

## Document Citation

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# BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

(NR)

(TELECULTURE)

Color/1.33

921 Mins

Cast: Gunter Lamprecht, Hanna Schygulla, Barbara Sukowa, Elisabeth Trissenaar, Brigitte Mira, Gottfried John, Hark Bohm, Roger Fritz, Franz Buchrieser.

Credits: Directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Produced by Peter Marthesheimer. Screenplay by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, from the novel by Alfred Döblin. Cinematography by Xaver Schwarzenberger. Edited by Juliane Lorenz. Music by Peer Raben.

**Epic film by Rainer Fassbinder, beautifully mounted and acted. The 15½ hour length allows a relatively low-key treatment of elements (rape, murder, alcoholism, insanity, etc.) that would be grossly melodramatic if compressed into a shorter time span. As one of German director Fassbinder's last films and certainly his longest, it will be of interest to art house audiences, but the length is daunting.**

In Berlin in 1927, Franz Biberkopf (Gunter Lamprecht) is released from prison after serving a sentence for the murder of his prostitute/girlfriend and vows that he will live a decent life, but circumstances lead him back into a life of drunkenness and petty crime.

Originally made for German television, the 15½ hours of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* are divided into 13 parts and an epilogue. Unlike many of Fassbinder's late films, the dramatic elements generally take precedence over the stylized ones—the result is a much more accessible film than *In A Year of 13 Moons* or *The Third Generation*, something on the order of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* or *Lola*. Although the total length is formidable, the individual segments are tightly constructed and the overall look is beautiful. Shot in muted colors through occasionally visible gauze, the muted interiors sometimes lit up by a neon wash, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is often reminiscent of old Hollywood at its most extreme.

—M.M.