLABORATION WITH ORF-FFA, ORF SWR AND ARTE
WITH VALERIE PACHNER, ROBERT STADLOBER, HANNO KOFFLER, STEFANIE REINSPERGER, PETRA MÜLLER, PAUL WOLFF-PLÜTTIG, MARGARETHE TESSL, MICHAEL GANKE, MICHAEL FINTI, AND RONALD ZEHRFELD. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL SPRINZ. COSTUME DESIGNER: SIMON BLASI. MARTIN PEEL. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: MARTINA BRÜDER. COSTUME DESIGNER: LESTER AMOSER.
MAKUP BY TINA SCHNEIDER. ORIGINAL SOUND BY MARKUS FERRERIZ. SOUND DESIGNER: MARVIN H. KEIL. MIXER BY ARAASH SAFARIAN. CASTING: ANGELIKA KRÖPFI. EDITOR: JUAN PAUL LEON. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JOHANN WÄLTLER, PETER WILDUNG, GERHART KLEIN. PRODUCTION MANAGERS: ANJA WIESER, GEMINETTI FELIX, RUPPEL.
COMMISSIONING EDITOR: JULIA SENS. SCRIPT BY ADRIAN GOINGER. PRODUCED BY PETER WILDUNG, GERHART KLEIN, MARTIN PEEL, ADRIAN GOINGER, DAVYD STÖLLINGER. WRITTEN BY SENAD HALLDASIC. DIRECTED BY ADRIAN GOINGER.
COPYRIGHT © 2019 GÖTTSCHE LOWE FILMAGENCY AND UFI - AFG BÄLLEN. WIRTSCHAFTS FILMINTENSIV. FILMINTENSIV. DEUTSCHE FILMUNDFERNSICHERUNG FILM UND FERNSEHUNGSANSTALT FILM UND FERNSEHUNGSANSTALT BAYERN. COMESTIVIA. BAYRISCHE STAATSKANZLEI LAND SAALZBURG. LAND STEIERMARK. KULTUR STAAT SAARL. STAAT SAALZBURG.



Beta Cinema
presents



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Panorama

FOUR MINUS THREE

A film by
Adrian Goiginger

Based on the bestselling novel of the same name by
Barbara Pacht-Eberhart

Written by
Senad Halilbašić

Produced by
Peter Wildling, Gerrit Klein, Martin Pfeil,
David Stöllinger, Adrian Goiginger

Starring
Valerie Pachner, Robert Stadlober, Stefanie Reinsperger,
Hanno Koffler, Ronald Zehrfeld a.o.

Screenings in Berlin

Mon, Feb 16	18:00h	Zoo Palast 1	World Premiere
Tue, Feb 17	10:45h	Haus der Berliner Festspiele	
Wed, Feb 18	21:45h	Cubix 7	
Thu, Feb 20	16:45h	Kino Casablanca	
Fri, Feb 21	10:00h	Cubix 9	
Sat, Feb 22	15:00h	Urania	

International Press

Stephen Lan // iamstephenlan@gmail.com // Cell/WhatsApp: +1-416-923-6327

World Sales

Beta Cinema // beta@betacinema.com // Phone: +49 89 673469 – 828
www.betacinema.com

CONTENT

Cast & crew

Synopsis

Production notes

Interview with Adrian Goiginger

Interview with Barbara Pacht-Eberhart

Interview with Valerie Pachner

The Cast

Valerie Pachner (Barbara)

Robert Stadlober (Heli)

Stefanie Reinsperger (Sabine)

Hanno Koffler (Friedrich)

Ronald Zehrfeld (M.D. Jürgen Schreiner)

The Crew

Adrian Goiginger (Director)

Barbara Pacht-Eberhart (Novel)

Senad Halilbašić (Screenplay)

Paul Sprinz (Director of Photography)

The Production Companies

2010 Entertainment (Austria)

Giganten Film (Germany)

CAST & CREW

Barbara	VALERIE PACHNER
Heli	ROBERT STADLOBER
Sabine	STEFANIE REINSPERGER
Friedrich	HANNO KOFFLER
Roswitha	MARGARETHE TIESEL
Fritz	PAUL WOLFF-PLOTTEGG
Gerhard	MICHAEL GAMPE
Stefanie	PETRA MORZÉ
Jan	MICHAEL FUITH
Hannes	WOLFGANG LAMPL
Edith	SOPHIA LAGGNER
Jürgen Schreiner	RONALD ZEHRFELD
Directed by	ADRIAN GOIGINGER
Written by	SENAD HALILBAŠIĆ
Based on the novel by	BARBARA PACHL-EBERHART
Production Companies	2010 ENTERTAINMENT (Austria), GIGANTEN FILM (Germany)
Producers	PETER WILDLING, GERRIT KLEIN, MARTIN PFEIL, DAVID STÖLLINGER, ADRIAN GOIGINGER
Director of Photography	PAUL SPRINZ
Production design	MARIA GRUBER
Costume design	ESTHER AMUSER
Make-up	TIM SCHEIDIG
Editing	MARTIN PFEIL, SIMON BLASI
Casting	ANGELIKA KROPEJ
Music	ARASH SAFAIAN
Sound design	MARVIN KEIL
Production managers	MAJA WIESER BENEDETTI, FELIX RUPLE
German distributor	ALAMODE FILM
Austrian distributor	POLYFILM
Technical Details:	Austria/Germany 2025 121 minutes

LOGLINE

Based on a true story: Barbara lives a joyful life as a clown with her partner and their two children. When a tragic accident takes her family, Barbara is left alone. In the face of unspeakable loss, she decides to confront her fate and dares to embrace life anew.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Barbara and her partner Heli are professional clowns, living out their dream of an alternative, joy-filled life with their two children, laughing at what doesn't work out. But when a tragic car accident takes Heli and the children, Barbara is left alone. In the face of unspeakable loss, her belief in humor, hope, and humanity is put to the ultimate test. Can her way of seeing the world — through both its light and shadow — help her find a way back to life? She bets she'll laugh again.

Based on the incredible true story of an exceptional woman and her bestselling novel. *A Hidden Life's* Valerie Pachner delivers an outstanding performance in this deeply emotional love story and ode to precious memories.

Director Adrian Goiginger, celebrated for his very personal films – *The Best of All Worlds*, *The Fox* – has adapted this moving life story for the screen. With sensitivity and a keen sense for his characters, he stages the lively, hopeful story of a woman who never gives up.

FULL SYNOPSIS

A family: Barbara (VALERIE PACHNER), Heli (ROBERT STADLOBER) and their children Fini and Thimo. There is love. There is affection. There is harmony. A life together.

Heli and Barbara are clowns—very different clowns. Heli celebrates the fine art, performs in front of an audience, and captivates spectators with his subtle performances. It's crazy how infinitely heavy a small balloon can be—heavier than life itself, it seems! Barbara is a hospital clown, with a painted face and a red nose. She brings colour to the grey everyday life of the hospital, joy and imagination to sick children in the midst of dreariness. Both take laughter seriously and see their work as a calling, albeit on different levels and using different means. This can certainly lead to disagreement. Heli thinks Barbara could make more of herself. Barbara is fulfilled by what she does. When the family is together, everything is fine. The children and Heli are Barbara's elixir of life.

On the way home from Graz, Barbara receives a call in the car from her friend Sabine (STEFANIE REINSPERGER). There has been an accident at a level crossing, an accident involving a yellow clown bus. Barbara and Heli were given a clown bus like this as a

wedding present. Barbara is incredulous, yet alarm bells are ringing—LOUD. LOUDER AND LOUDER. Hope, fear. A little later, certainty. It is their bus; the children were on board. Heli is dead. The children are in hospital with serious injuries. The doctor (RONALD ZEHRFELD) can offer her little hope. Thimo suffered cardiac arrest. He was resuscitated, but the circulatory arrest caused severe brain damage. He will never wake up again. Fini suffered severe traumatic brain injury. She is stable but has been placed in an induced coma. In her case, there is hope. “Good,” says Barbara, her face stony, a mask. Because she knows that nothing is good, but it will take time to truly understand that. Heli's parents insist that the children need to be christened, and Barbara breaks down.

She remembers how Heli persuaded her not to sell a dilapidated country estate he inherited from his aunt, as originally planned, but to leave the city behind, renovate it themselves, and turn it into a paradise for the children. “Please,” Heli said, “let me do this!” And Barbara said yes, because she could never refuse anything to Heli—her Heli, the dreamer and born clown.

The doctors continue fighting for Fini's life and are quietly optimistic. For the first time, Barbara leaves the hospital room and goes for a walk in nature. “Please... stay!” she says. She hears the wind rustling, the rustling of autumn leaves. She feels. She is alive. She thinks of her children, of Heli, of laughter and happiness. Of family and life. But back at the hospital, Barbara is caught up again in the cruelty of reality. Fini died in the brief moments when she was not there. Barbara thinks back to Fini's birth, the great happiness.

Everyday life catches up with her. Decisions have to be made: which coffins, which mourning cards, what kind of funeral. Barbara experiences it as if watching from the outside. She takes refuge in her memories. Not all of them are positive anymore. Not everything was always good; there were also arguments between her and Heli. About the inherited house. About the division of responsibilities. It was Barbara who brought home the money with her work as a hospital clown, while Heli took care of the children and household. He reproached her for preventing him from applying to be a clown with a big circus in Germany or France, from realising his potential, from finally turning his back on provincial Austria. It got down to the existential. Sometimes it got so loud that the children woke from their sleep. “I'm not afraid,” she would sing to the children to calm them down, and finally put her arms around Heli. Life had to go on. And it did. Until now.

Watching a video of Heli performing, Barbara laughs again for the first time. How she would love to touch him now. Inspired, she writes a long email to her friends and contacts who have comforted her, telling them how she is doing and how she feels. That she is still alive. “I want to laugh, and I will laugh,” she tells her friend Sabine. Heli and her children would want that. “I am alive and I want to be part of normal life,” she writes. “Don't be afraid to confront me with this life and challenge me in the process. It feels so good to experience life in all its facets.” A first step. It has been taken. Now comes the hard part.

Barbara invites her clown friends to the funeral service, and they sing a lively song in the church, one she always sang with Heli and the children. *“Get out of the way! Old Dan Tucker. You’re too late to get your supper,”* they sing, dance, walk on stilts, and release balloons as the coffins are carried outside. A wondrous sight, a sad farewell, and yet a celebration of life.

Now Barbara has to cope on her own, alone in her big house, alone with her life. It is not made easy for her. She wants to go back to work, but she is not welcome: no one wants a clown who has just lost her family to play with children.

Barbara remembers how she tried her hand at theatre acting and met Heli right after that, during a street performance. She spontaneously jumped into the scene, and afterwards they talked, and he took her under his wing as his clown partner.

A rollercoaster ride of emotions begins. Barbara visits Fini's kindergarten group. The children tell her stories and talk about their dreams, hand her their drawings. Barbara bursts into tears. She wants to throw herself back into life, to feel something, so she puts on make-up and picks up a guy at the disco for a quickie. The hoped-for thrill fails to materialise... After he slips away, she has to laugh. She remembers her beginnings as a clown, how awkward she was at first and how great her joy was when she succeeded in her first tricks. ‘The clown is the most unfinished character there is,’ Heli taught her and confessed that he wanted nothing else in his life. That was the moment she fell in love with him.

Sabine asks Barbara if she would like to go out for dinner with her and her husband and a friend of theirs next week: the actor Friedrich (HANNO KOFFLER) has read her letter, which went viral in a roundabout way, and wants to meet her. The evening gets off to a good start, but Barbara soon feels that Friedrich's attempts at sincere sympathy are inappropriate. She just wants to get away and flees. She is all the more surprised when Friedrich shows up at her farm a little later and apologises. He is like a changed man—empathetic and curious, whereas before he seemed so full of himself. Barbara feels something. But will she dare to take another step?

PRODUCTION NOTES

HONEST, HEARTFELT STORYTELLING ROOTED IN TRUTH.

Four Minus Three is the fifth feature film by successful Austrian filmmaker Adrian Goiginger. He came up with the idea after discovering Barbara Pachl-Eberhart's book of the same name. He then brought Senad Halilbašić on board as screenwriter and proposed the idea of launching the project as an Austrian-German co-production between the production companies he co-founded – 2010 Entertainment in Austria, led by Peter Wildling, and Giganten Film in Germany, headed by Gerrit Klein. 'We all met at the 2020 Berlinale and forged the plan for the project and our collaboration,' say the producers. The material fits the DNA of both companies: Both 2010 Entertainment and Giganten Film stand for truthful storytelling — for films that touch something real without ever pretending. *Four Minus Three* embodies exactly that: the film is both heartbreaking and comforting, and always deeply truthful.

From the very first reading of Barbara Pachl-Eberhart's original work, it was clear to the filmmakers that this story was something special: a deeply personal story about loss, love and the power to find your way back to life, the producers continue. 'We were deeply moved by how honestly and hopefully Barbara Pachl-Eberhart writes about her fate in her book. We quickly wanted to turn it into a film that would do justice to her openness – with the same authenticity that characterises Adrian's films.'

Adrian Goiginger's earlier films, such as *The Best of All Worlds* and *The Fox*, are strongly influenced by his own biography. *Four Minus Three* was an exciting next step. 'Here he tells the personal story of another person, and yet you immediately recognise his signature style: the honest, loving narration of pain, loss and hope,' say the producers. What is special about Barbara Pachl-Eberhart's story is its clarity. 'She speaks openly about the unspeakable without losing herself in it. She shows that grief and *joie de vivre* are not contradictory. This balance between darkness and light fascinated us from the very beginning.'

Barbara Pachl-Eberhart was an important contact person in all phases of the project development, from the script to the preparation to the shooting. Together with Senad Halilbašić as writer and Adrian Goiginger as director, a very sensitive, respectful exchange developed. 'Barbara didn't control, she accompanied – and repeatedly encouraged us to seek the emotional truth of her story cinematically, rather than just retelling it. This openness did the film a lot of good,' say the producers.

A RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON TRUST

The biggest challenge for the producers was to do justice to the true story. 'With such sensitive material, every decision, from the casting to the tone of the film, must be made with particular care. We wanted authenticity instead of shock, closeness instead of pathos,' said our colleagues at 2010 Entertainment and Giganten Film. And of course, it

required trust, as they emphasize: ‘From Barbara Pachel-Eberhart, who entrusted us with her story; from Adrian Goiginger, who retold it in his own way; and from everyone who contributed to this film. That trust was the foundation of the entire project.’”

Thanks to this trust, they succeeded in giving such a sensitive topic the right form, cinematically, atmospherically and humanly. The film should do justice to the true story without embellishing or exaggerating it.

Because *Four Minus Three* is not a classic entertainment film, a certain amount of persuasion was necessary when setting up the financing. ‘It was all the more wonderful to see how everyone involved, from the team to our partners, stood behind this story and made it possible together,’ said the producers. With the support of Austrian and German financing partners, filming could begin in autumn 2024. Most of it took place in the region of Styria (Austria), in Graz and the surrounding area, with parts also shot in Vienna, Salzburg and Karlsruhe (Germany). It was important to preserve the geographical and emotional location of the story without reconstructing it. The producers remember the filming as ‘intense,’ ‘but characterised by a great sense of unity within the team. Many of them already knew each other from previous projects, which created a sense of trust and calm that was crucial when dealing with such an emotional subject.’

The producers conclude by saying that they hope this emotional intensity will also be conveyed to cinema audiences. “*Four Minus Three* tells the story of an unimaginable loss and of how life continues nonetheless. Our hope is that the film offers comfort without imposing it. If audiences leave the cinema with a sense of hope—perhaps even with the thought that love and memory are stronger than pain—then, as producers, we have achieved everything we wished for.”

Peter Wildling & Gerrit Klein

INTERVIEW WITH ADRIAN GOINGER

***Four Minus Three* is the first screenplay you have filmed that you did not write yourself. Did you first encounter Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart's story in the form of a finished screenplay, or had you come across it earlier?**

We wanted to produce the film with 2010 Entertainment in Austria and Giganten Film in Germany, but at the beginning I didn't know whether I wanted to direct it. I first read the synopsis of *Four Minus Three* at a time when my second child had just been born. My initial reaction was that the story of a woman who loses her husband and children in one fell swoop was too intense for me. However, I recommended the author Senad Halilbašić, whom I already knew from other screenplays and whose approach I had always found very interesting. I left myself open to joining the project at a later stage. It was only through Senad's first draft of the screenplay and his perspective on the story that I realised that it was more about hope and life after the accident than about telling a tragedy. That made me want to make this film.

There is a constant theme running through all five of your feature films – *The Best of All Worlds*, *Märzengrund*, *The Fox*, *Rickerl*: the interface between real people and events and their fictionalisation. Is anchoring your stories in reality an important factor for you?

I think so. A real core is enough. *Rickerl* is actually very fictional, but we did draw on many anecdotes and true events from the life of Voodoo Jürgens. As soon as there is a real starting point, you have something to research and discover. This preparatory phase, where you have conversations, collect photo and video material, rehearse and try to delve deeper into a topic, is one of the phases I enjoy the most. And I notice in audience discussions that most questions relate back to the real story.

The story of a woman who loses her entire family in a traffic accident means telling the almost unimaginable and taking on a great responsibility towards the real person. Did processing your own family experiences cinematically help you to maintain a special sensitivity?

I don't think I would have been allowed to make the film if Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart hadn't seen *The Best of All Worlds*. Shortly after her book was published, there had already been a first, ultimately unsuccessful attempt to make a film adaptation. The discussions with Barbara were very important, and I also felt that this film adaptation was a huge responsibility because she is very much involved in public life. It was clear to me, and later also to Valerie Pachner, that we could only make the film together with Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart. She was heavily involved in all phases, from the script and casting to visiting the set, because it was very important to us that she supported the film. We had a great working relationship, and she showed an impressive understanding of the necessary fictionalisation of real events.

As a director, do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by so much emotion? How do you deal with it despite your outside perspective?

It was an incredibly demanding, emotional shoot for everyone, both in front of and behind the camera. I've never seen so many people cry on my sets before. You're constantly confronted with this sad subject matter. We tried to switch off and distract ourselves after the day's filming, but you can't really escape it, and I also had two small children at home.

The narrative structure of *Four Minus Three* consists of flashbacks and the events that follow the tragic turning point. Was it important to you to build up a strong tension between how things were and how life continues for Barbara?

On the one hand, I was interested in this tension and also in the two worlds and lives she led, which could not have been separated by a more striking break. Barbara's book is not written chronologically in places. There are some great reference films that served as models for Senad and me, including *The Broken Circle*, *Marriage Story* and *Manchester by the Sea*, which also tell their stories in a non-linear way, making the impact of the events more bearable. We didn't write the script chronologically, and the film was shot that way too, but a lot changed during editing, resulting in a completely different narrative structure. *Four Minus Three* is a prime example of how some stories need a non-linear narrative style.

The fact that both Barbara and her husband worked as clowns adds a very strong narrative and cinematographic element. What does the character of the clown – who is described at one point in the film as having the task of showing that there is always another point of view – bring to a cinematic narrative?

I would say that the figure of the clown offers both an opportunity and a danger. There are many people who have an aversion to clowns. During the preparatory phase, we encountered mixed reactions at pitchings and from distributors. First of all, it's a great world to immerse yourself in, but you have to proceed very carefully. We also looked at literature on clown philosophy and discovered that there are many clown films that are not immediately recognisable as such; for example, *Toni Erdmann*, where the father creates a clown character in order to rebuild his relationship with his daughter. We had a clown consultant, visited street festivals and met many real clowns. It was a particularly enriching aspect of the research and, as a director, I found it exciting to write and develop the clown acts. What is particularly exciting about Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart's story is that her clown philosophy of always looking at the other side of things, which she and her husband Heli lived and practised, is put to the test. After this stroke of fate, she has to apply what she previously claimed to be the essence of her life.

The clowns also bring strong visual, tragicomic facets to the visual language. This is most impressive in the funeral scene. What memories do you have of the filming?

The funeral was particularly interesting. There is a lot of original video footage from the real funeral that I watched. Even though the funeral parlour couldn't have been less cinematic, there were some very inspiring elements. We took some of these and placed them in a church and another cemetery. The funeral scene was certainly the scene that required the most planning. I think we had around 160 extras, including over 20 clown actors. We spent two days casting clowns. Together with the song *Old Dan Tucker*, which was an important song for Barbara and Heli's family, this resulted in one of the key scenes in the film. During a test screening, I heard a few young women laughing behind me and I was confused. I turned around and saw that they were also crying, and that confirmed my suspicion: tears of laughter were exactly the reaction I had hoped for.

Heidi Appenzeller is Barbara's alter ego as a clown. This character allows her to step out of herself in delicate situations. Is this character an invention of the script? How did Valerie Pachner and Robert Stadlober familiarise themselves with the clown aspect of their roles?

Heidi Appenzeller was actually Barbara's alter ego when she worked as a clown. Just like actors slip into their roles, clowns slip into their inner characters. People who are shy in real life become very extroverted in their clown roles, sometimes even pushy. We had a clown consultant, Jean-Paul Ledun. He is French, lives in Graz and knew Heli, Barbara's husband. He gave Valerie and Robert a kind of crash course in clowning. He says that a clown is always a clown, even when he is not on stage, and uses this alter ego as a protective shield. It was also important to us that Valerie and Robert internalised the thought processes of a clown. It is not my directing method to dictate every single step. I want the actors to go through a process, to become their characters themselves and to contribute their own ideas. The preparation with Jean-Paul made this possible. Valerie and Robert kept the stage names of Barbara and Heli – Waldemar and Heidi Appenzeller – but also contributed their own ideas. Robert wanted to be a loud clown, Valerie a seductive, romantic clown. They also underwent intensive technical training, from juggling, inline skating and balancing to improvising with objects. The scenes in the hospital, where Barbara worked for the *Red Nose Clowns*, are all improvised. We set up the hospital room, but didn't know what was going to happen. I also want to put in a word for the *Red Noses*. I accompanied them during my research, and I was deeply impressed by their work; the hope and light they bring into every medical story moved me profoundly.

Valerie Pachner has a role in which she brings out the comedic facets of her art, but above all, she embodies the enormous, uncontrollable emotionality of grief. What did you see as the major challenges of this role? How did you prepare for it together with Valerie Pachner?

Two things coincided in terms of timing. At the time Terrence Malick's *A Hidden Life* was released, in which Valerie plays Franz Jägerstätter's wife, I had already read up a bit on the *Four Minus Three* theme. I was very impressed by how much emotion Valerie Pachner conveys in this film with so few words. I met her at the Berlinale 2020 and told her about

the project, for which there wasn't even a script at that point, in a long conversation. I don't think she took it very seriously at the time. When we did our first test shoot, it only confirmed my feeling that she was the right choice for Barbara. I've rarely seen anyone commit to a role the way Valerie does: 100% emotionally invested in every take, regardless of the consequences.

Did Valerie Pachner and Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart meet each other?

The two had a long conversation. Barbara also asked us not to give the go-ahead for the film until it was clear who would be playing her role. Valerie didn't schedule the meeting until very late in the preparation phase; she wanted to work on the character for herself first. They met a few weeks before filming began, and Valerie then picked up on a few individual aspects.

The rest of the cast, including Robert Stadlober, Stefanie Reinsperger, Petra Morzé and Margarethe Tiesel, is also a first-rate ensemble. How did the cast for *Four Minus Three* come together?

There was no alternative to Robert Stadlober! He has a clownish streak in his personality, is good at fooling around with children, is a great and experienced actor who can improvise well, and he had a perfect command of the Styrian dialect. Stefanie Reinsperger didn't have an easy role as Barbara's best friend; she embodied the person who had to catch her emotionally. Margarethe Tiesel is Heli's very religious mother. Petra Morzé made a big impression at the casting. With her as Barbara's mother, we shot some great scenes that unfortunately ended up on the cutting room floor. Hanno Koffler, who plays Barbara's new partner, beat out some well-known colleagues at the casting. For this role, I wanted to cast a German living in Vienna. Hanno brought a lot of good ideas and energy to his role as Friedrich. Valerie felt very comfortable with him, which was especially important for one of the last scenes, which we shot in eight-minute takes.

You have mentioned improvisation several times. What prompted you, in your proven collaboration with cinematographer Paul Sprinz, to make such extensive use of the handheld camera?

It has become a bit of my style. It started with *The Best of All Worlds*. In *The Fox*, handheld cameras are used less because we wanted to have a more fixed historical setting. But *The Best of All Worlds*, *Rickerl* and *Four Minus Three* are all anchored in a similar cosmos. I like working with a handheld camera and close-up shots. For dialogues, I like to shoot with two cameras in parallel so that improvisations are covered from both sides. We also had children with us again, including a girl who wasn't even two years old for the role of Fini, who impressed me greatly with how fearless she was with the camera. I had already worked with Paul Sprinz before I started my studies. We are a really well-coordinated team. And when you have actors like Valerie Pachner, Robert Stadlober or Hanno Koffler, who give so much and are so immersed in their roles, I feel that people enjoy watching them because it's honest and sincere. It's my style to stay close to the characters.

Handheld cameras have the great advantage of giving actors a certain freedom to move spontaneously around the room without having to pay attention to a mark. The handheld camera follows them.

With the last sequence, you may be entering a dream world, or at least a world that has nothing to do with the rational world. What are the thoughts behind this final scene?

Final scenes are particularly important to me in my films. They are what stays with you when you leave the cinema. I always put myself under a lot of pressure to make them as powerful as possible and without dialogue. I want final scenes to be very emotional and to still have something to negotiate. So I was faced with the question of what aspect was still open, what Barbara still had to do. For us, the answer was that she still hadn't said goodbye to her daughter. Since she couldn't do it as Barbara, she has to do it as Heidi Appenzeller. This reminds me again of *Toni Erdmann*, where the main character can't bring herself to hug her father. Only when he appears in disguise does she manage to establish closeness. Balloons are a recurring symbol throughout the film. We took up the symbolism of the red balloon, which from the beginning stands for unattainable goals and unfulfillable wishes, and it seemed to us the right ending for her to say goodbye to her daughter in this way and let her soul go. All of this then had to be packaged into a clown act, which is not so easy because it can't last as long in the film as it does on stage. I was counting on Arash Safaian to write a good film score for it. Since there is no dialogue and not much action at the end, the scene cries out for a score, but it mustn't be too much or too kitschy. Arash Safaian had already composed the music for *The Fox*, so we were familiar with the process and were able to exchange lots of ideas.

Interview: Karin Schiefer | Austrian Films | November 2025

INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA PACHL-EBERHART

Your book *Four Minus Three* was published in 2010, two years after your family's accidental death. Was it only now that you could imagine it being made into a film? Did you deliberately wait so long?

I didn't hold back. The film rights were already part of the book contract. There were also a few enquiries. However, these mainly failed because no screenwriter dared to translate this book, which deals a lot with inner processes, into a plot. Most of them gave up. It took someone of Adrian Goiginger's calibre in combination with screenwriter Senad Halilbašić. I am very happy because they did an incredibly good job.

Adrian Goiginger is a filmmaker who has a keen sense for the cinematic adaptation of very personal material. What was your experience with him?

My first encounter with Adrian was when I watched his debut film *The Best of All Worlds*. There is a kind of enthusiasm that doesn't say 'wow', but leaves you speechless and makes your heart open wide. That's how it was with this film, and I knew that if anyone could tell my story, it was Adrian. He manages to look at these seemingly problematic, difficult issues, the things you want to look away from, the things you pigeonhole before you even know anything about them, with great love and nuance. That immediately won me over. When we met for the first time, there was an immediate closeness that can perhaps only arise when both people have experienced very similar things, when both have been moved by something similarly essential in life. We immediately felt a sympathetic connection through having to deal with quite difficult life issues, through our love for everything and our similar sense of humour.

Could you have imagined writing the screenplay yourself?

I originally come from a background in music, acting and clowning. Writing came very late to me, with my book *Four Minus Three*. I realised how much you have to be able to do. For a while, I dabbled in the basics of screenwriting for fun. But that's a science in itself. When you do big things, you should do them really well. Nevertheless, I was closely involved in the screenplay process.

What did your collaboration look like and how close is Senad Halilbašić's screenplay to your original work?

I sat with Senad very often and for many hours and had the luxury of being asked incredibly detailed and nuanced questions about my life and having time to find answers. These weren't just factual questions, which was interesting in itself because I realised how deceptive memory can be and I was challenged to rediscover the truth. Instead, they were much more essential questions about why, how I felt, how I explain all of this to myself... Many questions that I, as a woman who accompanies people in writing their biographies, also ask. Experiencing this myself was very nice. Senad often wanted concrete examples of abstract things, such as situations in which Heli and I fooled around and laughed a lot

together. To do this, I had to recount little scenes, which in turn allowed me to dig into my memory. The conversations were like unearthing treasures. There are very few scenes in the script that are not true. But they are all authentic. Certain things in my book had to be translated into cinematic action, condensed. I particularly liked it when Senad told me right at the beginning that he can only start writing a script when he can summarise what a film is about in one sentence. When that sentence is so powerful and so important to him, only then does he know: now it's worth making the film. The sentence he said to me about *Four Minus Three* was: "Art can save lives."

What questions did Adrian Goiginger ask you?

The conversations with Adrian felt like hours with a psychoanalyst. He asked a lot of questions about inner motivation, about the psychological background. He wanted to understand all the characters in their inner logic so that he could give them their own structure and explain them well to the actors. Adrian has a special approach. He has to get the actors so deeply into their characters that they can find their own language during filming and improvise in scenes. That's something he works with a lot.

How did you experience the casting process? What was it like to see yourself and your family brought to life by actors?

Thanks to the excellent script, the characters were already very vivid on paper. They were like holograms that just needed to be filled with flesh and blood. In that respect, the leap to the actors wasn't that big. I wasn't involved in all the casting rounds, but I received three suggestions for each role except mine – without comment, in random order. And the wonderful thing was that I always knew immediately who it was, who it had to be. It was always the actor that Adrian and Senad preferred.

And with Valerie Pachner?

The confidence gained from the other castings was so great that Adrian's statement that he had found the ideal person for the role of Barbara was enough for me. I then watched a few interviews with Valerie Pachner and realised that this woman ticks very similarly to me on the inside. I found everything Valerie said extremely likeable. We only got to know each other relatively shortly before filming began. During our conversation, we discovered an incredible number of parallels in our lives. For example, she took her first steps in acting at summer school in Graz, just like me.

You were there on one of the shooting days. How do you remember it?

It's not just my life that was filmed in *Four Minus Three*. For me, the best thing of all is that the film also shows Heli's life and Heli's way of living, Heli's view of life. I am very happy that I was able to be there on the day Robert Stadlober performed Heli's balloon act in a theatre. I didn't just see Robert on stage, but also the cameraman sitting in front of the combo. And I thought: This is great cinema! Tears sprang to my eyes because what Heli was only able to show on stage in a very limited space in Graz suddenly became visible in

all its grandeur and radiance. This tribute was important to me: how Heli is portrayed, how it comes across, what seeds he planted in my heart for my life.

You've already seen the film. How did it affect you?

Friedrich Nietzsche said: 'Literature is life with the boring passages cut out.' Life is so diverse, playing on seven radio stations at the same time... The difficult question is: where do you hear the actual melody of your life? I think *Four Minus Three* turns off all the unimportant radio stations and plays the most important programme or melody. And it's definitely the one I would have chosen too.

Clowning, being a clown, is an important part of the film. How accurately is it portrayed in the film?

This attitude of the clown, the way the clown looks at life, is portrayed absolutely accurately. The tension between being a clown on stage and being a clown as a social profession, the main problem in Heli's and my marriage, is also portrayed accurately. We talked about it a lot. Senad pored over books on the subject, talked to other clowns... He really did his homework well.

How does the clown view life?

For me, being a clown is my great school of life. No matter what I do in my life, everything is shaped by the fundamental lessons I learned as a clown: make something of it, stand by your weaknesses, know that your weaknesses are actually your strengths. And, very importantly, don't cheat your way through anything. Except in a way that makes the whole audience realise that you're cheating.

INTERVIEW WITH VALERIE PACHNER

What was it about this role that intrigued you?

I was generally interested in how someone could follow such a path after such a stroke of fate. When I imagine it, I would initially tend to feel anger and want to give up on life. I know that I can get incredibly upset about even minor things. Here is someone who has a positive outlook in the face of such a stroke of fate. Barbara is resilient and faces life head-on. She is not afraid to do things differently. She exposes herself to life, embraces life, and does not follow any preconceived ideas. The other thing that interested me was the clown aspect. The question of what art can do, how art can help you in such moments. Barbara Pachl-Eberhart has a special strength and attitude towards life and fate. But the clown philosophy has also helped her not to despair. I was interested in this attitude against despair, both for her personally and through her work as a clown or artist.

The clown level transports you to a world of its own. How would you describe this world? Do you perhaps have a personal connection with clowns?

The world of clowns was not completely foreign to me, because I had taken a few clowning lessons at drama school and also had a friend who was a clown. This taught me that being a clown goes hand in hand with a certain philosophy and that the artistic aspect has something very poetic about it, which has little to do with the party or slapstick clowns that most people imagine. Failure is important for clowns. Another interesting aspect is the childlike naivety that clowns bring with them, the fact that they never take themselves seriously and yet take themselves seriously. This creates a very special kind of comedy. Failure, being funny, not fitting in, being different, not conforming to norms – these are all things that I find appealing. Max Reinhardt once described actors as having ‘childhood in their pockets’. This also applies to clowns, but on a different level, because they have more freedom to act foolishly. Nevertheless, clowns always remain in contact with the audience. Clowns are not people who do their own thing. They are always in contact with the audience. They play with that. At the same time, working as a hospital clown in a children's ward, as Barbara Pachl-Eberhart did, is a selfless job that embraces life in all its facets.

You are, so to speak, in touch with the pain in life.

That's right. This idea, this feeling, helped me in my role. Despite the difficult blows of fate that you encounter every day as a hospital clown, you have to bring a lightness to being with the pain, not to despair. Not to despair even when you yourself are hit by a hard blow of fate.

Did the role perhaps also frighten you because of its intensity? After all, Barbara is confronted with a pain that you have to evoke to a certain extent in order to be able to play it.

Fear, perhaps not, but great respect. I knew that it would be two intense months. I can't help but throw myself into it completely. Only then can I let myself fall into this world, into this state. Of course, it affected me deeply and took a lot out of me. But that's part of the job. I also like to give my all when I feel that the story is working, when I notice that the whole set is going along with it and is moved by what is happening. That was the case here. It helps a lot. I also had a lot of respect for the clown scenes. Although I knew a little bit about it and have a soft spot for it, I don't see myself as a funny person at all. I was unsure how that would translate to film, because clowns always have something bigger than life about them, and we also tell the story of Barbara's clowning, which only matures over time. A clown is also always something very personal. I wanted to get close to the clown that Barbara Pachl-Eberhart had in her real life. I was probably more afraid of that because I didn't know if it would work with my clown persona. I was relieved when I realised that it did. Playing these scenes was great fun. A lot of it was improvised.

Is it different for you to play a real person?

It does make a difference to me when I play a person who either lived or, as in the case of *Four Minus Three*, still lives. Interestingly, these roles keep coming my way. I think it's nice, I like researching people who really existed or exist, reading about them, finding things out. It stimulates my thinking and my work on the respective role. This always goes hand in hand with a great sense of responsibility towards the person. I didn't meet Barbara Pachl-Eberhart until shortly before filming began, because it was important for me to find the role independently of her. We're not telling a direct biography, so it wasn't about imitating someone. Nevertheless, meeting Barbara Pachl-Eberhart was very important to me because it helped me understand a few things even better and I felt that she trusted us very much.

What was it like working with Adrian Goiginger? What makes him stand out?

Adrian has a lot of energy and passion, he throws himself completely into a project. There are also directors who maintain a certain distance. He throws himself into it just as much as I do. I appreciate that. I found him to be an extremely well-prepared director. I am someone who prepares very well and knows exactly what I want to say. With Adrian, it was great because he gave so much input and contributed very specific things to the film. He thinks very scenically and is actively involved as a director. You don't always get that. I was fascinated by his wealth of ideas and his willingness to throw himself into it just as much as I did. In addition, his general approach always includes improvisation, which can create very lively situations. I'm a fan of improvisation, although I also love it when things are precise and accurate. The script and the preparation of the scenes themselves with Senad and Adrian before filming began were important. Nevertheless, during filming we had room to try things out, improvise and bring them to life in this way. That was quite challenging because it's not easy for actors. It's fun, no question. But you have to find the right words on the spot during serious scenes, it's like being a writer in the process. That was intense.

What have you taken away from this experience?

I don't dare say yet that my reaction to a similar stroke of fate would now be different from what I imagined at the beginning of the project. But I do feel that working on *Four Minus Three* has given me a slightly more resilient attitude towards despair. Of course, you never know what you would do if you really had to experience something like that. I can now better understand the attitude or idea of accepting life in all its facets and finding something light-hearted even in tragedy, of transforming tragedy. Life is always both. It is not just shadow or just light. Both are there, both are needed. Above all, my work as a clown in hospitals has made this visible and tangible to me. To hold the magnitude and force of fate, whether it is beautiful or terrible.

THE CAST

VALERIE PACHNER (Barbara)

Valerie Pachner, born in Wels (Austria) in 1987, has demonstrated exceptional acting skills, subtle nuance and remarkable passion for her craft in all of her roles to date. Trained at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna, where Pachner developed her acting skills between 2009 and 2013, she moved to Munich immediately after completing her training. At the beginning of the 2013/2014 season, she became a permanent member of the ensemble at the Residenztheater, where she has appeared in roles including Irina in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Elisabeth in Horvath's *Faith, Love, Hope*. Parallel to her training and stage work, Valerie Pachner took on her first film roles. In Thomas Wotschitz's film *Bad Luck*, which was nominated for the Max Ophüls Prize in 2015, she could be admired in a leading role in cinema for the first time. This was followed by *Jack* (2015, directed by Elisabeth Scharang) and *Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe* (2016, directed by Maria Schrader), in which she played the stepdaughter of the writer Stefan Zweig alongside Barbara Sukowa and Josef Hader. In 2016, the film *Egon Schiele: Death and Girls* was released, for which Valerie Pachner was awarded not only the Austrian Film Prize but also the Romy for Best Young Actress.

In 2016, she received her first international engagement when Terrence Malick noticed her and cast her in the female lead role of Franziska Jägerstätter for his new film, the World War II drama *A Hidden Life*, in which she appears alongside August Diehl, Matthias Schoenaerts, Bruno Ganz and Michael Nykvist. *A Hidden Life* celebrated its world premiere in competition at the Cannes International Film Festival and received worldwide recognition. Another milestone in Valerie Pachner's career is her award-winning leading role in Marie Kreutzer's film *The Ground Beneath My Feet* (2019), which celebrated its highly acclaimed and much-noticed world premiere in competition at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival.

Among other accolades, she won the German Acting Award for this role and was nominated for the Austrian Film Award for Best Actress. In the same year, she appeared on television alongside Anna Maria Mühe and August Diehl in Lars Kraume's Bauhaus series *Die neue Zeit (The New Era)*. In 2021, she appeared in Matthew Vaughn's successful *Kingsman* series in the role of Mata Hari alongside Ralph Fiennes, Rhys Ifans and Daniel Brühl. The following year, David Yates cast her in *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*. This was followed by the ensemble lead role of Martha Myers in the Western miniseries *The English* by writer and director Hugo Blick, alongside Emily Blunt. In 2023, Pachner returned to the stage and took on a double role in *Jedermann* at the Salzburg Festival: for the first time in the history of the festival, the roles of Buhlschaft and Death were played by one person.

The actress was most recently seen in a leading role in Nele Mueller-Stöfen's *Delicious* (2025), which celebrated its world premiere in the Panorama section of the Berlinale.

ROBERT STADLOBER (Heli)

Robert Stadlober, born in 1982 in Friesach, Austria, is one of the most versatile character actors in the German-speaking world. He has appeared in over 100 TV, streaming and cinema productions and has been cast by directors such as Volker Schlöndorff, Doris Dörrie and Christoph Schlingensief. Stadlober has received numerous awards and nominations for his versatile performances, including the Bavarian Film Award, the Hamburg Theatre Award and the Premio Bacco.

Stadlober works as an actor, director, author and musician. He became the idol of an entire generation of German teenagers through cinema successes such as *Sun Alley* (1999, directed by Leander Haußmann), *Crazy* (2000; directed by Hans-Christian Schmid), *Play it Loud!* (2003; directed by Benjamin Quabeck) and *Summerstorm* (2004; directed by Marco Kreuzpaintner). Films such as *Black Sheep* (2006; directed by Oliver Rihs), *Tender Parasites* (2009; directed by Christian Becker and Oliver Schwabe) and *Peer Gynt* (2006; directed by Uwe Janson) also established him in arthouse cinema. Other films in which Stadlober was involved include *Krabat* (2008), in which he collaborated with Marco Kreuzpaintner again, Oskar Roehler's *Jew Suss: Rise and Fall* (2008), *Mack The Knife – Brecht's Three Penny Film* (2018), *Leberkäsjunkie* (2019) and the series *Das Boot*, in which he appeared in 16 episodes as ship's cook Hinrich Laudrup. His more recent cinema work includes *The Seed* (2021) by Mia Maariel Meyer, *Schweigend steht der Wald* (2022) by Saralisa Volm, the literary adaptation *A Whole Life* (2023) by Hans Steinbichler based on a novel by Robert Seethaler, Josef Hader's Austrian cinema hit *Andrea Gets An Divorce* (2024), *Am Ende wird alles sichtbar* (2023) by Peter Keglevic, based on a novel by August Schmölder, Evi Romen's second feature film *Happyland* (2024) and the feature film *Goebbels and the Führer* (2024) by Joachim A. Lang, in which he played the leading role. For this performance, Stadlober was nominated for the 2025 German Acting Award in the category 'Dramatic Leading Role'. Stadlober has also appeared in numerous television productions. He starred alongside Brigitte Hobmeier in the thriller series *Schnee*, in the miniseries *Hundertdreizehn* by Arndt Stüwe, which was one of the most successful series on ARD Mediathek in 2025, and in *Schwarze Schafe – Die Serie* by Oliver Rihs. Most recently, Stadlober appeared in front of the camera in the winter of 2025 for the series *Husk* (again directed by Mia Maariel Meyer and Tim Trachte) and for the ORF thriller *Illegal*.

At the same time, the actor has repeatedly appeared on stage, including at the Burgtheater in Vienna, the Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin and the Hamburg Schauspielhaus, as well as with his own art projects and performances. Robert Stadlober has recorded over 50 audiobooks and produced four albums with his band Gary. In the *Heym* project, he set texts by Stephan Heym to music together with Klara Deutschmann and Daniel Moheit, followed by a CD and live performances. He also created his own live programme on Kurt Tucholsky, with which he is also on tour and enjoying great success.

STEFANIE REINSPERGER (Sabine)

Stefanie Reinsperger, born in Baden near Vienna in 1988, grew up in London and Belgrade and completed her acting training at the renowned Max Reinhardt Seminar. She successfully alternates between theatre and film.

She started her career in theatre. After completing her studies, she spent three years at the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf. In 2013, she won the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus audience award for best young actress. This was followed by engagements at the Burg and the Volkstheater Wien. She has been part of the Berliner Ensemble since the 2017/18 season. In 2017 and 2018, she played the role of Buhlschaft in *Jedermann* at the Salzburg Festival in the summer. Since 2022, she has also played the Frog in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* at the Vienna Volksoper. Stefanie Reinsperger has received numerous awards for her work, including the Theater Heute magazine's Young Actress and Actress of the Year awards, the Nestroy Prize for Best Young Actress, the Dorothea Neff Prize for Best Actress and the Romy Award. In 2022, she was also awarded the Helene Weigel Theatre Prize. She will return to the Burgtheater as a member of the ensemble for the 2024/25 season.

Away from the stage, Stefanie Reinsperger also regularly appears in front of the camera for film and television. In 2019, she played Maria Theresa in Robert Dornhelm's two-part series *Maria Theresia*. From 2021 to 2025, she appeared in eleven episodes as Chief Inspector Rosa Herzog in the regular team of *Tatort* Dortmund. Her television work also includes *Haus aus Glas* by Alain Gsponer, a six-part miniseries for ARD, and *Other People's Money* by Jan Schomburg. She was most recently seen in Chris Kraus' *15 Years* (2023), Franziska Pflaum's debut *Mermaids Don't Cry* (2022) and the German audience hit *Guglhupfgeschwader* (2022).

Since 2017, Stefanie Reinsperger has been working regularly as a lecturer at the HSF Ernst Busch. In 2022, she published her book entitled *Ganz schön wütend (Pretty Angry)*, a declaration of love and an appeal to female anger.

In 2025, she was named Austrian of the Year in the cultural heritage category.

HANNO KOFFLER (Friedrich)

Hanno Koffler, born in Berlin in 1980, is one of Germany's most versatile actors. His artistic roots lie in the music scene as the drummer of the band Kerosin, which he founded with his brother Max. He had his first film role in the short film *Mein lieber Herr Gesangsverein*. His cinema debut followed in *Anatomy 2* (2003). This was followed by further feature films directed by Marco Kreuzpaintner: *Ganz und gar* (2003) and *Summerstorm* (2004).

In 2007, he completed his acting studies at the renowned Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna. During his studies, he already performed in the theatre under the direction of Klaus Maria Brandauer, among others.

In 2008, Koffler returned with three films: he played the lead role in *A Hero's Welcome* by Brigitte Bertele, which celebrated its world premiere at the Berlinale and was subsequently shown at numerous other festivals. He then appeared in *The Red Baron* by Nicolai Müllerschön and *Krabat* by Marco Kreuzpaintner. In 2013, he appeared in Stephan Lacant's *Free Fall* as a young heterosexual police officer who, just as he is becoming a family man, develops homosexual feelings for his colleague. In 2014, he starred alongside Götz George in the television film *Special Severity of Guilt*. For his role in Rosa von Praunheim's film *Tough Love* (2015), Koffler received a nomination for Best Actor at the German Film Awards. In the same year, he played the lead role in Mia Maariel Meyer's debut *Up The Stairs* (2015). In 2016, he appeared as Puma founder Rudolf Dassler in *Rivals Forever*. Other notable television work includes *Tod im Internat (Death at Boarding School)* with Nadja Uhl, *Toter Winkel (Blind Spot)* by Stephan Lacant, *Das Geheimnis des Totenwaldes (The Secret of the Dead Forest)* with Karoline Schuch, *Beat* and *Pagan Peak*. Koffler has also appeared on the big screen in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Never Look Away* (2018), in *The Seed* (2021), Mia Maariel Meyer's second feature film, for which he also co-wrote the screenplay with Meyer, and in *All For Ella* (2022) by Teresa Fritzi Hoerl. Thomas Sieben cast him in his horror film *Prey*, and he played First Lieutenant Walther Stennes in 17 episodes of the event series *Babylon Berlin*.

Most recently, he has appeared frequently on television, including in Rupert Henning's *Tiefwassertaucher unterm Dach*, Caroline Rosales' miniseries *Sexuell verfügbar*, and crime series such as *Tatort*, *Polizeiruf 110*, and *Zielfahnder*.

RONALD ZEHRFELD (M.D. Jürgen Schreiner)

Ronald Zehrfeld was born in East Berlin in 1977. He studied acting at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin, after which he made a name for himself with audiences and critics at the Berliner Ensemble, the Deutsches Theater Berlin and the St. Pauli Theater in Hamburg. He made his film debut in Dominik Graf's *The Red Cockatoo* (2006), for whom he later appeared in the groundbreaking ten-part series *In The Face of Crime* and in the German entry to the Oscars *Beloved Sisters* (2014). After leading roles in productions such as *At Any Second* (2008) and *Twelve Paces Without a Head* (2009) – as the legendary pirate Klaus Störtebeker – and appearances in films such as Christian Schwochow's *Cracks in the Shell* (2011), Zehrfeld celebrated his international breakthrough alongside Nina Hoss in Christian Petzold's *Barbara* (2012), which was received with critical acclaim at the Berlinale.

This was followed by significant roles in works such as *Shores of Hope* (2012) by Toke Constantin Hebbeln, *Weissensee, Finsterworld* (2013) by Frauke Finsterwalder, *Vergiss mein Ich* (2014) by Jan Schomburg, *Inbetween Worlds* (2014) by Feo Aladag and *Tannbach*, as well as another collaboration with Christian Petzold, *Phoenix* (2014). Another highlight in Zehrfeld's career was the hard-hitting police thriller *The King's Surrender* (2015) by Philipp Leinemann – followed later by another highlight with the same director, *Blame Game* (2019). Ronald Zehrfeld played one of the leading roles alongside Burghart Klaußner and Lilith Stangenberg in Lars Kraume's German Film Award winner *The People vs Fritz Bauer* (2015) and subsequently also appeared in Kraume's *The Silent Classroom* (2018). But by this point, Zehrfeld had already shifted the focus of his acting career to television. He appeared in the international series *SS-GB*, directed by Philipp Kadelbach, and was also seen in *4 Blocks*, *Warten auf'n Bus*, *Hackerville*, *Walpurgisnacht* and *Barbaren*, and took on the role of Walter Weintraub in the event series *Babylon Berlin* by Tom Tykwer, Hendrik Handloegten and Achim von Borries. He also appeared in the series *Tatort* and *Polizeiruf 110*. In 2022, he returned to the cinema with *Die schwarze Spinne (The Black Spider)* by Markus Fischer. Most recently, he played Max Frisch in Margarethe von Trotta's biopic *Ingeborg Bachmann – Reise in die Wüste (Ingeborg Bachmann – Journey into the Desert)* (2023) alongside Vicky Krieps in the title role. The film celebrated its world premiere in 2023 in competition at the Berlinale.

In 2024, Ronald Zehrfeld appeared in Matthias Glasner's *Dying* (the film celebrated its world premiere in competition at the Berlinale and went on to win four German Film Awards), Natja Brunckhorst's *Two To One* (2024) and *The Door-to-Door-Bookstore* (2024) by Ngo The Chau. At the beginning of 2025, he appeared in David Dietl's Tallinn Film Festival premiere *Long Story Short*.

THE CREW

ADRIAN GOINGER (Director)

Adrian Goinger, born in Salzburg in 1991, is a multi-award-winning writer and director with an impressive track record. His debut feature *The Best of All Worlds* (2017) received more than 100 international awards, including the Compass Perspective Award at the Berlinale, the Best European First Film Award in Zlin, the Best Feature Award at the New York City FF, the Bavarian Film Award, the Best Actress Awards in Milano, Houston, Harlem and Moscow, and five Austrian Film Awards.

His feature *The Fox* (2022) went on to win two German and two Austrian Film Awards, was sold to more than 20 territories worldwide, and became a box-office hit in Austria. With his subsequent films, *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby* (2024) and *Märzengrund* (2022), Goinger continued to build on the success of his debut, with both films receiving critical acclaim and achieving strong box-office results.

Goinger is known for his exceptional sensitivity in telling autobiographical stories and for approaching difficult subjects with remarkable ease. Alongside his work as a writer and director, he is also a partner in the production companies 2010 Entertainment and Giganten Film.

Filmography:

2017	<i>The Best of All Worlds</i>
2022	<i>Märzengrund</i>
2022	<i>The Fox</i>
2024	<i>Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby</i>

BARBARA PACHL-EBERHART (Novel)

Barbara Pachtl-Eberhart was born in Vienna in 1974. She studied flute at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna from 1992 to 1997 and obtained a teaching diploma for primary schools in 2000. She worked as a clown with the Red Nose Clown-Doctors Graz and Vienna for nine years. Today, she works in the fields of dialogue circle facilitation, grief and end-of-life support, and creative, constructive life design, as well as as a writing coach and poetry and bibliotherapist. Her autobiographical book *Four Minus Three*, in which she deals with the death of her husband and two small children, became a bestselling novel.

SENAD HALILBASIC (Screenplay)

Senad Halilbašić was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1988 and grew up in Austria. He completed his studies in theatre, film and media studies at the University of Vienna in 2018 with a doctorate. As a screenwriter, he has won the Austrian Film Award for *7500* (directed by Patrick Vollrath, 2019) and the Screenplay Award at the Cannes International Series Festival for the series *Souls*. As a dramaturge, he worked on *Die Migrantigen* by Arman T. Riahi (Audience Award Max Ophüls Prize 2017), the short film *Alles wird gut* by Patrick Vollrath (Oscar nomination 2016) and Adrian Goiginger's *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby* (four Austrian Film Awards 2024).

His most recent work as a screenwriter includes the third season of the hit series *Der Pass*, the *Tatort* films *Dunkelheit* and *Licht* (both to be broadcast in 2025), and the adaptation of Saša Stanišić's novel *Herkunft*, which is to be filmed in 2026 under the direction of Clara Zoë My-Linh von Arnim.

Halilbašić also works as a script consultant for the Drehbuchforum Wien and the *Diverse Geschichten* story development programme. Since 2023, he has been a consulting writer for the European Writers Club and a graduate of the European Showrunner Programme (ifs). He also teaches screenwriting and dramaturgy at the Film Academy Vienna.

PAUL SPRINZ (Director of Photography)

Paul Sprinz is a long-standing creative partner of Adrian Goiginger. He was responsible for the cinematography of all of Goiginger's theatrical works: *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby* (2024), *The Fox* (2022, in cooperation with Yoshi Heimrath), *Märzengrund* (2022) (with Klemens Hufnagl) and *The Best of All Worlds* (2017, in cooperation with Yoshi Heimrath). Sprinz was also on board for Goiginger's works, which he realised during his studies at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg.

THE PRODUCTION COMPANIES

2010 ENTERTAINMENT (Austria)

2010 Entertainment is a team of creative minds consisting of Adrian Goiginger, Martin Pfeil, David Stöllinger and Peter Wildling. Since 2012, they have been bringing fictional and documentary stories to life on the big screen and on television. Their productions include the festival and cinema hit *The Best of All Worlds*, Adrian Goiginger's feature film debut, which won five Austrian Film Awards (including Best Feature Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay), the feature film *The Magic Flute – Das Vermächtnis der Zauberflöte* (service production) by Florian Sigl, the television documentary *Virginia* by Sascha Köllnreitner and Adrian Goiginger's historical feature film *The Fox* (2022), as well as *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby* (2024), which won four Austrian Film Awards.

GIGANTEN FILM (Germany)

Giganten Film Produktions GmbH was founded in 2017 by Gerrit Klein and Adrian Goiginger. The company is based in Ludwigsburg and has an office in Cologne. Giganten Film produces cinema and television films as well as series.

Its portfolio to date includes the cinema documentary *Los Cuatro Vientos* (2022), which won the Civis Media Prize, the TV film *Sommer auf drei Rädern*, which was nominated for the Jupiter Award, and the cinema films *The Fox* (2022) and *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby* (2024), both directed by Adrian Goiginger. *The Fox* won the Silver Lola for Best Feature Film at the 2024 German Film Awards; Simon Morzé received the Lola for Best Actor.

Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby won the Günter Rohrbach Film Prize (Best Film, Best Music) in 2024 and was nominated for Best Film at the Bavarian Film Awards 2023. Producer Gerrit Klein was recently awarded the Carl Laemmle VFF Talent Prize for *Four Minus Three* and *Rickerl – Musik is höchstens a Hobby*.

In addition to cinema productions, Giganten Film develops and produces television films and series formats. A Munich-based *Polizeiruf* is currently in post-production, and a *Tatort* series and another series are in preparation.

CONTACT WORLD SALES

Beta Cinema

beta@betacinema.com

Phone: +49 | 89 | 673469 – 828

www.betacinema.com