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Author(s)	Tom Allen Andrew Sarris Tom Allen Andrew Sarris
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Wednesday

Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Lola (1981), from a screenplay by Peter Marthesheimer, Pea Frohlich, and Fassbinder, with Barbara Sukowa, Mario Adorf, and Armin Mueller-Stahl, suggested a mellowing in Fassbinder even as he continued to survey the whorish corruption of Germany in the '50s. It was the midway film between *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Veronika Voss* in a trilogy on the Republic's economic miracle, but like all Fassbinder's films, it stands on its own and one doesn't need the weave of a larger tapestry to understand or appreciate it. The bulky, muscular Adorf, projecting the massive power of money in the New Germany, dominates many of the early scenes, particularly one set in a men's room where the political text and sexological subtext of the film jockey for position around the urinals. Adorf is the first bridge to Sukowa's cabaret entertainer, a kind of cerebral, contained half-a-Dietrich Lola Lola, but in a nightclub that makes Josef von Sternberg's *Blue Angel* look like a monastery. An extraordinary acting triptych is completed by Mueller-Stahl, who plays a middle-aged idealist. In a great performance, his incredibly blue eyes suggest oceans of moral remembrance and regret. Fassbinder must have drawn on some reserve of mystical nostalgia to create in this cuckolded figure a haunting ghost of a lost grace, a lost honor, a lost faith. (Co-features: *Maria Braun* and *Veronika Voss*) **Metro: also Thursday, 3:55, 10:05.**