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Everyday heroes: Russian Film Festival in Kassel

Walt Disney's first Russian production celebrates premiere in Kassel / from thrillers to comedies, thirteen films presents a broad portrait of the country

Kassel. Just a few days before the awards ceremony in Los Angeles, current and previous Oscar-nominated Russian films will be shown on cinema screens in Kassel (at the Cineplex Capitol). With its film festival "**Russia. Cinema. Kassel.**", the German-Russian natural gas company WINGAS will be presenting award-winning cinema highlights, audience favorites as well as children's and documentary films from the largest country in the world to a broad public for the first time on Saturday, 6 March. One of the highlights of the festival is the **premiere** of Walt Disney's first Russian production, "**The Book of Masters**", in the afternoon. The children's film (age 8 and over) tells the story of the stonecutter Ivan who battles against the terrifying reign of the Stone Countess. The Russian production elegantly combines traditional Russian storytelling with modern fantasy elements. Other new Russian films, such as the offbeat "**Ballada**", which examines the significance of the Lada in Russian daily life, will celebrate their premiere at the film festival. The wide-ranging program also contains award-winning comedies such as "**Tulpan**" and the psychological thriller "**12**". Thirteen films in total will be shown on three separate cinema screens. On Saturday evening Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren shines in the literary adaptation "**The Last Station**" as the wife of "War and Peace" author Leo Tolstoy. Unsurprisingly, the English actress has once again been nominated for an Oscar for her performance in this film.

"Russian cinema has many gems to offer which remain largely unknown to the public in this country. We want to bring these films to the public with the Russian Film Festival," WINGAS Chairman Dr. Gerhard König said explaining his company's initiative. "As a German-Russian company, we are particularly interested in promoting cultural understanding between the two countries". In addition to many film showings, "Russia. Cinema. Kassel." also offers a special children's program on Saturday afternoon. Children will have the opportunity to paint and design their own linden wood matryoshka dolls at creative stations. A photo studio will also be set up especially for the event with special tricks to give the young guests a photo to remember.

Tickets for the film festival are available from Monday, 1st March, in the Cineplex Capitol Kassel, Wilhelmstraße 2a. Tickets cost € 4 per film for adults and €2 per film for children under 12. The special events for children start on Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. in the cinema foyer and continue until 7 p.m. The entire **program** is available on the Internet at www.wingas-filmfest.de. The original Russian versions of some of the films will be shown with German or English subtitles.

Note to editors:

The film festival will kick off for WINGAS employees and guests with an exclusive event on the evening before (**Friday, 5 March, 8 p.m.**). On show will be one of the latest Russian blockbusters, the music film "**Stilyagi**" (The Hipster). The Stilyagis were the Russian hipsters and rebelled against the establishment in their country years before the 1968 protest movement in Germany. "**Stilyagi**" tells the story of the young Communist Mels. When he encounters the Stilyagis in the 1950's in Moscow, a whole new world opens up to him. The music film became one of the most successful Russian films of recent years in 2009. After the film, **Dr. Hans-Joachim Schlegel**, one of the most distinguished German connoisseurs of Russian cinema (and **Member of the European Film Academy**), will talk to one of the **main protagonists** in the film, **Maxim Matveev**, about his role, the legacy of the Stilyagis, the role of Russian cinema in his own country as well as international interest in Russian productions.

Following the film there will be an **after-show-party in the Soda Club**, where cult author and DJ **Vladimir Kaminer** will personally grace the turntables.

Journalists can receive accreditation for the event by contacting the WINGAS press office at (0561) 301 3301 or by mail to presse@wingas.de. **Photographic material** on the film festival is also available from the press office.

European energy provider **WINGAS GmbH & Co. KG** is active in natural gas trading and distribution in Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Austria, the Czech Republic and Denmark. Its customers include municipal utilities, regional gas suppliers, industrial firms and power plants. Since 1990 WINGAS has invested more than 3 billion Euros in the development of a natural gas transport and storage infrastructure. WINGAS TRANSPORT pipeline network, which is over 2,000 kilometers long, connects the major gas reserves in Siberia and in the North Sea to the growing markets in Western Europe. In Rehden in North Germany, WINGAS has the largest natural gas storage facility in Western Europe – with a working gas volume of over four billion cubic meters, and the company also participates in Central Europe's second largest storage facility in Haidach, Austria. Additional natural gas storage facilities are currently being built in Great Britain and Germany in order to secure the supply of natural gas in Europe. More information at www.wingas.de