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For Immediate Release

WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
TWO NEW FASSBINDER FILMS
WEDNESDAY APRIL 28 IN BERKELEY!

The West Coast Premiere of two 1975 productions of the young German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder -- FOX: FIST-RIGHT OF FREEDOM and MOTHER KUSTER'S TRIP TO HEAVEN --will take place on Wednesday, April 28 at 7:30 and 9:45 respectively at UC Berkeley's Wheeler Auditorium, under the auspices of the Pacific Film Archive, University Art Museum. Admission is \$2.00 for both films.

MOTHER KUSTER'S TRIP TO HEAVEN was originally scheduled to have its first American screening at the Pacific Film Archive on April 21: but the print was delayed in shipment: it arrived on April 23. Both FOX; FIST-RIGHT OF FREEDOM and MOTHER KUSTER'S TRIP TO HEAVEN have English subtitles.

A third recent Fassbinder feature, EFFIE BRIEST (1974), will have its first local screening Monday April 26 at 7:00 and 9:30 at the Pacific Film Archive's University Art Museum theatre at 2625 Durant Ave, Berkeley. The film is an adaptation of the 19th Century novel by Theodor Fontane.

Both FOX:FIST-RIGHT OF FREEDOM and MOTHER KUSTER'S TRIP TO HEAVEN were presented at the 1975 London International Film Festival, where they were described as follows:

"Director Rainer Werner Fassbinder himself plays the leading role, a young homosexual, first seen as the lover of a fairground showman, in whose booth he appears as 'Fox, the Talking Head'. His friend goes to prison, leaving Fox high and dry, whereupon he wins half a million in a lottery. His money, rather than his not too prepossessing person, attracts Eugen, a young businessman and heir apparent to a disastrous printing firm. Eugen and his well-mannered family systematically milk Fox of his fortune, patronising and humiliating him more and more as the money nears its end, and finally kicking him out to die alone and bewildered. It is a cruel fable, cast in the form of a melodrama. Clearly to set it in a homosexual milieu makes more credible the erotic exploitative relation between two people; yet even though the setting seems almost fortuitous, it is one of the best films about the

life of homosexuals, their passions, their quarrels, their enforced pretences, their ghettos, their ultimate drab normality. Just because the theme of homosexuality provides the milieu and not the main point of the film, it is more persuasive than other films we have seen in Cannes that openly plead the Gay Lib cause."—David Robinson, *The Times*. "The story ends in tragedy, but as always with Fassbinder the characters' woes are distanced by the tone of exotic Hollywoodese in which the story is told. The film is nearer to the highly-wrought artifice of *Petra von Kant* than to the realism of *Fear Eats the Soul* but the brilliance of Fassbinder's work lies in the continuing dexterity with which he manages to juggle both styles within the framework of a single film."—Nigel Andrews, *The Financial Times*.

"*Mother Küster's Trip to Heaven* tells the story of an elderly German woman (Brigitte Mira) whose life and family relationships are disrupted when her husband, a factory worker, commits suicide after murdering one of his bosses. Reporters descend upon the family in droves, and soon Frau Küster's home has broken up under the pressure of intrusions. The daughter goes off to live with one of the reporters; the son to make a new home with his pregnant wife. Having no family shoulder left to cry upon, the mother turns for solace to a wealthy couple (Margit Carstensen and Karl Boehm) whom she first meets at her husband's funeral, and who reveal themselves to be members of the Communist Party. Her cause is theirs, they earnestly assure her; but once they have made political capital out of the poor woman's story, and presented her husband to the world as a martyr to capitalism, they coolly discard her. After the deluge of films in recent years that have devoted them-

selves to chastising or ridiculing Right-wing political exploitation, it is astonishing and refreshing to find a film that dares to suggest that as much corruption and self-interest might exist on the left of centre. The reaction of the small audience I saw the film with in Berlin was typical of what Fassbinder can probably expect — charges of 'political nonsense', implicit fascism, cheaply irresponsible satire. But although the film has a lighter touch and a looser structure than either *Fear Eats the Soul* or *Fox* . . . none of the laughs that it earns, or the shocks it administers, are cheap. The manipulation of individual misery and vulnerability for propagandist ends is one of the classic ploys of political totalitarianism, whether of the Left or the Right, and that is what Fassbinder takes as his theme. If he had made the film with Right-wing rather than Left-wing villains, he would undoubtedly have been applauded all the way to the box office."—Nigel Andrews, *Financial Times*.