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**Presents**

# **THE SILENCE**

**A FILM BY BARAN BO ODAR**

*In German with English subtitles*

119 min., Germany, 2010

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<http://www.musicboxfilms.com/the-silence-movies-59.php>

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## SYNOPSIS

*The Silence* begins 23 years ago on a hot summer day, when a girl named Pia is brutally murdered in a field of wheat by Peer (Ulrich Thomsen), as his helpless friend Timo (Wotan Wilke Moehring) watches. Now, in the present day, on the exact same date, 13-year-old Sinikka is missing, her bicycle abandoned in the same spot, leading police to suspect the same killer may be at work again. Recently widowed detective David (Sebastian Blomberg) and his colleague Janna (Jule Boewe) struggle to solve the mystery of these parallel crimes with the help of Krischan (Burghart Klaussner), the retired investigator of the unresolved case.

While Sinikka's distraught parents are trapped in an agonizing period of waiting and uncertainty, their daughter's fate rips open unhealed wounds in the heart of Pia's mother (Katrin Sass) and sends Timo in search of Peer and their own old desires.

In his strikingly commanding debut feature, Swiss-born Baran bo Odar adapts Jan Costin Wagner's novel with his own unmistakable signature. Selected by *Variety* as a "Director to Watch," Odar studied directing at the Munich Film School. His first short film, *Squeak*, was shown at the 2005 Berlin International Film Festival. *The Silence* premiered on the Locarno Film Festival's Piazza Grande and went on to screen at the Palm Springs Film Festival. Gripping performances by top European actors - headed by Ulrich Thomsen (*In a Better World*, *Fear Me Not*, *The Celebration*), Sebastian Blomberg (*The Baader Meinhof Complex*), Katrin Sass (*Good Bye, Lenin!*) and Burghart Klaussner (*The White Ribbon*, *The Edukators*) - enrich this intense drama far beyond the crime genre.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

In *THE SILENCE* I combine two genres, thriller and melodrama. My primary focus isn't the question "Whodunit?" but more the emotional state of the characters. How does one cope with the loss of a loved one? In different ways the protagonists are preoccupied with this issue, which is the common theme running through this constellation of characters. *THE SILENCE* is an ensemble piece with a wonderful cast, including Ulrich Thomsen, Wotan Wilke Möhring, Sebastian Blomberg, Katrin Sass, Burkhard Klaussner, and Karoline Eichhorn, to name but a few. Their acting expresses what words no longer can. Their faces reveal feelings such as despair and emotional states such as guilt in all their nuances and show even the most fleeting changes. That's where the real tragedy unfolds.

- *Baran bo Odar*

## **PRODUCERS' STATEMENT**

*THE SILENCE* is a rather unusual feature film debut, a contemporary neo-noir as well as a visually impressive, gripping relationship drama. It is an ensemble film fueled by the emotional state of its characters, a tragedy that unfolds in the most subtle way. The criminal case is just a way into the psyche of the characters and their emotional states. Their encounters, marked by the trauma of an existential loss, are like duels: issues that have been repressed for years erupt without ever being mentioned. Loneliness, despair, guilt and atonement – bewildered, the characters face a crime that makes no apparent sense.

*THE SILENCE* also marks yet another cinematic accomplishment for director Baran bo Odar and his DoP Nik Summerer. They studied film together at the *Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen* in Munich and previously joined forces on "Unter der Sonne", their graduation film. Even back then, Nik Summerer's powerful visual images impressed us and that's again the case in *THE SILENCE*. The precision and visual strength of his elegant cinemascope camera work captivates the audience, drawing them deeper and deeper into the psychological discord triggered by the disappearance of 13-year-old Sinikka.

The complex world that Baran bo Odar sets out to create is further brought to fruition by Yesim Zolan and Christian M. Goldbeck's production design, Katharina Ost's costume design, Robert Rzesacz's editing, and the music of *pas de deux* (Michael Kamm, Chris Steininger). The careful preparations and the constant exchange between the department heads, as well as Baran bo Odar's clear artistic vision, can be felt in even the most minute details of this film.

*THE SILENCE* is the result of successful collaboration between Cine Plus Filmproduktion, Berlin, and lüthje schneider | FILM, Munich. We share Baran bo Odar's passion for gripping stories and powerful visuals, and appreciate his ability to utilize the techniques of Hollywood cinema to tell a German story without ever sacrificing its universal theme. With his short film "Quietsch" (Cine Plus Filmproduktion) and his graduation film "Unter der Sonne" (lüthje schneider | FILM), Baran bo Odar has established himself as a director who knows exactly what stories he wants to tell, and as a filmmaker with a distinctly formal and aesthetic handwriting.

- *Jörg Schulze, Frank Evers, Maren Lüthje, Florian Schneider*

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **BARAN BO ODAR – WRITER AND DIRECTOR**

Baran bo Odar was born in 1978 in Switzerland. He studied film at the *Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film* in Munich from 1998 to 2006. In 2001, after completing a directing internship on Doris Dörrie's film "Naked", he left to spend a year in Barcelona. Together with Mike Marzuk, he founded illegalefarben filmproduktion/Munich in 2003. He also completed the Masterclass – commercial and promotional film at the HFF Munich. In 2003 he was invited to participate in the Berlinale Talent Campus, and in 2005 his short film "Quietsch" screened at the 55th Berlin International Film Festival.

In 2006, after making a number of short films and docu-shorts, Baran bo Odar shot his first feature "Unter der Sonne," for which he received two awards for Best New Director: the Studio Hamburg Newcomer Awards in 2006 and the Munich Feature Film Award in 2007.

### **ULRICH THOMSEN as Peer Sommer**

*For 29 years, Peer Sommer has been the superintendent of the non-descript residential high-rise complex where he and Timo met 23 years ago. A dark secret connects the two men.*

Ulrich Thomsen was born in 1963 in Denmark. After graduating from the Danish National School of Theater in Copenhagen, he played various parts on local stages for a number of years. In 1994, he made his feature film debut in Ole Bornedal's cult classic NIGHTWATCH.

At the beginning of his film career, he appeared in Susanne Bier's thriller SEKTEN and Anders Thomas Jensen's "Election Night", which received the Oscar for best short film in 1998. That year, Thomsen launched his international career in the lead role of Thomas Vinterberg's multiple award-winning film THE CELEBRATION. Thomsen went on to become one of the most renowned figures in Danish cinema. With films such as Susanne Bier's BROTHERS, the versatile character actor continues to win over international critics. He has appeared in local and international film and television productions, collaborating with directors such as Ridley Scott, Michael Apted, Sean Ellis, and János Szász, and actors such as Sean Penn, Mads Mikkelsen, Catherine McCormack, and Joseph Fiennes. He has received numerous international awards and nominations for his work, including the European Film Award.

**WOTAN WILKE MÖHRING** as Timo Friedrich

*Timo Friedrich leads a quiet life with his wife Julia and their two children. But when he sees the bike belonging to the missing Sinikka on TV, he finds himself catapulted back into the past.*

Wotan Wilke Möhring made his acting debut in the television movie “Die Bubi Scholz Story,” directed by Roland Suso Richter. Möhring also played Joe the electrician in Oliver Hirschbiegel’s feature film THE EXPERIMENT (2000). From there, Möhring’s career took off. He received a great deal of attention in 2000 for his impressive performance in the lead role of “Hat er Arbeit?,” for which he was nominated for a German Television Award. He has since played a wide range of characters, proving to be one of the most versatile actors of his generation. Other notable roles include a secretive, small-town police officer in Christian Alvar’s critically acclaimed thriller ANTIBODIES, a man suffering from testicular cancer in Robert Schwentke’s dark comedy THE FAMILY JEWELS, as well as appearances in VALKYRIE, alongside Tom Cruise, Fatih Akin’s SOUL KITCHEN, and Simon Verhoeven’s MANNERHERZEN.

**KATRIN SASS** as Elena Lange

*Elena has been grieving ever since her daughter Pia’s death 23 years ago. The disappearance of Sinikka brings back memories that threaten to throw her life off-track again.*

Prior to the fall of the wall, Katrin Sass was one of the most renowned actresses in East Germany. With the box office hit GOOD BYE, LENIN! she became a fixture in the German film industry. She was a student when director Heiner Carow discovered her, casting her as the lead in UNTIL DEATH DO US APART.

For her performance in Herrmann Zschoche’s BURGSCHAFT FÜR EIN JAHR, she received the Silver Bear at the Berlinale in 1982. She also appeared in DAS HAUS AM FLUSS, FALLADA – DAS LETZTE KAPITEL and HEUTE STERBEN IMMER NUR DIE ANDEREN. For her performances in both SPERLING UND DER BRENNENDE ARM and EIN MANN STÜRZT AB, Sass received the German Film Award in 1999 for Best Supporting Actress. In 2001 Sass played the lead in HEIDI M., for which she won the German Film Award and the German Critics Award. For her portrayal of a sick mother in GOOD BYE, LENIN! she was nominated for the European Film Award-Best Actress and won the Audience Award.

**BURGHART KLAUSSNER** as Krischan Mittich

*Twenty-three years later, Pia Lange's case still preoccupies Krischan Mittich, who was unable to find her killer. When Sinikka disappears he's determined to get involved in the investigation, even though he has recently retired.*

Born in Berlin, Burghart Klaussner studied acting at the Max-Reinhard-Schule in Berlin. The general public discovered him in feature films such as ROSSINI and the award-winning GOOD BYE, LENIN! (2003, Wolfgang Becker). Klaussner also appeared in three of director Hans-Christian Schmid's films: 23, CRAZY, and REQUIEM. For his role in Hans Weingartner's celebrated Cannes entry THE EDUKATORS, he received the German Film Award. At the Locarno Film Festival in 2006, he was awarded the Silver Leopard for Best Actor for his lead role in Dito Tsintsadze's THE MAN FROM THE EMBASSY. In 2009, Klaussner appeared in Michael Klier's feature film AGE AND BEAUTY alongside Henry Hübchen, Armin Rohde, and Peter Lohmeyer and played the judge in THE READER, the adaptation of the novel of the same name directed by Stephen Daldry and starring Kate Winslet. Recently Klaussner played the pastor in Michael Haneke's drama THE WHITE RIBBON, which was awarded the Palme d'Or at the 2009 Cannes International Film Festival and the European Film Award, as well as the 2009 German Film Award and the 2010 Golden Globe. He regularly appears on various German stages.

**SEBASTIAN BLOMBERG** as David Jahn

*David Jahn is but a shadow of his former self ever since his wife passed away. To get a handle on his life, he returns to work as a police officer the day before Sinikka's disappearance.*

Sebastian Blomberg was born in 1972 in Bergisch Gladbach and studied acting at the renowned Max-Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna. He first caught audience attention in Lars Kraume's well-received television movie "Dunkel". He made his feature film debut a year later in Stefan Ruzowitzky's horror-thriller ANATOMY, alongside Franka Potente. He also appeared in WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF FIRE? with Til Schweiger, OLGA'S SUMMER, I'M THE FATHER, and Florian Hoffmeister's 3 GRAD KALTER. His performance in the latter won the Silver Leopard at the 2005 Locarno Film Festival. In Uli Edel's box office success DER BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX, Blomberg convincingly portrayed the political activist Rudi Dutschke. Most recently, he appeared in Wim Wender's PALERMO SHOOTING and Julie Delpy's THE COUNTESS.

**NIKOLAUS SUMMERER** – Director of Photography

Nikolaus Summerer was born in 1971. He began his film career as a gaffer, grip, loader, and camera assistant. In 1997-98 he worked for ARRI Rental and ARRI Camera and went on to become a technical supervisor at Camera Service Center in New York. From 1999 to 2004, he completed numerous feature films, television movies, commercials, and video clips. At the same time, he studied film at the *Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film* in Munich. He has worked as a DoP since 2004. His graduation film UNTER DER SONNE received the Kodak Vision Award at the Slamdance Film Festival and was nominated for the 2006 German Camera Award in the feature film category.

## **CINE PLUS FILMPRODUKTION GMBH**

Cine Plus Filmproduktion develops, produces, and co-produces feature films and documentaries for the German and international market. Producers Jörg Schulze and Andreas Eicher produce and co-produce high quality, innovative productions ranging from mainstream movies to European art house films. They collaborate closely with their parent company Cine Plus Media Service, which offers the full range of audiovisual production services. The duo's most successful projects include Philip Gröning's INTO GREAT SILENCE and Thomas Grube's RHYTHM IS IT! Currently, they are working on Ulrich Thomsen's directing debut IN EMBRYO, Martin Gypken's DIE HINGABE, the Norwegian-German-Swedish coproduction UNDERNEATH, directed by Bobbie Peers, and Armin Völckers' comedy feature ALLES AUSSER DAS MADCHEN.

## **lÜthje schneider | FILM**

Lüthje Schneider | FILM is an emerging Munich production company founded in 2005 by Maren Lüthje and Florian Schneider. In 2010, Andreas Hörl joined as a third partner. The team has produced international feature films such as Byambasuren Davaa's German-Mongolian production THE CAVE OF THE YELLOW DOG (winner of the 2006 German Film Award), Daniel Workou's MENGED, a German-French-Ethiopian co-production (winner of the Crystal Bear at the 2007 Berlinale), as well as documentary films like WAS WIRD BLEIBEN, directed by Knut Karger, STADLFREUNDE, directed by Frauke Ihnen, and AVENIDA ARGENTINA, directed by Milena Bonse. The company also completed Baran bo Odar's previous projects – UNTER DER SONNE (2005) and the commercial "Hadi MINI" for the Master Class Werbung und Imagefilm at the HFF in Munich. Currently, they are in development and preproduction for several feature film projects by directors including Baran bo Odar, Doron Wisotzky, Torben Liebrecht, Sabrina Wulff and Knut Karger.

## CAST

Peer Sommer	Ulrich Thomsen
Timo Friedrich	Wotan Wilke Möhring
Elena Lange	Katrin Sass
Krischan Mittich	Burghart Klaussner
David Jahn	Sebastian Blomberg
Ruth Weghamm	Karoline Eichhorn
Karl Weghamm	Roeland Wiesnekker
Julia Friedrich	Claudia Michelsen
Matthias Grimmer	Oliver Stokowski
Jana Gläser	Jule Böwe

## CREW

Written and directed by	Baran bo Odar
<i>Based on the novel "The Silence" by Jan Costin Wagner</i>	
Published by	Harvill Secker <i>Originally published in Germany by Eichborn</i>
DoP	Nikolaus Summerer
Producers	Jörg Schulze, Frank Evers Florian Schneider, Maren Lühje
Production Companies	cine plus Filmproduktion GmbH, lühje schneider   FILM
Supported by	Mitt eldeuts che Medienförderung, Film Fernseh Fond Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FFA, DFFF
Line Producers	Florian Schneider Maren Lühje
Production Manager	Jantje Friese
Production Design	Yesim Zolan Christian M. Goldbeck
Costume Design	Katharina Ost
Make-Up	Elke Lebender
Sound	Johannes Doberenz
Music	pas de deux (Kris Steininger, Michael Kamm)
Editing	Robert Rzesacz
Casting	Anja Dührberg Casting
Commissioning Editors	Christian Cloos (ZDF – Das kleine Fernsehspiel) Doris Hepp (ZDF / arte)

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Germany, 2010, 119 min  
35 mm and DCP, color, 1:2.35, Dolby SR  
Release date: August 19, 2010  
International Premiere  
Official Selection Locarno / Piazza Grande 2010



## **About Music Box Films**

Founded in 2007, Music Box Films has quickly established itself as one of the leading theatrical and home entertainment distributors of foreign language, American independent and documentary films in the US. Past releases include the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of international mega selling novels; the first in the series, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, with over \$10 million in US box office, was one the most popular international releases of the decade. 2012 titles include Terence Davies' THE DEEP BLUE SEA, starring Rachel Weisz; Philippe Falardeau's Academy Award nominated MONSIEUR LAZHAR, one of the top grossing foreign language films of the year; Ira Sachs' KEEP THE LIGHTS ON, winner of the 2012 Outfest Grand Jury Prize and the Berlin International Film Festival Teddy Award; and Travis Fine's festival audience favorite ANY DAY NOW, starring Alan Cumming. Upcoming releases include LORE, directed by Cate Shortland (*Somersault*) and Julian Roman Pölsler's THE WALL, starring Martina Gedeck. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.

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