

# RALF PLEGER

Author & Director

“Fresh narrative, skilful editing – a natural, free-flowing and very enjoyable film.”  
*TV Festival Golden Prague about the award winning music documentary “The Maestro-Maker”*

“Insightful, clever portrait of a power-lady.”  
*DER SPIEGEL about “Simone Young – To Hamburg from Downunder”*

“Filmmaker Ralf Pleger shows the woman behind the artist.”  
*BILD about “Anne-Sophie Mutter – Portrait of a Global Success”*

The German filmmaker Ralf Pleger was born in Brandenburg, Germany in 1967. He lives in Berlin and Hamburg. His work is focused on documentaries and fictional films dedicated to music and to notable personalities. The glossy style of his films and the liaison of classical music and vibrant editing are award-winning signature features.

Ralf Pleger studied Musicology, Art History and Italian in Berlin and Milan. Freelancing as a dramaturge he contributed to various international opera productions, e.g. at the Berlin State Opera Unter den Linden and at the Innsbrucker Festwochen. At the same time he worked as author and director for radio and television broadcasters.

While still a student, Pleger made his first films. He has filmed documentaries on concert tours of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra which were broadcast worldwide. In 2005, he directed a critically-acclaimed documentary film portrait of Australian conductor Simone Young for ARTE, the Franco-German television network, and his film was broadcast on numerous German and international television stations. The following year, his book about Simone Young was published and received broad critical praise.

In 2007, Pleger directed a film portrait of German violin virtuoso Anne-Sophie Mutter, which also aired on the ARTE network. His documentary film “The Maestro-Maker”, a portrait of the unique Finnish conducting teacher Jorma Panula for the German-language television network 3sat, has won the Czech Crystal award as the best music documentary at the 2008 International Television Festival Golden Prague. In 2008, Pleger directed two ambitious semi-fictional films about George Frideric Handel which aired on the German NDR and ARD networks. Ralf Pleger also directed a documentary about the best-selling crime thriller writer Donna Leon (ARTE 2009) and a film about vocal talent in South Africa (ARTE 2010). For this documentary he followed a group of opera singers on a 5,000 km tour through the South African provinces.

Pleger's recent works include a musical film with the ensemble Salut Salon and a film about the pianist Markus Groh who goes on a concert tour in a carriage drawn by four horses. Currently Ralf Pleger is working on a documentary featuring opera star Joyce DiDonato, and on a big semi-fictional film about Richard and Cosima Wagner to be aired on ARTE networks.

## FILMOGRAPHY

- *Salut Salon: Quartet Without Borders* [Salut Salon – Lady-Power im Quartett], television documentary, ARTE 2011.
- *Madrid – Zest for Life* [Madrid – Metropole der Lebenslust], television documentary, RBB 2011.
- *Horsepower Performances – The Time Journey of the Pianist Markus Groh* [Konzertreise mit 4 PS – Die Zeitreise des Pianisten Markus Groh], documentary film, SWR 2010.
- *Cape of Good Voices – South Africa Hooked on Opera* [Kap der guten Stimmen – Südafrika im Opernrausch], documentary film, ARTE 2010
- *Donna Leon: Crime Novels from Venice* [Donna Leon – Abenteuer einer Krimi-Lady], film portrait, ARTE 2009.
- *Handel in Northern Germany – A Star Composer's Years of Travel* [Händel in Norddeutschland – Wanderjahre eines Musik-Stars], television documentary, NDR 2009.
- *Handel - Life of a Pop Icon* [Händel – Der Film], semi-fictional film, NDR/ARD 2008.
- *Anne-Sophie Mutter – Portrait of a Global Success* [Anne-Sophie Mutter – Dynamik eines Welterfolgs], television documentary, ARTE 2007.
- *The Maestro-Maker – Jorma Panula and his Finnish Conducting School* [Der Maestro- Macher- Jorma Panula und seine finnische Dirigentenschule], television documentary, ZDF/3sat 2007. **Winner of the Czech Crystal award as the best music documentary at the 2008 International TV Festival Golden Prague.**
- *With Crown and Camera: The House of Welf's Secret Cinema* [Mit Krone und Kamera – Das Heimkino der Welfen], television documentary, NDR 2007.
- *Simone Young – To Hamburg from Downunder* [Von Australien an die Alster – Die Dirigentin Simone Young], television documentary, ARTE 2005.
- *Fate to Fado: A Musical Tour of Lisbon* [Fado kommt von Schicksal - Ein musikalischer Streifzug durch Lissabon], television documentary, ARD 2003.
- *Palermo: City of Music* [Musikstadt Palermo], television documentary, ARD 2002.
- *Music in Istanbul: Where East Meets West* [Musik in Istanbul - Zwischen Orient und Okzident], television documentary, ARD 2001.
- *The Berlin Philharmonic and its City* [Die Berliner Philharmoniker und ihre Stadt], documentary film, ARD 2000.
- *A Musical Tour of Krakow* [Streifzug durch das musikalische Krakau], television documentary, ARD 1999.
- *St. Petersburg: City of Music* [Musikstadt Sankt Petersburg], television documentary, ARD 1996.

**Selected Radio Projects:**

- *Belcanto*, series of radio documentaries on opera, SFB 1999-2003.
- *Summit Concertante* [Konzertierendes Gipfeltreffen], double portrait of Daniel Barenboim & Simon Rattle, RBB 2004.
- *Berlin: City of Music*, series of radio documentaries for the European Broadcasting Union, RBB 2007.

**Publications:**

- *The Neues Palais Palace Theater* [Das Schloßtheater im Neuen Palais], Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten [The Foundation for Prussian Palaces and Gardens], Potsdam 1999.
- *Simone Young – The Conductor: A Portrait by Ralf Pleger* [Simone Young - Die Dirigentin. Ein Porträt von Ralf Pleger], Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 2006.

[www.ralf-pleger.de](http://www.ralf-pleger.de)