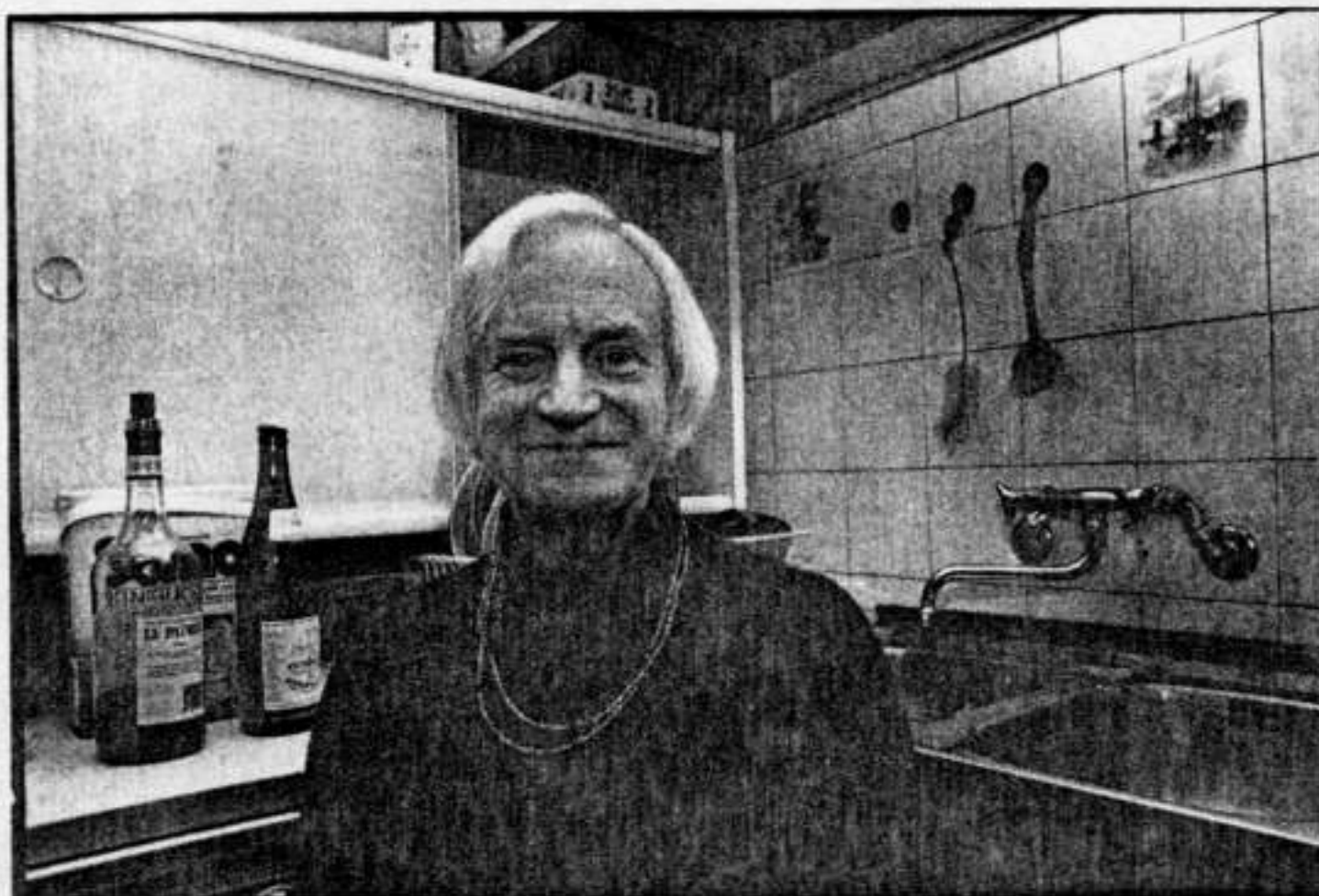


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Wellington F.F. '93



I Am My Own Woman

Ich bin meine eigene Frau, Germany, 1992

Director: Rosa von Praunheim

Production Co.: Rosa von Praunheim Filmproduktion/Scala Z Film GmbH

Producers: Rosa von Praunheim, René Perraudin

Screenplay: Rosa von Praunheim, Valentin Passoni

Photography: Lorenz Haarmann (colour)

Editor/Sound: Mike Shephard

Art director: Peter Kothe

Costumes: Joachim Voeltzke

Music: Joachim Litty and die Cello Familie

With: Charlotte van Mahlsdorf, Ichgola Androgyn (Charlotte 20 - 40), Jens Taschner (Charlotte 15 - 17), Beate Jung, Sylvia Seelow, Utz Krause, Robert Dietl, Evelyn Cron, Rainer Luhn

91 minutes/35mm

Festivals: Rotterdam (International Critics' Prize), 1993.

This presentation is made possible by the generous assistance of the Goethe Institut.

In its way, this inspiring tale of a permanently shifted sexual identity making her way through successive political regimes is the real *Orlando*. Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, born Lothar Berfelde in 1928, was brought up by a tyrannical father determined to beat her into manhood. Her life was saved by a lesbian aunt who indulged her preference for women's clothes and encouraged her taste for wielding a feather duster. Her vehemently Nazi father continued to torment her until she put an end to her humiliation by murdering him in his sleep. The film details her survival as a transvestite through the Nazi era - and then the Stasi era, when she established the only private museum in the former GDR, housing the turn-of-the-century pieces she had collected. For years this museum doubled as an underground haven for outlawed East German gays and lesbians. The unification of Germany has brought public recognition from the West, including publication of an autobiography - and the violent hostility of the new right. She relates her amazing history in anecdote and interview, supported by actors who enact scenes from her past. (She gives them notes.) The matter-of-factness with which she has never questioned her sexual identity - despite enormous incentive to do so - has the force of passion. Her gentle demeanour is maintained by nerves of steel. We emerge daunted by the relentlessness of the forces that have opposed her, inspired by the sheer simple courage with which she's withstood them - and delighted by the grinning evidence that she's had a great deal of pleasure along the way.

Feature only