

DIRECTOR'S NOTE "STELLA"

This is the story of a German Jewess who dreams of becoming a famous Broadway musician, but who happens to live at the wrong time: Berlin in the 1940's. After being forced into hiding underground and caught and tortured by the Gestapo, she decides to betray her own people to save her own life and the lives of her parents. This story is true. Based on our detailed research in the trial files of the Soviet military court in 1946 and the proceedings in front of the Moabit district court in 1957.

I've been fascinated with Stella from the very first moment I read about her. Of course, I keep asking myself "why?". Maybe it is because she seems to be such a modern character, longing not only to survive but also to flourish and thrive in life. She is a highly ambivalent character. Both perpetrator and victim in one person. It's not easy to judge her. More than once I caught myself thinking I would have acted like her. I felt terribly close to her.

So, in the end, this is a film about us. What would you do if you were in a situation like this? What would you do if you were a young human being living in a dictatorship?

I don't have to point out how relevant this topic is. Dictatorship is now much closer to us than many of us would like to believe. So, we should take this time to reflect on our ethical principles. We may be forced, sooner or later, to decide which side we are on.

This film was always meant to be radical. This can be seen in both the storytelling and the aesthetics. There's no comfort zone for the audience, no excuses, no historical distance, that allows you to put this film aside as just another period piece about Nazism. Berlin appears to us as a modern, fast and almost seductive metropolis to which you would like to belong at all costs.

This film confronts the viewer both emotionally and intellectually. We should find ourselves in the same physical and mental condition as Stella. So often, ethical choices have to be made in a split second. Are we ready for this?

Kilian Riedhof