

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Schmid (1941–2006) grew up in the Hotel Schweizerhof in Flims, which his family had owned for generations. After studying history and comparative literature in West Berlin (1962–67), he attended the German Film Academy (Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin, DFFB) from 1967 to 1969. He met Rainer W. Fassbinder during his entrance exams and a close, enduring friendship developed between them. Fassbinder subsequently introduced Schmid to Werner Schroeter, and the three film-makers went on to influence each other's early work. Since 1974 Schmid has divided his time between Paris and Switzerland. Apart from making films, he has also staged several operas, including Offenbach's *Barbe Bleue* (1984), Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* (1987) and Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1996–2006) at the Zurich Opera House.

Schmid's filmwork has been shown in many retrospectives all over the world, among other places in Boston (Harvard Film Archive), Washington (National Gallery of Art), New York (BAM cinémathèque), Chicago (The Gene Siskel Film Center of the Art Institute), Vancouver (Pacific Cinematheque), Montreal (Cinéma québécoise), Paris (Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume), the International Filmfestival Pesaro and the International Filmfestival Kiev.

FILMOGRAPHY

1969	Miriam (short film)
1971	Do everything in the dark in order to save your Lord the light Thut alles im Finstern eurem Herrn das Licht zu ersparen
1972	Tonight or Never Heute Nacht oder nie
1974	La Paloma
1976	Shadow of Angels Schatten der Engel
1977	Violanta
1981	Notre-Dame de la croisette
1982	Hécate
1983	"Mirage de la vie" or: "Imitation of Life", docu- portrait made for television
1984	Tosca's Kiss Il Bacio di Tosca
1987	Jenatsch

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I grew up in a hotel lobby, amidst all of its sceneries. A place where appearance and reality, continually intersect. This stage, with its enmeshment of illusion and reality, has continually informed me and continues to attract me. I also believe that all of my films, whether they are time-travelling tales like **Jenatsch** and **Hors Saison** (Off Season), extreme love stories like **La Paloma** or **Hécate**, or refracted narratives working with mirrorings, like **Schatten der Engel** (Shadows of Angels)

or **The Written Face**, take place in a twilight zone of sorts: in liminal realms. The same holds true for **Il Bacio di Tosca** (Tosca's Kiss) and **Beresina**. They are all about illusions and dreams that dissolve, about people slipping away from and losing each other, about imaginary places that one seeks in order to escape from reality, from normality and all it entails." Daniel Schmid, May 2004

Always "à la recherche du temps perdu"

"Life is a legend" Daniel Schmid, 1998

In 1992, aged 51, Daniel Schmid created **Hors Saison** (Off Season), a film that is like a key to his oeuvre and his life. A grown-up man, Valentin, returns to the place of his childhood: an old hotel in the Swiss Alps. The hotel has been abandoned and is set to be demolished. Once again, Valentin walks through corridors, halls, dining rooms and guest rooms. He pushes open doors, peeps round corners, sees his reflection in a nearly opaque window and peers through smudged windows. Memories flash up unexpectedly; his past manifests itself as a second reality level within the film. Looking over the boy's shoulder, Valentin again meets up with a fascinating crowd: guests, hotel staff, family. His constantly dilly-dallying mother, his grandmother with her 1001 tales to tell. The distinguished gentleman, the aristocratic ladies and the nymphomaniac blonde, the bar musicians Max and Lilo, Malini the conjurer and Miss Gabriel, the kiosk lady who would slip Valentin the latest Mickey Mouse magazine every Thursday. Just like in the old days, Valentin's family move from room to room in the hotel – nomads in their own four walls – in line with the changing seasons. In the high season, their abode is under the roof, in the pre- and post-season they make the third floor, in the dead season the first floor their home. Without any actual shift of place, **Hors Saison** tells about journeys, journeys into the realm of dreams, fables and memories, something that Daniel Schmid is so well acquainted with through his own experience. Like the protagonist in **Hors Saison**, he grew up in a Swiss mountain hotel, in his case the Hotel Schweizerhof in Flims-Wald-

1991	The Amateurs 1912–1931 Les amateurs Compilation film for the Cinémathèque Suisse
1992	Off Season Hors Saison / Zwischensaison
1995	The Written Face Das geschriebene Gesicht
1999	Beresina or The Last Days of Switzerland , Beresina oder Die letzten Tage, der Schweiz
2004	Shimmering Flims Flimmerndes Flims Compilation film for the Yellow House in Flims 2003

STAGE PRODUCTIONS

1978	Ingrid Caven au Pigall's Paris
1978	Barbe-Bleue Opera by Jacques Offenbach Grand Théâtre de Genève
1985	Lulu Opera by Alban Berg Grand Théâtre de Genève With Patricia Wise
87/91	Guglielmo Tell Opera by Gioacchino Rossini Zurich Opera House With Antonio Salvatori, Salvatore Fisichella
94/95	Linda di Chamounix Opera by Gaetano Donizetti Zurich Opera House With Edita Gruberova
1995	I Puritani Opera by Vincenzo Bellini Grand Théâtre de Genève With Ruth Ann Swenson
1996– 2006	Il Trovatore Opera by Giuseppe Verdi Zurich Opera House, with Marjana Lipovsek, Neil Shicoff
2001	Beatrice di tenda Opera by Vincenzo Bellini Zurich Opera House With Edita Gruberova

AWARDS

1985	IDA award, Los Angeles Grand Premio del popolo, Firenze Film Festival
1988	Prix Max Petitpierre
1998	Zürcher Kunstpreis, Zurich
1999	Pardo d'Onore, International Film Festival, Locarno
2002	International Film Festival Kiev, lifetime achievement award

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haus. It was a cosseted and at the same time lonely childhood marked by the "soundless presence of dead or blind men" and the presence of strong women. Daniel Schmid was four years old when his father died of TB. His grandfather was blind for the last few years of his life. And Schmid's mother and grandmother ran the family enterprise on their own for many years, until Schmid's brother and his wife took over.

Hotel Schweizerhof is three kilometres outside the village at the edge of a forest. Before going to school, Daniel Schmid had little contact with other children. His first "best friend" was an imaginary boy who would gallop through the hotel with him. Otherwise, what little Daniel liked best was to listen to stories. One of his favourites was the tale of his grandfather and a kiss. At the age of 16, during a practical training stint at the Savoy in London, Schmid's "Nonno" (grandfather) once fell asleep on a chair while waiting for guests late at night. It was Sarah Bernhardt who woke him with a kiss. "Who's Sarah Bernhardt?" Daniel would ask. "The greatest actress in the world," was his grandmother's reply. Schmid, who was blessed with an easily enraptured heart as well as with considerable charm, decided that he, too, wanted to be kissed by "someone like that".

Such memories of his childhood at a hotel and the ensuing traits and sensibilities – the child's perspective of being at the heart of events without being able to really participate; the pleasures of one's own memories, the joy of story-telling, the flair for staging one's own appearances – can be found as basic components throughout Schmid's artistic oeuvre. In his quiet, fairy-tale-like opera productions. In his films: the grotesque social satires, the love stories taken to extremes and beyond, the somnambulous time-travel movies, the so-called documentaries. Almost more than in the films, these traits come to the fore in his books. For instance in the picture book written together with Christian Bener in 1983, *Die Erfindung vom Paradies* (The Invention of Paradise), a scintillating parody of Switzerland's official views of its history; his illustrated autobiography *A Smuggler's Life* (1999); and *Excitation Bizarre*, published in 2004, a collection of old photographs and three short essays on the romantic notion of exaltation, which in Schmid's view found its perfect expression in the hotel world of Flims at the turn of the 19th/20th century.

La force de l'imagination

"There is no greater fiction than remembered stories" Daniel Schmid, 1992

Schmid moved to Berlin in 1962 to study history and literature at the Freie Universität Berlin. After a brief stint in California, he then attended the newly founded Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie, also in Berlin. In 1974, he made his third feature film, **La Paloma**. One of its protagonists

ACTOR FOR OTHER DIRECTORS

1971 **The Merchant of Four Seasons**, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder

Ludwig, directed by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg

1977 **The American Friend**, directed by Wim Wenders

1978 **Roberte, ce soir**, directed by Pierre Klossowsky

1979 **Judith Terpauve**, directed by Patrice Chéreau

1980 **Lili Marleen**, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder

PUBLICATIONS 1983

Peter Christian Bener and Daniel Schmid in collaboration with Martin Suter, *The Invention of Paradise*. An illustrated book about Switzerland as a theatrical set and emotional backdrop in the 19th century. Beobachter-Verlag, Glattbrugg, publ. Beat Curti

BOOKS ON DANIEL SCHMID (SELECTION)

1974 Freddy Buache, *Portrait de Daniel Schmid le Magicien*, Edition L'Age d'Homme

1978 *Film in der Schweiz*, Hanser Verlag, Munich/Vienna

1983 Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-Mouvement*, Edition de Minuit, Paris

1984 Hasumi Shiguhiko, *Le Cinéma ou l'écriture de la Séduction*, Edition Teju – Sha, Tokyo,

1985 Karsten Witte, *Im Kino, Texte vom Sehen und Hören*, Fischer Cinéma 4454, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt

82/88 *Daniel Schmid*, New Edition, Zytglogge Verlag/Pro Helvetia, Berne/Zurich

1988 Irene-Anna Genhart, *Spiegelbilder*. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zum Fragenkreis um Literaturverfilmungen am Beispiel des Films *Violanta*. MA thesis for the University of Zurich

1994 *El Cine de Daniel Schmid*, La Mascara y el Artificio, Madrid/Valencia/Barcelona

1999 *A Smugglers Life*, Daniel Schmid Edition, Dino Simonett, Zurich, 2003
Daniel Schmid and Dino Simonett, *Excitation Bizarre*, Zyloc Publishers, Zurich.
Published to coincide with the "Excitation Bizarre" exhibition at the Yellow House in Flims

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is "La Force de l'imagination" (the power of imagination), an allegory which points to the entirety of Schmid's future creative work. Unlike many other Swiss film-makers of his generation, who, in thrall of the mood of the 1960s and the New Swiss Film movement, were not averse to presenting themselves as socially and politically committed cultural practitioners, Schmid saw himself first and foremost as an artist. In the most original sense of the word, which defines the artist as the master of a craft out of which something genuinely new – artificial as well as artistic – is created. For Daniel Schmid, so-called reality is the raw material from which he shapes new worlds and realities.

The act of staging, the "mise en scène", is one of Schmid's great passions. Nothing is left to chance; Schmid has his say on spatial setting, lighting, decoration and colour down to the minutest details. This is his nature and his strength, which enabled him to produce such timeless films as **La Paloma** (1974), **Schatten der Engel** (Shadows of Angels, 1976) and **Violanta** (1978) and gained him the reputation of an aesthete, quite unlike many of his Swiss colleagues, who were more committed to the realism and naturalism en vogue at the time. It also explains the rapport between Schmid's films and his other artistic predilection, opera. The operas he staged for the Grand Théâtre in Geneva and the Zurich Opera House include *Barbe Bleue*, *Lulu*, *William Tell*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *I Puritani*, *Il Trovatore* and *Beatrice di Tenda*. Playful mingling and juggling of spaces, mirrors, veils, people, music and masks is a characteristic feature of both his films and his operas. It involves the merging of genres, forms, times and realities, the coincidence of what is, what was, and what might be. Schmid's operas often comprise entire films; his films often have strongly theatrical elements. Nearly all his films contain those wonderful, wondrous moments when time shifts and different realities come together. In **Hécate** (1982), the fanatical love story of an embassy staff member and the mysterious Clothilde, it is the look into a champagne glass that causes different time levels to merge. In **Jenatsch** (1987), a story around the murder of legendary Grisons freedom fighter Jürg Jenatsch, the sounding of a bell on a desk in present-day Zurich leads us to the mountain world of the 17th century. In **Violanta** (1977), the adaptation of a novel by famous Swiss author C. F. Meyer, the swaying of a gondola in Venice evokes the incestuous meeting, beside a Swiss mountain lake, between a man and a woman who is, unbeknownst to him, his sister. Finally, in **La Paloma**, a glimpse into the eyes of a woman singer brings to the fore one man's whole life, his unquenched thirst for love and a whore's relentless brutality. In the end, someone says in *La Paloma*, nothing remains but memories. "Life is imagining, dreaming, remembering..." Memory is the mirror of the soul, and what happens on the screen depicts nothing but reality. This is what fiction is all about.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Irene Genhart studied film, German language and literature, and philosophy at the universities of Zurich and Berlin. She writes for Swiss newspapers, film magazines, catalogues and encyclopedias as a freelance journalist. She is a board member of the Swiss film journalists' association and has been co-organizer of Critics' Week at the International Film Festival of Locarno.

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Maverick and cosmopolitan

"Cinema for me has always been linked with beautiful women" Daniel Schmid, 1995

Over the years Schmid, the unworldly son of Swiss alpine hotel owners, has evolved into a man of the world with a suitcase in Paris and a place in Zurich, seemingly at home in hotels all over the world. From 1970 to 2004, he made 15 films including three that are usually listed as documentaries (although he claims to dislike this categorisation) – the Douglas Sirk portrait **Imitation of Life** (1983), **Il Bacio di Tosca** (Tosca's Kiss, 1984) and **The Written Face** (1995) – and two film compilations, entitled **Les Amateurs 1912–1931** (1991) and **Flimmerndes Flims** (Shimmering Flims, 2004). Between 1984 and 2001 he also staged seven operas. He is currently working on two films, **Portovero** and **Giulias Verschwinden** (Giulia Disappears). Although he is among the most regularly creative film-makers in Switzerland, someone who does not only attempt to shine at the big festivals of Cannes, Venice and Toronto, but who has won recognition and a fair share of awards at home, Daniel Schmid is still often regarded as something of a maverick. One reason for this can be found in his stylistic preferences, which are at odds with most of his Swiss peers. Another reason is his "asynchronous" selection of topics after the release of his first two feature films, the social satires **Thut alles im Finstern, eurem Herrn das Licht zu ersparen** (Do Everything in the Dark, 1971) and **Heute Nacht oder nie** (Tonight or Never, 1972). Whereas most of his colleagues spent the early seventies making films with a critical take of political issues, Schmid turned his attention to exploring human memory. And in 1999, when others, in keeping with the spirit of the age, focused more on private issues, he made **Beresina – oder die letzten Tage der Schweiz** (Beresina or the Last Days of Switzerland), a humorous yet biting political satire. The main reason, however, is probably that Schmid has been an uninhibited and surefooted player in the international arena ever since his time in Berlin, where he met Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the two became close, lifelong friends. His casts include internationally reputed actors such as Gérard Depardieu, Sami Frey, Michel Voita, Peter Kern, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Bernard Giraudeau. Yet Daniel Schmid, "the conjurer", as he is called in Freddy Buache's book on the man and his films (*Daniel Schmid – portrait comme magicien*, 1974), exerts his magical powers most strongly on the female roles in his films. Whether they are played by Ingrid Caven, Lucia Bosé, Lauren Hutton, Elena Pavona or Geraldine Chaplin, Schmid, in his quest for the most beautiful actress in the world, has consistently made out of them proud, beautiful and lonesome figures that are far superior to any of his male characters.

Irene Genhart, July 2005

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Gérard Vandenberg
Sound: Hartmut Kunz

Editing: Ila von Hasperg
Cast: Igor Jozà, Isabella Morellato,
Stella Longo, Jenny Caputer

Production: Bayrisches Fernsehen,
Iduna Film München
World Rights: Daniel Schmid,
c/o Condor Films AG

Original Version: German, French,
Italian

"This medium-length first film by Daniel Schmid reminds one of James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* – revealing and majestic. Each member of the audience sees a different story in it. It is labyrinthine cinema. A high-school full of mute expressions accompanied by a solitary voice speaking of revolution; an Italian palazzo where servants fuss about with a corpse; a woman speaking of her Mussolinian past; a few hackneyed Elvis Presley songs are heard now and then over the talk – an amorphous story in which nothing is shown and in which the audience is offered no clue to help them understand." *L'Express*, Paris (15 Jan. 1976)



| 1970

| 16 mm

| colour

| 45'

| original title: Thut alles im Finstern
eurem Herrn das Licht zu ersparen

A documentary fiction about Europe's last training school for domestic staff. The title is a quote from Jonathan Swift's *Directions to Servants*. The film is divided into acts: 1. Gethsemane, 2. Mussolini Foxtrot, 3. "Action shapes thought", 4. Cariolita, 5. Bombs on Monte-Carlo, 6. Mass for Magdalena Montezuma, 7. Letter to an ageing collaborator, 8. Domestic idyll, 9. "All things corruptible are but a parable", 10. Blue-Hawaii for Lucretia Borgia, 11. Psalm 102, 12. Domestic idyll, 13. Genteel people with genteel feelings in genteel society, 14. Circus Finale

"Do everything in the dark ... was my first film (...). I believe the fundamental elements of my later works are already visible in it." Daniel Schmid, 1974

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta

Sound: Jeti Grigioni
Editing: Ila von Hasperg

Cast: Ingrid Caven, Voli Geiler,
Peter Chatel, Igor Jozsà, Peter Kern,
Anna Fadda, Harry Bär, Peter-
Christian Bener

Production: Matthias Brunner
World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German

"The end of an era, dance macabre and final apotheosis: a coolly calculated film with inspired images. Unbelievably beautiful screenshots that seem to hold the characters within a frame (...). A punctilious study of a society that has ceased to develop and merely applauds itself and its demise. As in Buñuel the oppressed are simply would-be members of the middle classes. And the artist who wants to change society is no more than a buffoon."

Armin Halstenberg, *Kölnischer Stadt-Anzeiger* (12/13
May 1973)



| 1972

| 35 mm

| colour

| 90'

| original title: Heute Nacht oder nie

Schmid's satire on 19th-century class relations is also a thinly veiled commentary on the failure of the 1968 political revolution. Once a year, an aristocratic Austrian family holds a traditional feast at which masters and servants trade places. A troupe of actors are hired to entertain the guests, performing fragments from the "cultural scrap heap": *Gone with the Wind*, *Madame Bovary*, Tennessee Williams, *Swan Lake*. The decadent proceedings take on a dangerous edge when the actors incite the servants to revolt against their masters – but is the revolution also part of the act? This caustic political statement, attacked by the Left when the film was released, seems more prescient today in an age of corporate and media co-optation."

Mike Rabehl, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago (2000)

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Sound: Luc Yersin
Editing: Ila von Hasperg

Music: Gottfried Hünsberg
Cast: Ingrid Caven, Peter Kern,
Peter Chatel, Bulle Ogier, Jérôme
Olivier Nicolin, Béatrice Stoll

Production: Citel Films, Genf
Artco Film, Genf, Les Films du
Losange, Paris

World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German

"Daniel Schmid fashions this tale into a poem, a play of associations around the (romantic) themes of love, death and the tomb. He is fascinated and tormented by the artistic desire to examine the creatures of the night, decadent yet soundless, the stuff of longing and despair."

Neue Zürcher Zeitung (4 Oct. 1974)

"For Daniel Schmid everything is an illusion, especially cinema. Imagination is set alight, reality disintegrates, leaving fiction in its purest form: the beauty of women, the tear-jerking sentimentality of the songs, this (German-speaking) Switzerland, forever more. Rarely has a film played hide-and-seek with itself in this way and glorified the world of illusion so blatantly merely to expose the virtues of everyday life and offer us a biting form of social criticism. A masterpiece."

Louis Marcorelles, Le Monde, Paris (12/13 May 1974)



| 1974 | 35 mm | colour | 110' |

Wherever Viola Schlump (stage name La Paloma) performs, the audience includes Count Isidor Palewski, a corpulent young man who has followed her from one second-rate nightclub to another for years, despite her failure to show much interest in him. She finally consents to become his mistress when she is diagnosed as being in the advanced stages of consumption. Isidor takes her to Europe's luxury sanatoriums, where she stages an unexpected recovery and starts to fall in love, not with Isidor but with his love for her, and agrees to marry him. When her belief in his love starts to falter, Viola falls ill again and sets out to revenge herself.

"La Paloma is about love seen as an absolute fiction." Daniel Schmid

Script: Daniel Schmid, R.W. Fassbinder
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Raúl Gimenez

Sound: Günther Kortwig
Editing: Ila von Hasperg
Music: Peer Raben

Cast: Ingrid Caven, R.W. Fassbinder,
Klaus Löwitsch, Annemarie Düringer,
Jean-Claude Dreyfus, Ulli Lommel,
Adrian Hoven

Production: Albatros Film/Artco Film
World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German

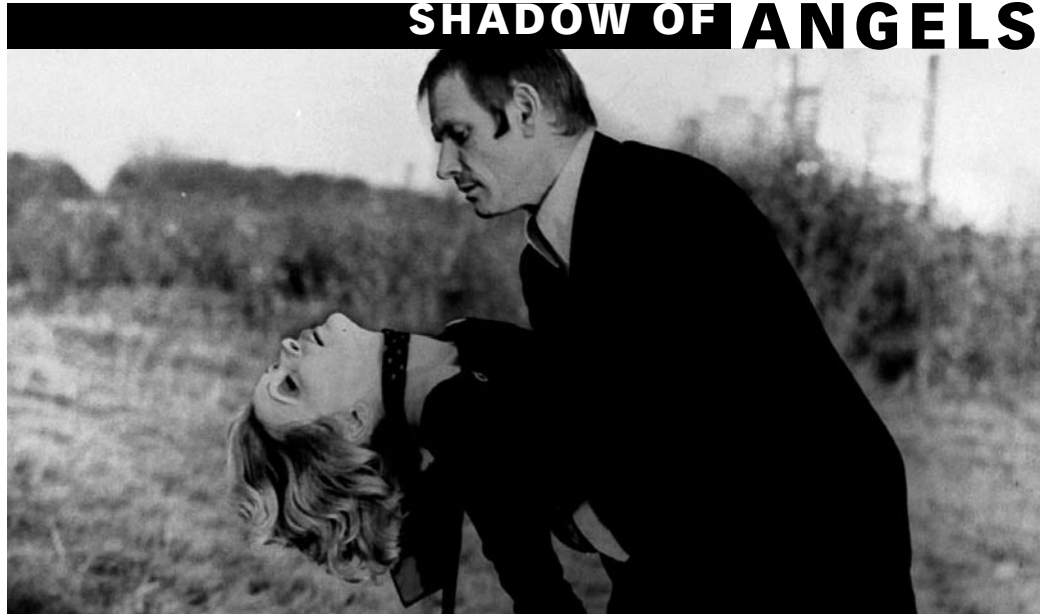
"Banning or blocking a film by Schmid is no victory in the fight against anti-semitism. On the contrary, it is a victory for neo-fascism (...). For some people will remember the poignancy of this film, its political significance and how it was forced out of the public eye."

Gilles Deleuze, *Le Monde*, Paris (18 Feb. 1977)

"A film that claims to have a life of its own, to have nothing to do with everyday experience although it does nothing other than absorb everyday filth. It is a film people will want – and have – to see again."

Wolfram Schütte, *Frankfurter Rundschau* (29 May 1976)

SHADOW OF ANGELS



| 1976

| 35 mm

| colour

| 105'

| original title: Schatten der Engel

Shadow of Angels is the story of a prostitute who is so beautiful that she fails to attract clients. She lives with her pimp until she meets someone who advises her to stop speaking and pays her for listening. That marks the start of her career as the "city's garbage can". She no longer sleeps with her clients, she simply listens to them. In this way she becomes rich and powerful, until she has had enough.

This film is based on a play by Fassbinder, a polemical attack on Frankfurt as a financial centre which triggered a heated debate about alleged anti-semitic tendencies. Schmid's more detached film version was also caught up in the fracas.

Script: Wolf Wondratschek,
Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Raúl Gimenez

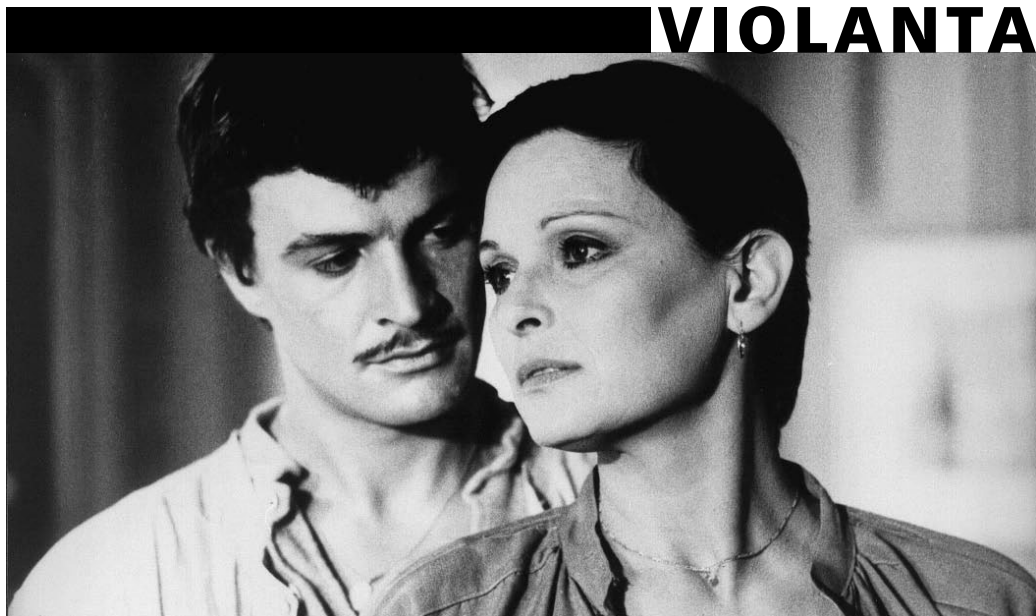
Sound: Florian Eidenbenz
Editing: Ila von Hasperg
Music: Peer Raben

Cast: Lucia Bosé, Maria Sch-
neider, Lou Castel, Ingrid Caven,
G rard Depardieu, Fran ois
Simon, Raul Gimenez, Luciano
Simioni, Marilu Marini

Production: Condor Film, P.C. Fueter,
Artco Film, Eric Franck
World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: Italian

"Violanta is a film of classical beauty in its colours, rhythm and cinematic composition. Its clear, innocent images of a narrow Swiss valley, which immediately create a yearning to live there, embrace the human destinies that unfold inescapably, like a judgement that has to be enforced." Brigitte Jeremias, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (1980)

"This film is an allegory of the groping, inventive, questioning nature of life, which fears not death, but normality and its deathly paralysis. The film culminates in death, suicide and the establishment of more deceit-ridden couples, yet this is not an ending: the film merely portrays a fragment of life which can only be consciously lived in each moment. It is an exaggerated picture of people sailing out across the ocean of their existence without an anchor or mooring line." Bruno Jaeggi, *Basler Zeitung* (1977)



| 1977 | 35 mm | colour | 95' |

Donna Violanta is busy preparing for the wedding of her daughter Laura. The preparations are interrupted by the arrival of Silver, Laura's half-brother, whom she has never met. Violanta is prey to long-forgotten images of a past clothed in secrecy, memories of a passion she believed she had overcome. Laura and Silver have equally ambiguous feelings and are unable to escape their mutual fascination. Dream, reality and the past are closely interwoven.

The inspiration for this tale was a novella by Conrad-Ferdinand Meyer, a popular 19th-century Swiss writer who ranked alongside the likes of Gottfried Keller. Schmid's film constellation is based on this tale, but he has transplanted the action from the 8th-century court of Charlemagne to the 19th century, renamed the characters and altered the dialogue to suit the modern age.

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta,
B. Nicoulin

Sound: Luc Yersin
Editing: Luc Yersin

Cast: Bulle Ogier, Kira Nijinski,
Bob Rafelson, Jean-Claude Brialy

Production: RTSI, SRG, PIC Film
World Rights: PIC Films
Original Version: French

“Schmid turns his unobtrusive humour on a festival that takes on a life of its own, with rules that are impenetrable to an outsider. Having tried desperately to obtain tickets for at least one film with no success, the young tourist has no option but to watch the events unfolding so close to her on television. This is a satire on the role of television in general and the way in which our knowledge and perception are filtered through the media.”

Doris M. Trauth, *Badische Zeitung* (1981)

NOTRE DAME DE LA CROISSETTE



| 1981

| 16 mm

| colour

| 56'

This film portrays a woman attending the Cannes Film Festival in May 1981. A tourist who has no links to the world of cinema and acting, she knows no one and soon becomes lost in the chaos.

“This film is bound to delight anyone who has suffered the trials and tribulations of attending a major film festival for the first time.” Daniel Schmid

Script: Pascal Jardin, Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Raúl Gimenez

Sound: Luc Yersin, Bernard Rochut
Editing: Nicole Lubtchansky,
Daniela Roderer
Music: Carlos d'Alessio

Cast: Lauren Hutton, Bernard
Giraudeau, Jean Bouise,
Jean-Pierre Kalfon, Gérard
Desarthe, Juliette Brac

Production: T+C Film AG
World Rights: T&C Edition/
TF1 Films Production
Original Version: French

"Daniel Schmid sets this *amour fou* in exquisite interiors against the glittering backdrop of a clash of cultures: European colonialism on the one hand and the dark, secretive labyrinth of the Arab world on the other. And he has remained true to his motto: 'For me, film-making means using clichés that lead to dreams.' The dreams are fantastic."

Anne Frederiksen, *Die Zeit* (27 Jan. 1984)

"A story of physical passion from which love is absent. Although this is a film that openly portrays sensual lust, Daniel Schmid avoids all vulgarity, there is no sense of voyeurism, not a single lewd scene. This is a film that keeps the spectator at a distance, avoiding all direct visual intrusion. That is a hallmark of this gifted director: In his films, form is never used to create reality. Cinema cannot depict reality, it can merely reflect the illusion of reality. But moulded by the artist, this illusion can contain reality, expose reality. Daniel Schmid's formal approach is a reflection of this philosophy of film and cinema . (...) Throughout *Hécate* we remain aware that this is the world of art, that as the film unfolds we are watching an artificial world outside our own reality. You may like it or you may not, but *Hécate* cannot be judged with critical terms that have nothing to do with this film (or with Daniel Schmid's work as a whole). The cool distance from tangible reality makes this film Daniel Schmid's best to date."

Martin Schlappner,
Neue Zürcher Zeitung (29 Oct. 1982)



| 1982

| 35 mm

| colour

| 105'

The strangeness and oriental fascination of North Africa have often served as an attractive backdrop for tales of unbridled passion and unpredictable actions. In *Hécate* the rituals of life are framed by the Arab-European world of colonial North Africa. Set in Morocco, this film looks back at one man's passion for an enigmatic woman, who seems to move further and further from him although she submits to his physical caresses. When Julien Rochelle meets Clothilde at a reception, she is waiting for her husband, a French officer, to return from a mission to Siberia. Their liaison, initially no more than a way of passing the time, an antidote to boredom, soon becomes a passionate affair that makes Julien dependent and ill and eventually drives him to the verge of madness.

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Sound: Luc Yersin

Editing: Daniela Roderer
Cast: Sara Scuderi, Della Benning,
Irma Colasanti, Giuseppe Sani,
Giulia Scaramelli, Ida Bida

Production: T+C Film
World Rights: T&C Edition

Original Version: Italian

"Tosca's Kiss is a film whose charm makes it deeply moving. Its appeal is rooted in many things. First there is Renato Berta's exquisite camera-work, characterised by the utmost technical precision, which captures the most delicate shades of mood, and a sensitivity towards the subjects that goes beyond simple consideration and becomes in itself an expression of compassion. There are other reasons for the beauty of this film, too. One is the genuineness of the people's faces: the faces of old men and women whose eyes and wrinkles show the ravages of time, the sign of a long, hard life with its achievements and disappointments, ovations and losses. Faces of people who know what they look like and what is coming, whose hands and gestures, whose every movement is pervaded by the inimitable flair of a ceaseless performance."

Neue Zürcher Zeitung (10 Aug. 1984)

"This film is an extraordinary, overwhelming declaration of love: for the old people in the 'Casa Verdi', for opera and for Italy, home to a sociocultural tradition that cannot be dismissed as 'bourgeois'. This is what prevented Schmid showcasing the more critical aspects. Of course it would have been easy to portray the forgotten stars as vanity-ridden weirdos who have mislaid all sense of history (e.g. fascism) . (...) Even if you do not understand much about opera or Italy, this film gives you a deeper insight into the world of old age, music, major cultural relationships and the power of feelings."

Gerhard R. Koch, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*
(1984)



| 1984

| 35 mm

| colour

| 87'

| original title: Il Bacio di Tosca

On the Piazza Buonarrotti, in the middle of Milan, surrounded by the noise of traffic, we can still find what Giuseppe Verdi referred to as his "most important work": the Casa Verdi. Inside it is dark and quiet – except in the rooms where the residents are making music. Founded by Verdi in 1902, the Casa Verdi is a home for retired musicians, who live withdrawn in their small rooms with their music and a handful of memories. Some are artistes who never quite made the grade, while others are stars of yesteryear who have long since spent their dream fees.

Script: Martin Suter, Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Raúl Gimenez

Sound: Luc Yersin
Editing: Daniela Roderer
Music: Pino Donaggio

Cast: Michel Voita, Christine
Boisson, Vittorio Mezzogiorno,
Laura Betti, Carole Bouquet,
Jean Bouise

Production: Limbo Film AG
World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German

JENATSCH

"This is a film about crossing boundaries, especially time boundaries, and looking through windows in people's souls that show who they once were and how the world once was. Through its use of surreal elements, this film naturally generates close encounters of the third kind, but Daniel Schmid's interest focuses on the deeper psychological trauma rather than amusing cinematic tricks. Aided by his outstanding cameraman, Renato Berta, this is something he does to perfection."

Martin Schlappner, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (1987)



| 1987

| 35 mm

| colour

| 97'

In **Jenatsch** Daniel Schmid set himself a tough challenge, taking up a tale that may appear at first sight easy to tell but which interweaves different epochs. The film centres on Sprecher, a journalist who is sent to interview anthropologist Dr. Meister, who once led the excavation of Jenatsch's tomb. Jenatsch was a 17th-century Swiss freedom fighter who was murdered during the carnival celebrations in Chur in January 1639. During his assignment Sprecher takes a brass bell, which is supposed to unlock the secret surrounding the murder of Jenatsch. Gradually his life is drawn into the history of Jenatsch. As he tries to put things right, he suddenly loses all sense of reality. The only solution seems to be to "murder" Jenatsch again. The murder becomes a repeat of the reconstruction that the anthropologist played out to the journalist – originally to the journalist's great amusement. But what seemed at first to be no more than a joke, suddenly turns very sinister.

Script: Martin Suter
Editing: Daniela Roderer

Production: CS, Limbo Film AG,
Film&Video Production

World Rights: Carac Film AG
Original Version: Italian

"Graceful skaters, dashing outdoor sportsmen, high society on the hotel terrace and a lively tea dance on a steamer: Daniel Schmid's contribution to Freddy Buache's compilation programme uses anonymous advertising films and amateur footage from the 1910s and 1920s to portray the delightful world of high-society tourists in a bygone age." Sabina Brändli,

Züri-Tipp (1992)



| 1991

| 35 mm

| b/w

| 26'

Les amateurs 1912-1931 is part of the **Film du Cinema Suisse** series directed by Freddy Buache, in which twelve film-makers avail themselves of a wealth of Swiss cinema archive material and film sequences, from 1896 to the current day, in order to produce twelve medium-length films.

Script: Daniel Schmid, Martin Suter
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Raúl Gimenez
Sound: Barbara Flückiger, Luc Yersin
Editing: Daniela Roderer
Music: Peer Raben

Cast: Sami Frey, María Maddalena
Fellini, Ingrid Caven, Andréa Ferréol,
Arielle Dombasle, Parisa Peredes,
Maurice Garrel, Dieter Meier, Ulli
Lommel, Carlos Devesa, Irene Olgiati,
Béatrice Stoll, Luisa Barbosa, Rosa

Castro André, Laura Soveral,
Hilde Ziegler, André Gomes,
Susana Borges, Jacentiono
Ramos, Rogerio Samora, Rogerio
Claro, Vittorio Mezzogiorno,
Géraldine Chaplin

Production: T+C Film AG Zürich;
Pierre Grise Production, Paris;
Metropolis Film, Berlin
World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German, French

"Schmid at his best: bold, whimsical, tender and ironic. He returns to the realm of women, who have always been at the heart of his theatrical reality, headed here by the grandmother, the baroque story-teller. (...) *Hors Saison* is enchanting: it spreads out a wealth of miniatures before our eyes, plays with dreams, forgotten longings and the emptiness of the present day, through which (adult) Valentin wanders futilely."

Wolfram Knorr, *Die Weltwoche* (1992)

"*Hors Saison* has an unexpected new lightness. Daniel Schmid (...) turned seducer. His stream of stories is poured out in a series of scrupulously encased images full of soft red tones. The shadowy ghosts of the past are transformed into wonderful characters that he brings to life and sets in motion as lavishly and tastefully as if they were on an opulent stage. Each unrelated episode, accompanied by Ingrid Caven's smoky, erotic voice, fuses into a magnificent, somnambulant dialogue, a tender melody."

Angela Schmitt-Gläser, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (7 Feb. 1994)



OFFSEASON

| 1992

| 35 mm

| colour

| 95'

| original title: Hors Saison

Valentin returns to the scene of his childhood: an old hotel in the Swiss mountains, which has long been sold and is about to be demolished. As he wanders through the empty building, his memories fill the hotel with life, as if their very transience had brought forth an inner melody.

The narrative structure of **Hors Saison** resembles a game of billiards: one ball glances off another, setting it in motion and at the same time altering its own course. One episode triggers another, until their paths cross or they merge, creating a kaleidoscope of memories interspersed by what is ostensibly the present.

Script: Daniel Schmid
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Sound: Dieter Meyer
Editing: Daniela Roderer
Music: Liszt, Puccini, Chow Hsuan,
Lecuona Cuban Boys

Cast: Tamasaburo Bando, Kazou Ohno,
Han Takehara, Haruko Sugimura,
Yajuro Bando, Kai Shishido, Toshiya
Nagasawa, Asaji Tsutakiyokomatsu

Production: Marcel Hoehn,
Kenzo Horikoshi
T+C Film, Zürich (Marcel Hoehn)
Eurospace, Tokyo

World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: Japanese

"There are two things that have to be said about *The Written Face*. First, it is probably Daniel Schmid's best film. Secondly, it is less a documentary about the Kabuki Theatre than a new variant of the film-maker's reflections (...), a cross between an essay and a poem."

Jacques Mandelbaum, *Le Monde*, Paris (1996)

"I love things that are gone," says Swiss film-maker and opera producer Schmid, paying tribute to a vanishing, alien culture. This is a hymn to the beauty of art. Schmid transforms the body of Onnagata, the 101-year-old geisha, and the 88-year-old Butoh dancer into fiction. A few gestures are sufficient for him to sketch the other sex or convey a sense of perfect beauty, but without the frail figure behind it disappearing completely. In Schmid's film people are works of art."

Christiane Peitz, *Die Zeit* (20 Sept. 1996)



| 1995

| (blow-up from Super-16)/35 mm

| 89'

| original title: The Written Face

The *Written Face* gravitates around Tamasaburo Bando, star of the Japanese Kabuki theatre. The film is divided into four overlapping acts. The first, the dance of the drunk serpent Orochi, from Japan's oldest myth, is followed by a second, documentary section on Tamasaburo Bando and his idols. This focuses on his meetings with geisha and dancer Han Takehara, movie actress Haruko Sugimura (Ozu, Naruse, Kurosawa) and Butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno. The third act, "Twilight Geisha", is a playful variation on the geisha theme. In the fourth and final act Tamasaburo dances the Kabuki piece "Sagimusume", a story of the reincarnation and metamorphosis of a young girl on a snowy winter's night.

Script: Martin Suter
Cinematographer: Renato Berta
Art Director: Kathrin Brunner
Sound: Luc Yersin
Editing: Daniela Roderer
Music: Carl Hänggi

Cast: Elena Panova, Martin Benrath,
Géraldine Chaplin, Ulrich Noehnten,
Ivan Darvas, Marina Confalone, Stefan
Kurt, Hans-Peter Korff, Joachim Tomas-
chewsky, Teco Celio, Hilde Ziegler,
Ivan Desney, Hanspeter Müller, Hubert
Kronlechner, Jessica Früh

Production: Marcel Hoehn, T+C Film
AG/ Pandora Film, Köln/ Prisma
Film, Wien

World Rights: T&C Edition
Original Version: German

“Schmid has always been one of those masterly film-makers whose vision has not been locked in the narrowness of the Swiss Alps, who loves to transform myths and legends into operatic screenplays marked by brilliant irony and the gloss of aestheticism. His new film *Beresina* – another collaboration with his long-standing scriptwriter Martin Suter – is a masterful black comedy that depicts Switzerland as a magic mountain where the powers that be pass before our eyes as a horrifying monstrosity show.”

Wolfram Knorr, *Die Weltwoche* (20 May 1999)

“Martin Suter has written a hilariously funny and completely disrespectful screenplay, which Daniel Schmid has set off with masterful elegance. Packed with attacks on representatives of Swiss political culture, especially from the army, this is a film that is apparently also delighting international audiences.”

Christoph Egger, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (25 May 1999)

BERESINA OR THE LAST DAYS...



| 1999

| 35 mm

| colour

| 108'

| original title: *Beresina oder Die letzten Tage der Schweiz*

This black comedy tells the tale of Irina, a beautiful Russian call-girl who finds herself in the fairy-tale setting of Switzerland, a country in which she begins to believe unconditionally – unlike those around her. Through Dr. Alfred Waldvogel, a somewhat fishy lawyer, and his girlfriend Charlotte De, she is introduced to a growing circle of clients from the worlds of business and politics, the military and the media.

Back in Russia, her fortune is followed by her numerous relatives, who soon start preparing to move to the promised land.

Meanwhile, Irina becomes more and more entwined in a labyrinthine tangle of interest groups, all of whom seem to be using her. As a reward for her role as “informant” she hopes to gain a Swiss passport. One of her clients even promises to marry her. In the face of blackmail she is forced to make up dubious stories about her clients. As she faces deportation, she falls prey to a misunderstanding and – fully unaware of the consequences – triggers a coup planned many years ago by a long-forgotten patriotic organization: the Beresina Alarm. Her life takes an unexpected turn – together with the rest of Switzerland.

“*Beresina or The Last Days of Switzerland* resulted from the desire to make our very own declaration of love of the country we grew up in and by which we have been moulded.” Daniel Schmid, 1999