

Glamorous film premiere



Premiere of the two-part TV feature film “Aenne Burda – Die Wirtschaftswunderfrau“ in Offenburg (c) René Reiche

Back to the... 1950s: The Oberrheinhalle on the exhibition grounds in Offenburg, a stone's throw away from Burda's roots on the other side of the river Kinzig, dressed up in a historical guise on 20 November 2018 for a tribute to Aenne Burda. The occasion was the big premiere of the two-part TV feature film “Aenne Burda – Die Wirtschaftswunderfrau“, produced by Polyphon Pictures on behalf of SWR for the German TV channel Das Erste.

1950s-style party

As soon as they set foot in the foyer, decorated with great attention to detail, the guests were transported back to the 1950s. The decoration was a mix of reality and fiction – there were photographs from the life of the real Aenne Burda and scenes from the feature film. Outside, near the red carpet, stood the original VW Beetle driven by Katharina Wackernagel in the film, while in the hall, next to vintage furniture, visitors were able to admire a shiny white Mercedes Cabriolet like the one driven by Aenne Burda. The waitresses wore original 1950s costumes from the SWR film prop department, and the bar tables were covered in table cloths made from sewing patterns. The flying buffet from Schloss Eberstein, including classical 1950s snacks such as cheese hedgehogs, Toast Hawaii, pigs in a blanket, and pineapple cocktails with little umbrellas, took the guests on a culinary journey back in time.

The SWR Big Band and Sandie Wollasch played hits from the 1950s: Rock around the clock! A perfect environment to get into the mood for three hours of Aenne Burda's life.

In this atmosphere, the main actors Katharina Wackernagel (Aenne Burda) and Fritz Karl (Senator Franz Burda) met Hubert Burda, his children Lisa and Jacob, and other members of the real Burda family. Numerous other actors starring in the film, such as Luise Wolfram, Annika Olbrich, Christoph Glaubacker and Martina Eitner-Acheampong, did not want to miss the opportunity of taking part in this special encounter and the glamorous opening night.

Fiction meets reality

The hosts of the evening, SWR director Peter Boudgoust, SWR presenter Hendrike Brenninkmeyer and Hubert Burda welcomed around 1300 guests in the cinema hall. The publisher shared some personal anecdotes with the audience about the time when his mother wanted to have the fashion publishing company that his father had financed for his mistress:

„When I was ten years old, I overheard my parents discussing the name for the fashion magazine. When I heard 'Burda Moden', I thought, what a stupid title, now I will be called Hubert Burda Moden for the rest of my life."

Hubert Burda

Later on he replaced 'Moden' with 'Media', "because a few other magazines were added." And when the publisher's daughter Lisa asked the audience who had known her grandmother personally, around a third of the visitors raised their hands. No wonder that everyone joined in when son Jacob Burda began to sing the Badnerlied, the hymn of the Baden region in southwestern Germany.

Action!

The story line: As a railroader's daughter from Offenburg's Gaswerkstraße, Aenne Burda strove for greater things. Her marriage with the ambitious publisher Dr Franz Burda was her ticket out of the coal-dusted railroad world. Upward mobility and affluence were only the first step, however. The career of this Wirtschaftswunder woman began only at the age of 40, when she exchanged the hobnailed boots from her childhood for a fashion empire. She fulfilled her desire for independence and freedom at a time when "emancipation" was still unheard of. When Aenne discovered that her husband had had a mistress for years, and had a daughter with her, she was appalled. And when she was told that he financed a fashion publishing company for her competitor, which had been her idea, she gave her husband the choice whether to get divorced or give her the publishing house. Aenne was given the debt-ridden publishing house. Thanks to her idea to use Burda sewing patterns to

make fashionable clothes affordable for women in the post-war era, she quickly turned the company into the biggest fashion publisher in the world: Burda Moden.

Emancipation through fashion

The life of Aenne Burda, the “queen of clothes”, is literally the perfect “fabric” to make a film. Scriptwriter Regine Bielefeldt only needed to address the years 1949-1952 to turn Aenne’s life into a feature film. “On her way to the top, she was aggressive, loud, wild and capricious. But also charming, generous and funny, loyal and creative. And she was passionate as a woman and as a boss”, says Regine Bielefeldt. “This project is a lucky strike for me”, says producer Sabine Tettenborn. As a producer working in the German state of Baden-Württemberg, she is constantly looking for regional film projects that appeal to audiences in the whole of Germany and throughout the world. Director Francis Meletzky was the ideal partner to implement the project, and as Bella Halben joined the team as cinematographer, the film is a women’s power package – both in terms of the historical source material and its implementation. For main actress Katharina Wackernagel, the “tailor-made” main part, for which she wore 30 different costumes, was “the part of my life”.

“I think it’s great that I’m able to meet so many people, colleagues and family members tonight who knew Aenne Burda, my film character, personally and held her in high regard. She was a fascinating personality.”

Katharina Wackernagel, actress playing Aenne Burda

DLD founder **Steffi Czerny**, who had just returned from *DLD Belgrade*, was thrilled by the 1950s decoration and the costumes displayed. “I’ve still got vintage costumes from my mother – now my daughters wear them!”

Corry Müller-Vivil remembers the times she spent with Aenne Burda: “I’ve known her since I was 15 years old, we went on many holidays together and I had infinite regard for her as a person. I admire her life’s work, her courage and her warmheartedness. She was full of energy, for her family, her children, her friends.”

Wolfgang Grupp, director of Trigema, said: “Aenne Burda was the female patriarch of Offenburg, a role model as an entrepreneur. And she lived with the people from Offenburg.” TV producer Werner Kimmig said, “It was high time for this film to be made. Such a special woman deserves this acknowledgment.”

Rashana Rebecca Jennings, head of content at *BurdaStyle*: “Aenne Burda had an unbeatable sense of fashion and the needs of women. The scenes in her studio, in particular, and to see how she worked, are incredibly inspiring for us as a team.”

Robert Pölzer, chief editor of *Bunte* magazine, replied to the question what title he would choose for a *Bunte* cover story on Aenne Burda: “With Heart and Mind: How I Made it.”

The film was broadcast on Das Erste on 5 December 2018 (part 1) and 12 December (part 2). Part 2 was followed by a documentary on the “real” Aenne Burda. You can watch both parts of the German film, the making-of and the documentary in [Das Erste Mediathek](#).

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