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Friedrich Schiller - The Triumph of a Genius

Friedrich Schiller - The Triumph of a Genius is a German feature film from 1940. Based on the novel *Passion* by Norbert Jacques , it deals with the artistic beginnings of the German poet Friedrich Schiller .

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Storyline

In the 18th century, Württemberg suffered under the harsh regime of the Duke of Württemberg, Karl Eugen . The poet Schubart dares open criticism, but is arrested a little later using a ruse and imprisoned in Hohenasperg Fortress.

At the same time, inner resistance to the military drill at the military academy , where he was studying medicine on the Duke's orders, grew in young Friedrich Schiller.

During the parade for the birthday of Karl Eugen's wife, Countess Franziska von Hohenheim , Schiller causes a stir when he sends his flame Laura Rieger a love poem. Their mother intercedes with the Countess to spare Schiller.

Movie

original title Friedrich Schiller - The Triumph of a Genius



production Germany

country

original language German

Publishing year 1940

length 102 minutes

Rod

directing Herbert Maisch

script CH Diller
Walter Wasserman

production Fritz Klotsch ,
Gustav Rathje for Tobis film art

music Herbert Windt

camera Fritz Arno Wagner

cut Hans Heinrich

occupation

- Horst Caspar : Friedrich Schiller
- Hannelore Schroth : Laura Rieger
- Heinrich George : Duke Karl Eugen
- Lil Dagover : Countess Franziska von Hohenheim

When the diplomas were awarded, Schiller explained to Karl Eugen that he adopted a philosophical tone in his medical work because every science, like medicine, has its limits, and he followed his heart when writing his works. The furious Karl Eugen orders that Schiller has one more year to spend at the academy. Schiller's father, who works as a gardener for Karl Eugen, was unsuccessful. When Laura intercedes with the Countess for Schiller, she promises help, which, however, is just as fruitless.

Meanwhile, Schiller secretly begins to write his protest play *Die Räuber*. Even the additional year at the academy did not break Schiller's will and thus emerged victorious from a dispute with Karl Eugen as to whether geniuses were raised or born.

When Schiller proudly tells Laura that his play is finished, he is dismayed to learn of Schubart's arrest.

At a roll call, the duke, who had gotten wind of the resistance of Schiller and his fellow students and announced that he would not tolerate any rebellion, suggested that Schiller go to Asperg. There, to his horror, Schiller encounters a broken Schubart. Believing that Karl Eugen wanted to have Schiller imprisoned, General Rieger had Schiller arrested at Asperg, which the duke immediately revoked.

In the meantime, Laura has forwarded the manuscript of *Die Räuber* to Hofmarschall Silberkalb. Schiller is initially disappointed by this betrayal, but learns from Laura that the manuscript is still with her. Schiller immediately had it printed anonymously. In order not to attract attention, Schiller now devotes himself entirely to medicine in order to be able to take his exams and finally leave the academy. After the exams, Schiller entered the service of General Augé's regiment, who informed the delighted Schiller that he considered the author of *The Robbers* to be a genius.

At the inn, Schiller and his friends, who are celebrating the release of *Die Räuber*, receive a letter from the theater director Dalberg in Mannheim and are delighted to learn that the play is to be performed.

The performance becomes a success. Duke Karl Eugen gets angry and calls Schiller over. As Schiller still stands by his attitudes, he has no choice but to leave Württemberg to avoid imprisonment on the Asperg.

- Eugen Klöpfer : Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart
- Paul Dahlke : Sergeant Riess
- Paul Henckels : Hofmarschall von Silberkalb
- Herbert Huebner : General Rieger
- Dagny Servaes : Mrs. Rieger
- Hildegard Grethe : Elizabeth Schiller, Schiller's mother
- Friedrich Kayssler : Johannes Kaspar Schiller, Schiller's father
- Walter Franck : Stranger
- Hans Quest : Eleve Hoven
- Hans Nielsen : Eleve Scharffenstein
- Fritz Genschow : Eleve Karpff
- Franz Nicklisch : Eleve Petersen
- Ernst Schroeder : Eleve Zumsteg
- Wolfgang Lukschy : Eleve Boigeol
- Just Scheu : Captain of the Military Academy
- Günther Hadank : General Augé
- Hans Leibelt : Professor Abel
- Ferdinand Terpe : Chamberlain
- Heinz Welzel : musician Andreas Streicher
- Bernhard Minetti : Franz Moor
- Albert Florath : Pastor Moser
- Vicco von Bülow : Page (extra role)
- Edmund Lorenz : Schorsch Riess

Awards

The National Socialist Film Review Board awarded the film the ratings of *political value* , *artistic value* and *youth value* .

Reviews

The film critics were mainly looking for an explanation as to how it was possible that during the time of the National Socialist dictatorship Friedrich Schiller was unashamedly portrayed as a rebel against the authorities of his time. On the one hand, one saw Schiller being monopolized as the predecessor of the “genius” Hitler, but on the other hand, one also looked for hidden criticism of the Nazi regime.

Thomas Kramer, for example, stated for *Reclam's Lexikon des Deutschen Films* that it was a carefully staged film about Schiller and his freedom-loving spirit. Like other genius films, its function was to “stylize German superhumans who, under Nazi ethics, had rights that the rest of the population did not have.” This was intended to evoke parallels to Adolf Hitler. However, this desired trend is u. a. repeatedly subverted here by Klöpfer and Caspar, "who drew Schiller as a rebellious hothead". ^[1]

Heyne 's film encyclopedia calls *Friedrich Schiller a strange "mixture of freedom and folk pathos" in which the song about the superman* sounds so high that the film was politically valuable for the Nazis. ^[2]

The Catholic Film Service also pointed to the careful direction and important cast, through which the film shows "a strange political ambivalence between the rebellious "in tyrannos" and the genius cult of National Socialist ideology". ^[3]

Erwin Leiser pointed out that "a superficial observer [...] might be tempted to see this film as a call for freedom of expression". In fact, it is misunderstood that the film does not take sides against the duke, who as a ruler is endowed with all rights over his subjects, but who lacks Schiller's visionary genius, for whom other rules apply according to the logic of the film would have to. According to the film, the author of the *robbers* is the forerunner of the author of *Mein Kampf* . A quote from a contemporary review from the *Illustrated Film-Kurier* , in which i.a. the " superhumanViolence" of the genius voice in Schiller is mentioned, Leiser follows up with a rhetorical question: “Who doesn’t think here of the moment when Hitler felt his vocation and became a politician?” ^[4]

The German Film Institute summarizes:

"The artistically staged film with a star cast still divides film critics today: while some see it as a protest against the oppression of 1940, others find the ideology of the National Socialists reflected in the figure of the brilliant, great German Friedrich Schiller." ^[5]

See also

- List of German feature films premiered in the German Reich during the National Socialist era

Itemizations

1. *Reclam's Lexicon of German Film* , Stuttgart, 1995, p. 112
2. Heyne Filmlexikon, Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, Munich, 1996, p. 275

3. *Friedrich Schiller - The Triumph of a Genius*. (<https://www.filmdienst.de/film/details/25546>)In: *Lexicon of international film* . Filmdienst , retrieved March 2, 2017 .
4. Erwin Leiser: *"Germany awake!" - Propaganda in the film of the Third Reich* . Rowohlt paperback, Reinbek near Hamburg 1968, p. 92.
5. German Film Institute (<http://www.difarchiv.deutsches-filminstitut.de/caligari/dt2fcf0519.htm>)

Web Links

- *Friedrich Schiller – The Triumph of a Genius* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032494/>) at the Internet Movie Database (English)
 - *Friedrich Schiller – The Triumph of a Genius* (<https://www.filmportal.de/98165bf072bf4146981f9c605de2eaf0>) at [filmportal.de](http://www.filmportal.de)
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