

The building at Hirschengasse 25 had come into the ownership of the Vienna NSDAP on October 14, 1931. It was officially named Adolf Hitler House but referred to in the press as the “Brown House.” SS men lived close to the party headquarters and there was also an SA hostel nearby. The choice of location was provocative, because the district was not only regarded as a “cradle of the workers’ movement,”⁶⁰ but was also a center of the Jewish community in the districts of Mariahilf and Neubau. Until 2019 the former Adolf Hitler House was a youth hostel for students from other parts of Austria, who visited Vienna on traditional group trips to the capital.

5. UFA Ton Kino



place Taborstrasse 8, II Leopoldstadt
time May 13, 1933, 4:45 p.m. to 11:15 p.m.

Fig. 23, p. 63

Fritz Lang’s sound film *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* (*The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*) is screened in **eight movie theaters in Vienna** on Saturday evening, May 13, 1933. The UFA Ton Kino at Taborstrasse 8 shows the two-hour production by the Berlin Nero Film AG at 4:45, 7:00, and 9:10 p.m.⁶¹ Joseph Goebbels, the National Socialist propaganda minister, viewed the crime film on March 28, 1933, and demanded it be banned in Germany, which took place the following day. *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* was a “danger to the state,” according to the minutes of the censorship meeting, because the crimes it portrays could be used as a “textbook for preparing and committing acts of terrorism.”⁶² The world premiere was

60 Christiane Rothländer: “Das ‘Adolf-Hitler-Haus’ in der Hirschengasse 25, Mariahilf,” in: Kilian Franer and Ulli Fuchs (eds.): *Erinnern für die Zukunft. Ein Projekt zum Gedächtnis an die Mariahilfer Opfer des NS-Terrors*, Vienna: Echomedia 2009, pp. 147–150, here p. 148 [our trans.].

61 See “Kino-Programme,” in: *Die Stunde* (Vienna), May 13, 1933, p. 4.

62 Cit. after Rolf Aurich, Wolfgang Jacobson, Cornelius Schnauber (eds.): *Fritz Lang. Leben und Werk. Bilder und Dokumente*, Berlin: jovis 2001, p. 194 [our trans.]. On the evening of the same day that he viewed *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, March 28, 1933, Goebbels gave a speech →

thus held in Budapest on April 21 and the Austrian premiere in Vienna on May 12.

The testament of the title refers to written notes intended as a guide to major crimes. Locked up in his cell, Dr. Mabuse (Rudolf Klein-Rogge) fills page after page with detailed instructions, which his obsessed physician Professor Baum (Oscar Beregi), the director of the mental hospital, puts into practice. As the head of a criminal organization, he passes on Mabuse's commands by telephone to employees who never see his face. The orders are explained in a kind of **control center**—a windowless room with a curtain, behind which a **figure is visible** and a voice audible. In fact, however, the gang's leader is not in the room, but only a dummy and a table with a **microphone and loudspeaker**. To conceal his absences from the clinic, Baum installs another media apparatus. He links a gramophone to the door handle using a wire, so that every attempt to enter his office triggers a recording saying: "I do not want to be disturbed now."⁶³

"The dramatic conflict that appears to fascinate Fritz Lang time and again is the collision between the criminal imagination of inventive delinquents and the objective researcher's

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Fig. 94, p. 224

Fig. 96, p. 224

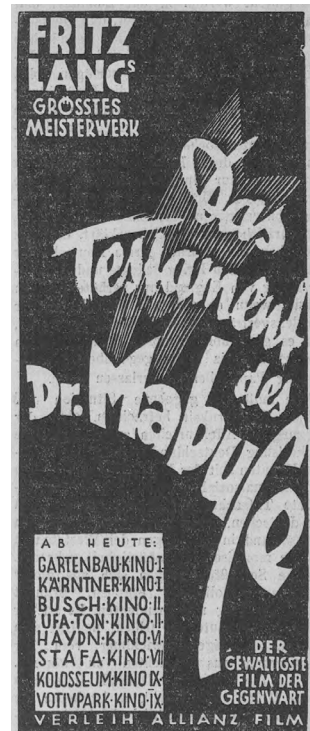


Fig. 23: Advertisement for the screening of Fritz Lang's film *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* in eight movie theaters in Vienna on May 13, 1933, printed in *Die Stunde* (Vienna), May 13, 1933, p. 1. Source: Austrian National Library, 606233-D.

- in front of German filmmakers at the Berlin Kaiserhof hotel, in which he singled out the movie *Die Nibelungen* (1924) by Fritz Lang as an exemplary artwork (see *ibid.*, pp. 215–216).

63 Cit. after Fritz Lang: *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse*, 35 mm film, Berlin: Nero Film AG 1933 [our trans.], source: Film Archive of the Federal Archives (Berlin), BSP 26989-12.

logic of the detective,” the film critic Fritz Rosenfeld writes in the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung* from Sunday, May 14, 1933.⁶⁴ In *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, this conflict intensifies on the basis of characters featured in Lang’s earlier works: the criminal psychologist from *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler* (1922) and the analytical inspector from *M* (1931). The psychopath Mabuse is insane and at the same time a genius; he writes logical plans for crimes with the sole purpose of causing chaos. Lohmann (Otto Wernicke), the police officer, on the other hand, attempts to create order by using his criminalistic intelligence, in other words establishing facts, analyzing photos, interrogating witnesses, etc. In both cases, imagination is at play—as the inspector’s controlled mental faculty and the psychopath’s unbridled fantasies.

Fig. 101, p. 234

The **UFA Ton Kino** was opened in 1916 as the Central Kino. Located on the ground floor of Hotel Central at Taborstrasse 8, it was not renamed until 1929 although the eponymous German Universum Film AG (UFA) had long held shares in the Vienna company.⁶⁵ The movie theater had a capacity of around one thousand seats and was used for premieres of UFA productions. On the evening of May 13, 1933, the UFA Ton Kino shows the *Ufa-Tonwoche* newsreel before *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, reporting on the Nazi celebration for the “Day of National Work” in Berlin on May 1.⁶⁶

64 Fritz Rosenfeld: “Die Herrschaft des Verbrechens,” in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), May 14, 1933, p. 17 [our trans.].

65 See Werner Michael Schwarz: *Kino und Kinos in Wien. Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte bis 1934*, Vienna: Turia + Kant 1992, p. 176.

66 See “Lichtspiele,” in: *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung* (Vienna), May 13, 1933, p. 14.