

Reber Makes A Strong Statement at IFFI 2009

Exposing Society's Hypocrisy



—Sigmund de Souza

Daring, erotic, provocative - the three words that describe best what I felt after watching Roland Reber's '24/7, The Passion of Life' during this year's International Film Festival of India.

The film starring Marina Ana Eich and Mira Gitner exposes a lot more than human bodies, not in the least, the hypocrisy behind society's opposition to the existence of sado-masochistic parlours in Europe.

In this film Marina plays Eva, an heiress daughter of a rich hotel owner, who is unhappy with her life and accidentally meets Magdalena,

who owns a sado-masochistic parlour and goes by the pseudonym of Lady Maria.

Magdalen hitches a lift from Eva after her bike breaks down on a deserted stretch of country road. When Eva drops her at the bike service station, Magdalena leaves without her handbag.

Eva finds a cell phone in the bag and calls the number only to find a voice mail that says "Welcome to Lady Maria". She pays a visit to Lady Maria to return her belongings and is confronted with a most surreal world of leather articles, sets, prison doors, etc., in the dominatrix's S&M studio.

Fascinated by what Magdalena, a sociologist, who finds running the parlour therapeutic to her own sexuality and personality, Eva embarks upon a journey of sexually deviant behavior.

Michael Burkhardt who though he was playing a man who thinks he is Jesus Christ fighting Satan's temptation (played by Lady Maria), Christoph Baumann who plays the role of Magdalena's house maid add interesting side plots to the whole theme.

In the end it becomes clear that when the clients of this S&M studio fulfill their kinkiest desire, they experience a totally overwhelming feeling, akin to being born again.

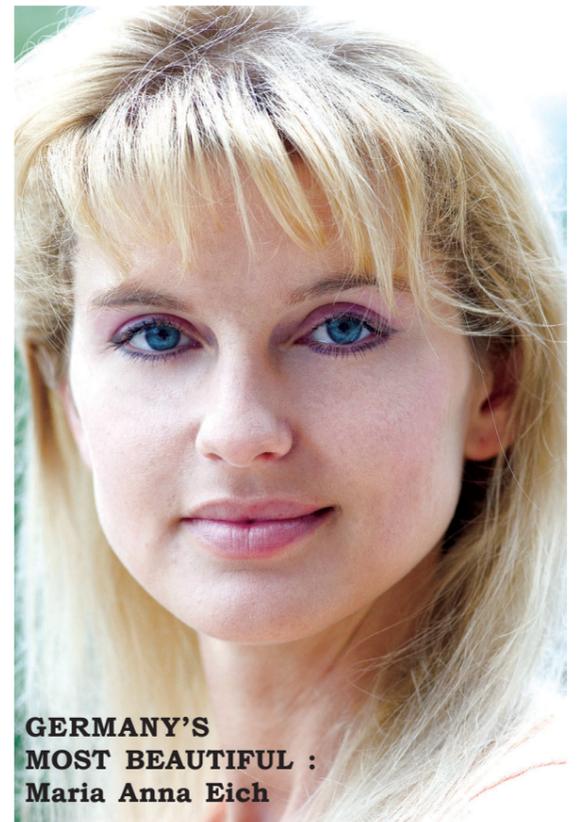
Reber would explain after the film that the cast spent a lot of time visiting swingers' clubs and S&M studio's in preparation for this film. "What we found is that the clients of these clubs carried about them an almost saintly glow on their faces. Obviously it came from them satisfying their inner most desire", felt Reber.

He also revealed that he was surprised to find out that many of society's rich and famous people,

including Catholic Bishops visited these Swingers' clubs and S&M parlours. Asked what was the Church's reaction to the interpretation of the Bible and the character of the man who thought he was Christ, Reber said the Church sent a Bishop to watch the film, and the Bishop later told him the content of the film was true.

Since most of his films include nude roles for the cast, this writer asked him how he motivates his actresses to strip for them. "I don't motivate them to strip. They offer to do the nude scenes when they realize it is important for the story. I never tell the actresses to strip, they come to me and offer to do so when they feel it is important for the roll", retorts Reber.

Thirty three year old Marina Anna Eich from Oberammergau, Germany, who plays the lead role in the film is German cinema's most beautiful faces. In the film it is evident that she has a body to go with that face. But what struck me most was the warmth with which she



GERMANY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL : Maria Anna Eich

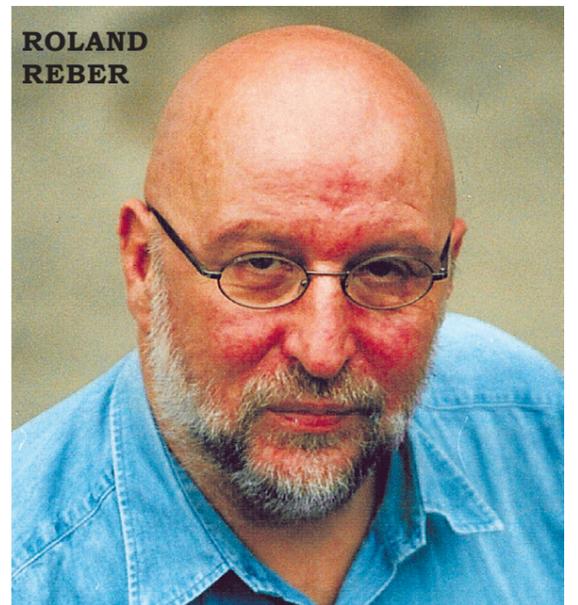
spoke, an air of genuine frankness and friendliness about her. That inner beauty is matched by an intelligence that is evident from the fact that Marina is also the public relations manager for WTP International, Reber's own film production company. After a predominantly male audience has seen you completely naked on screen, doesn't it embarrass you to face them in person after the film?

Was my question. "No, not at all, I am proud of my body. I am ready to strip if the script requires me to. As long as it is not porn", she adds.

The beautiful Marina is actively involved in the production and marketing of WTP's films, as well. Reber says that his team is his family. They work together on a minimalistic self financed budget, he revealed.



Eva being challenged by Lady Maria in the film. TOP: Michael Burkhardt and Mira Gitner



ROLAND REBER