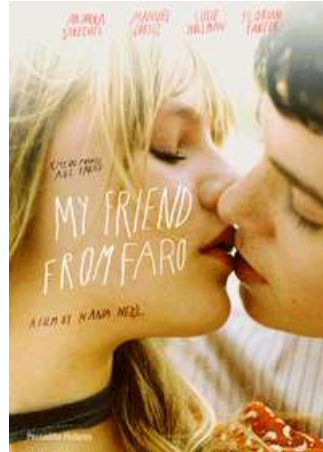




Peccadillo Pictures Presents

A Nana Neul Film



My Friend From Faro (Mein Freunde Aus Faro)

Anjorka Strechel Lucie Hollman Manuel Cortez Florian Panzner



IRIS PRIZE Festival

Winner, Best Feature Film



Official Selection



Official Selection



Official Selection

DVD Release Date: 16 May 2011 Running Time: 93 mins Cert: tbc RRP: £14.99

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Nana Neul's blistering directorial debut, which has drawn comparisons with *Boys Don't Cry* and *Unveiled*, comes to DVD on a wave of film festival acclaim. An assured, mature piece of work that draws heartfelt performances from its leads, *My Friend From Faro* marks Neul as a talent to watch.

Eternal daydreamer Mel can't wait to quit her sucky catering job and fly to her dream destination: Portugal. Things change when the beautiful Jenny literally crashes into her life when Mel nearly runs her over in her classic BMW. It is love at first sight, however there is just one problem: Jenny mistakenly assumes Mel to be a boy. Despite this, the pair become boyfriend and girlfriend. With Mel attempting to disguise her true gender at every turn, her journey from tomboy to out lesbian is fraught with life-defining dilemmas and sweet surprises.



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An Interview with Nana Neul



WHAT ENCOURAGED YOU TO WRITE THE FILM?

When I hitch-hiked from Berlin to Cologne the driver told me the story of a friend of her 14 year old daughter, who fell in love with a strange 18 year old boy, who - as she realised much later - was in fact an older woman. I couldn't forget this story, so I asked myself, what must it have been like for this woman to pretend to be a boy for this 14 year old girl?

MANY COMPARISONS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH *BOYS DON'T CRY* - HAD YOU SEEN THE FILM BEFORE YOU MADE 'MY FRIEND FROM FARO'?

Of course. I really love this film, but with *My Friend From Faro* I wanted to tell a love story with, at least in some way, an optimistic ending. You could say that *My Friend From Faro* is a kind of prologue for *Boys Don't Cry*, because my main character Mel hasn't already found her way in her life when the film starts. She doesn't know whether she wants to live as a girl or as a boy and where her love for Jenny is going to take her. She needs to explore this experience to find a way out of her family.

HOW WAS IT CASTING WOMEN FOR SUCH A MASCULINE ROLE?

Anjorka is a brilliant actress and when she showed up at our first casting I really loved her body language, how she walked, moved, everything seemed to be perfect for this masculine role of Mel. But her outer appearance was so different from what I was looking for that I first decided to cast some other girls. But then we decided to transform Anjorka into this Portuguese boy Miguel, with his brown eyes and brown hair. So the blond, blue eyed Anjorka became Miguel!

LUCIE HOLLMANN WAS ONLY THIRTEEN WHEN YOU MADE THE FILM, WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR HER?

She was no beginner on the set! She behaved very professionally. But when I wanted to rehearse the love scene she said she would only kiss Miguel in front of the rolling camera. So this was exciting, but it worked. It was her first kiss, as she told me! I really loved the pureness of her acting. The love story was something special for Lucie, something new. She was such an angel. And so it's a film about first love, and a first kiss!

THERE IS A LOVELY SCENE WHERE JENNY ASKS BIANCA IF SHE IS A LESBIAN, AND BIANCA HAS NO ANSWER. DID YOU HOPE TO BREAK ANY PREJUDICES WHEN YOU MADE THE FILM?

I wanted to show how a normal young girl experienced something very special and tries to deal with this experience. Of course she questions her sexuality even though she did not know that Miguel was a girl. That is quite a thing for a 14 year old girl. But maybe yes, I hope that other young girls think about love and sex and being lesbians in a different way. I don't care if I fall in love with a girl or a boy. The important thing is that I fall in love with this person, with this human being. I don't fall in love with a specific gender. But that's just me and my opinion.

HOW WAS THE FILM RECEIVED IN GERMANY AND AT FILM FESTIVALS?

My Friend From Faro is still very present at festivals all over the world and won many prizes for best script, best picture... I'm still waiting for a best actress prize! But of course it is no blockbuster. It is a film that will find its audience in the long run :-)

THE ENDING OF THE FILM LEAVES THE VIEWER IN A STRANGE PLACE OF HOPEFUL UNCERTAINTY. WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS TO THESE CHARACTERS?

Oh, that's unfair! I hope every spectator will dream his or her very special ending for the film and these two lovers who are separated. In a way it is the end of the beginning of Mel's real life as a German Portuguese. She may find an old or new love in Portugal.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PROJECTS?

I just finished a new script I hope to shoot in the south of France next summer (2011). It's a love story about a much older couple that I am going to tell from two different point of views. I already found a wonderful actress for the main role. Wish me luck for the funding!