

Strand Releasing presents

SASHA

A film by Dennis Todorović

**Starring Saša Kekez, Tim Bergmann, Pedja Bjelac, Željka Preksavec,
Ljubiša Grujić, Jasin Mjumjunov, Yvonne Yung-Hee, Arno Kempf**

Country of Origin: Germany/ In German with English Subtitles

Aspect Ratio: 1:2, 35 Scope

Running Time: 102 minutes

Not Rated

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SYNOPSIS

Sasha, confronted with the everyday prejudice of his homophobic immigrant family, struggles with his urge to come out. When his beloved piano teacher Gebhard Weber plans to leave the city, the young man is heartbroken. The only person in whom he can confide his feelings is his best friend Jiao. After a failed audition, Sasha swears never to play piano again, but a consoling telephone call from Gebhard changes his mind – and causes a turn of events. The next morning all secrets are exposed and only his brother's intervention prevents Sasha's father Vlado from shooting Gebhard dead. But the gun still goes off...

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Sasha is my debut feature, a story I simply had to tell. My characters have a lot to do with my own family, even though none of them is simply dramatized reality, their traits of character, their approaches to life, their flaws and virtues, their moments of lesser and larger cultural shock are the ones I know from my own life. *Sasha*, has become my declaration of love to and criticism of my own migrational background.

I am serious enough about the topic to be able to tell this story as a comedy – be it a bitter-sweet one. Only through irony I was able to show the tragedy of the tense conflicts within the Petrović's family ties. In cinema, I always look for the humor in the characters and scenes.

The Petrovićs, but also the weight of the characters Gebhard and Jiao make *Sasha* an ensemble piece. With Sasha's impossible coming-out story being the core and spine of it, but all of the characters make a Step towards their own self-fulfillment.

With *Sasha* I hope for an international audience, as it touches a subject still widely tabooed around the world. There needs to be an accessible way for a large audience to tackle these subjects, a difficult or depressing film about Sasha's truly tough conflict would not help to get the film seen. In the countries of former Yugoslavia, where a serious debate about homosexuality is still in its infancy and marked with violence and ignorance there is a dire need for a film like this one.

My film is as little German as it is Bosnian, Serbian or Croatian, as I am telling a story from my own world which is a world in between countries. In a world full of migrants and their children, I believe this is what makes this story universal and valuable for an international audience. To me, film represents art, entertainment and reflection. As a writer-director, I do not believe in making films for myself, but films to communicate with.

CAST

**SASA KEKEZ
TIM BERGMANN
PEDJA BJELAC
ZELJKA PREKSAVEC
LJUBISA GRUJCIC
JASIN MJUMJUNOV
YVONNE YUNG-HEE
ARNO KEMPF
PETRA NADOLNY
STEFAN PREISS
ROLF BERG
MANUEL PFOH
TEDROS TECLEBRHAN**

**Sasha
Gebhard Weber
Vlado
Stanka
Pero
Boki
Jiao
Peter
Frau Strattmann
Herr Meyer
Sammy
Peer
Amir**

CREW

**Directed by DENNIS TODOROVIC
Screenplay by DENNIS TODOROVIC
Produced by EWA BOROWSKI
Casting DANA CEBULLA
Original Music by PETER AUFDERHAAR
Sound Design PETER AUFDERHAAR
Sound Mixing LOTHAR SEGELER
Sound by CLAAS BENJAMIN BERGER
Make-Up CLAUDIA SCHAAF
Costume Designer SARAH RAIBLE, NINA ALBRECHT
Production Design DANIEL CHOUR
Production Manager ANNETTE SCHILLING
Unit Manager LAURA EINMAHL
Colorist DIRK MEIER
Edited by BRITTA STRATHMIN BERGER
Director of Photography ANDREAS KÖHLER**