



CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Doris Dorrie | Germany/France | 2008 | 127 mins | no cert



Exclusive Review by BFFS President Derek Malcolm

'Way back in 1985, German director Doris Dorrie made a sharp and entertaining film called *Men* which told the male sex off for expecting women to accept their sexual unreliability and then being horrified when women tried a bit of the same. Since then she has had a hard time finding her voice again. But she at last does so with this often moving film about parents and children, impermanence and mortality.



A married couple living in a small Bavarian town argue about visiting their son who works in Tokyo. Trudi, the wife (Hannelore Elsner) is fascinated by things like Mount Fuji and Butoh dancing but Rudi, the husband (Elmar Wepper), says their son should visit them instead. When Trudi unexpectedly dies, Rudi, overwhelmed by his loss, decides to go to Japan.

Once there he discovers his son doesn't really want to have him to stay and, wandering Tokyo, the old man finds himself intrigued by a young Butoh dancer (Aya Irizuki) and by a culture in which the cherry blossom is the most striking symbol of impermanence.

The film has terrific performances from Elsner and particularly Wepper, even if the dancer is a bit of an eccentric trial. It is nicely made and highly sympathetic, telling us that when our children seem to have no time for us, a different culture can provide solace, even if the shortness of life in the end brooks no argument.'

Synopsis

Only Trudi knows that her husband Rudi is suffering from a terminal illness. It is up to her to decide to tell him or not. The doctor suggests that they do something together, perhaps something they were long planning to do... Trudi decides not to tell her husband about the gravity of his illness and to follow the doctor's advice. She convinces Rudi to visit their children and grandchildren in Berlin, but once they arrive, they realize that their children are so busy with their own lives that they have no time for them. Then, suddenly, Trudi dies.

Rudi is devastated and has no idea what to do next. From his daughter's girlfriend he learns that Trudi's love for him had led her to forego the life that she had wanted to live. He begins to see her with new eyes and vows to make up for her lost life. And so he embarks on his last journey - to Tokyo, in the midst of the cherry blossom festival, a celebration of beauty, impermanence and new beginnings...

One of Germany's foremost filmmakers (*Men, Me and Him, Am I Beautiful, Enlightenment Guaranteed, and How to Cook Your Life*), multiple award-winning director Doris Dörrie reconfirms her exceptional talent with this tender, emotionally intense and profoundly moving story of marital love.

About Director and Writer Doris Dörrie

Doris Dörrie is an exceptional artist. She is the only female director in Germany who has repeatedly directed successful feature films over a period of 20 years. Her films, such as *Men, Me and Him*, *Nobody Loves Me*, *Am I Beautiful?*, *Naked* and *The Fisherman and His Wife*, to name a few, have not only been commercially successful, but have also been well received by the critics and have garnered her numerous awards. But it's not only her feature films that bear her unique stamp. She has also shot numerous documentaries; her latest outing in 2006 was *How to Cook your Life*, and she continues to delight audiences with opera productions such as *Cosi Fan Tutte* (Staatsoper Berlin 2001), *Turandot* (2003), *Rigoletto* (2004/2005 Münchner Staatsoper), *Madame Butterfly* (Münchner Staatstheater 2005) and *La Finta Giardiniera* (Salzburger Festspiele 2006).

She was born 1955 in Hannover and studied Latin and ancient Greek in high school. After graduation she went to the United States, where she studied drama, philosophy and psychology from 1973 to 1975. Upon returning to Germany she studied film at the Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film in Munich. Her graduation film *Der Erste Walzer* was well received at the Hof and Lübeck Film Festivals. Between 1978 and 1981 she wrote film reviews for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and shot several documentaries, as well as a children's movie for the Bayerische Rundfunk.

In 1983 she directed her first feature film *Straight Through the Heart*, which appeared at the Venice and Tokyo Film Festivals. One year later she directed her breakthrough film *Men*. This charming comedy was a box office success in Germany in 1986 with 6 million viewers and went on to perform well internationally.

When Doris Dörrie isn't directing film she teaches screenwriting at her alma mater, the HFF in Munich, and writes novels and short stories, which have been published with great success. She wrote her first collection of short stories *Liebe, Schmerz, und das ganze verdammte Zeug* in 1986. This was followed by *Was wollen Sie von mir* in 1988, *Der Mann meiner Träume* and *Für immer und ewig* in 1991, *Samara* in 1996 and, in 1998, *Am I Beautiful?* a collection of 17 interconnected short stories, on which her film of the same name is based. After receiving various literary awards for her short stories, she published her first novels, *Was machen wir jetzt?* and *Enlightenment Guaranteed*.

Her next novel, *Das blaue Kleid* was on the bestseller list of the weekly magazine *Spiegel* for several weeks in 2002 and won her the *Deutsche Buchpreis*. She has also published seven children's books and the weekly newspaper *DIE ZEIT* referred to her as one of the best storytellers of contemporary German literature. Recently, her latest novel, *Und was wird aus mir* a story about people and love in the Hollywood dream factory, appeared on German bookshelves.

Booking Information:

HD Digital, Digibeta & DVD bookings | Oli Harbottle | oli@dogwoof.com | 020 7833 3599

DVD bookings on BFFS Block Booking | Ros Hill | info@bffs.org.uk | 0114 221 0314

Theatrical release date | On general release

Official Website | www.kirschblueten-film.de

Cast and Crew

Rudi	Elmar Wepper	Butoh-Dancer	Tadashi Endo
Trudi	Hannelore Elsner	Writer/ Director	DorisDörrie
Franzi	Nadja Uhl	Producers	Molly von Fürstenberg/ Harald Kügler
Karl	Maximilian Brückner		Hanno Lentz
Yu	Aya Irizuki	DoP	Sabine Greuning
Karolin	Birgit Minichmayr	Costumes	Inez Regnier/ Frank Müller
Klaus	Felix Eitner	Editors	Claus Bantzer
Emma	Floriane Daniel	Music	Patrick Zorer/ Ruth Stadler
Celine	Celine Tannenberger	Associate Producers	
Robert	Robert Döhlert		

Film Info

Length 127 min | Colour | 1:1.85

Original Version: German | English | Japanese

Subtitled Version: English, Sound Technology: Dolby Stereo

World Premiere: Berlin 2008 (In Competition)

Awards and Quotes

'The film is suffused with a very Japanese sense of the transitory nature of life, in which the cherry blossom is regarded as the most beautiful symbol of impermanence. "Cherry Blossoms" itself is a most beautiful film; it's also a daring one in the sense that Dörrie risks folly -- in Rudi's convenient encounter with a sweet young Butoh dancer (Aya Irizuki) -- to reach for the sublime. Yet so committed and sustained is Dörrie's vision and so inspired are Wepper and Elsner and their supporting players that "Cherry Blossoms" is a stunning reminder of the omnipresence of mortality.'

Los Angeles Times

'The movie is an ideal blend of character study, deceptively simple plot twists, inspired acting, and travelogue.' **San Francisco Chronicle**

'It's a quiet, very beautiful film about the duality of love and death, and makes expressive use of the mysterious modern Japanese dance form called butoh.'

The Observer

'Unpredictable and compelling, this draws parallels between Japanese and German cultures in interesting and moving ways.'

Empire

'Writer-director Doris Dörrie invests this tender, tearful tale with delicate optimism and a sense that every moment is worth grabbing, even if - like the petals of the title - those moments are forever floating out of reach...'

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