

NEW FROM **NEW YORKER FILMS**

"A TERRIFIC MOVIE THAT BOASTS INTELLIGENT WIT, EXPERT STORYTELLING, DELIGHTFUL CHARACTERS... AND A WICKED SURPRISE ENDING!"

-HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

a film by **HANS WEINGARTNER**



DANIEL BRÜHL, JULIA JENTSCH, STIPE ERCEG, BURGHART KLAUBNER

THE EDUKATORS

"TENSE, EVOCATIVE, AND EMOTIONAL."

-Michael Wilmington, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

www.newyorkerfilms.com

Three roommates who are anti-globalization political activists inadvertently kidnap a wealthy businessman (and former 60s lefty) in *The Edukators*, an award-winning and wildly entertaining German comedy-thriller. Daniel Bruhl, the lead actor in *Goodbye, Lenin!*, stars as a young, idealistic, Berlin-based anti-capitalist in love with his best friend's girl in this sharp and funny social satire.

GERMANY • 2004 • 126 mins • Color • In German with English subtitles



MICHAEL WILMINGTON

Jan, Jule and Peter, the three youthful protagonists of the audacious German film "The Edukators," are rebels desperately searching for a cause. Hardenberg, the rich businessman they've kidnapped, is an ex-revolutionary himself: a man now firmly in the establishment who actually lived the days of pot, protests, rock, free love and riots that the youngsters can only dream of.

When the shaggy young trio wind up abducting Hardenberg as part of a botched political protest and stashing him in a mountain hideaway belonging to Jule's uncle, a curious exchange starts. Hardenberg, or "Hardi" as he likes to be called, treats the whole kidnapping as a sort of vacation, a time to cool out, let his now stubby hair down and reminisce about the good old days—of Danny the Red, acid and the Grateful Dead.

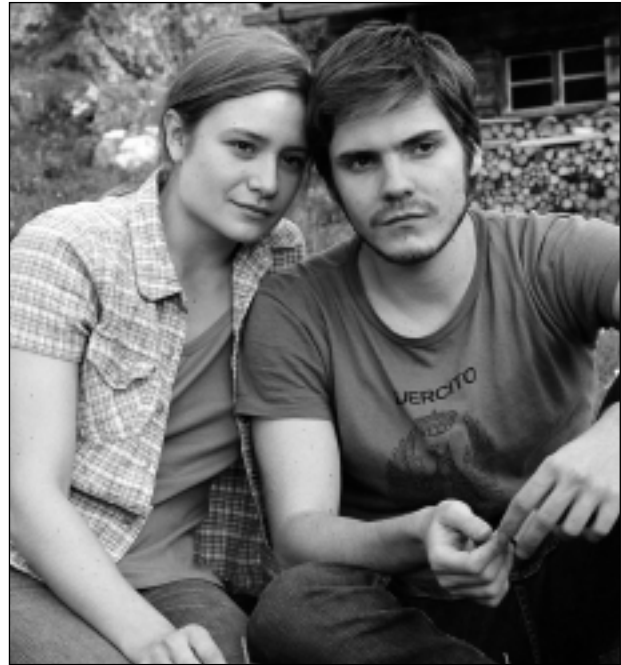
Meanwhile, his 20ish young captors find themselves surprisingly drawn to their 50ish prisoner and also forced to sort out their own crises. Jan (played by Daniel Bruhl of "Good Bye, Lenin!") has fallen in love with Jule (Julie Jentsch) who was the lover of Jan's best friend, Peter (Stipe Erceg). How will they all deal with the complexities of love and revolution in an age that seems hostile to both?

As he records the emotional travails of this odd quartet—with an active high-definition video camera that allows them all maximum freedom—Austrian writer-director Hans Weingartner tips his sympathies. Weingartner, a member of Hardenberg's generation, probably understands the businessman more deeply, but his heart is with the young, confused, reckless but essentially good-hearted kidnapers—and his film both wittily probes the political quandaries of the present and brazenly calls for a newer, better call to arms. Having gone through the '60s himself, a part of Weingartner—who has named Michael Moore, Mike Leigh ("Vera Drake") and Costa-Gavras ("Z") among his favorite filmmakers—clearly wants them back, but in a way that's less explosive, more permanent.

Perhaps that's why the director turns Jan, Jule and Peter into play revolutionaries. Though they may seem a kind of German edition of the Weather Underground, they don't play for keeps. They don't use violence or kill as did Germany's Bader-Meinhof Gang or the Italian Red Brigades.

Instead, they play a kind of parlor game; calling themselves "The Edukators," they break into the homes of the wealthy and rearrange their furniture into comical heaps, while leaving messages that say "Die Fetten Jahre Sind Vorbei" ("Your days of plenty are numbered.")

It's as much youthful prank as social statement. And the Hardenberg vandalism and unintentional kidnapping also come from personal revenge: Hardenberg holds a huge judgment over Jule, who accidentally crashed into his Mercedes, and when she persuades Jan to break into his luxury home and pull an "Edukators" prank, they wind up kidnapping Hardi, who comes home too early. In a way, it's a play kidnapping too; they clearly at first don't have the stomach for any violence. But we suspect that the affable-seeming Hardenberg does, which gives the movie another layer of tension—especially when the mountain hideout turns into an arena for a series of friendly seminars on politics.



Somehow, the world has to disrupt this bizarre idyll and sentimental "edukation."

"The Edukators" premiered in competition at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, which is where I first saw it. It took me back; though set in the present, the film has an irresistible sense of the '60s and '70s. Weingartner's neither paranoid nor a proselytizer, and he understands the rebels of that era and the present.

Weingartner won the German Film Critics' best film prize for "The Edukators" and he's a major new talent. (His first film, 2002's "The White Noise," also starring Bruhl, won the critics' best first feature award.) Utilizing an economy of means, he gets the maximum from his resources. The film's breeziness and energy act as a tonic, prevent its darker moods and insights from dragging its audience down.

Jentsch won the German critics' best actress prize, but the four-person ensemble registers strongly; each actor responds to the movie's mix of entrapment and freedom with fine, tigerish instincts. Jentsch is a perfect political ingenue, Erceg a convincing radical wanna-be. Klaussner hits all the right notes (and a few we don't expect) as Hardenberg. Meanwhile, Bruhl, as Jan, shows why he's become to the current German cinema what Gael Garcia Bernal is to both Mexican and Spanish film: a great young actor who's also a first-rank star. He imbues Jule with both sensitivity and fiery spirit.

"The Edukators" has both a surprising ending and after-effect. For a film that points out so much wrong with German society and shows such dubious, dangerous behavior, it leaves the audience with high spirits and a sense of crazy exhilaration.

THE EDUKATORS

Directed by Hans Weingartner; written by Katharina Held, Weingartner; photographed by Matthias Schellenberg, Daniela Knapp; edited by Dirk Oetelshoven, Andreas Wodraschke; production designed by Christian M. Goldbeck; music by Wodraschke; produced by Weingartner, Antonin Svoboda. In German, with English subtitles. Running time: 2:04. MPAA rating: R (for language, sexuality and drug use).

Available for performance rental in DVD, VHS and 35mm to all nontheatrical customers. All bookings subject to theatrical approval.

CALL NEW YORKER FILMS TOLL FREE: 1-877-247-6200

85 Fifth Avenue, 11th floor, New York, NY 10003 • Tel: (212) 645-4600 • Fax: (212) 645-3232 • nontheatrical@newyorkerfilms.com