

Percy Adlon was born in Munich on June 1st, 1935. This is also where he studied art, theatre, and German literature at the famous Ludwigs-Maximilians-University.

After three years as a stage actor, he worked as a narrator and editor of literature programs for radio, and as a voiceover actor for television. In 1970, he made his first short film for Bavarian television, followed by more than 150 documentaries about art and the human condition.

His first feature film *CÉLESTE* (1981) drew international attention. Then, in the fall of 1987, festival juries, distributors, film critics, and audiences from all over the world fell in love with Jasmin and her coffee thermos from Rosenheim, Bavaria, in *BAGDAD CAFÉ*, which was awarded "Best Film" in Rio de Janeiro, and won two Cesars, the Ernst Lubitch Prize, and many more.

Percy and Eleonore Adlon have been married since 1961. She is co-producer of all, and co-writer of most, of the couple's films. Their features and documentaries, including *SUGARBABY* (1984), *SALMONBERRIES* (1991, Grand Prix des Ameriques, IFF Montreal), and *THE GLAMOROUS WORLD OF THE ADLON HOTEL* (1998), have won numerous national and international awards. A series of 22 short films without words, *DIE STRAUSSKISTE* (1999/2000), is among the Adlons' newest works. *HAWAIIAN GARDENS*, their 10th feature film, continues their German-American stories.

Percy and Eleonore Adlon believe in film as an art form. They are proud to be independent filmmakers who write, direct, produce, and own their work. They run two production companies: the Munich-based *pelemele FILM GmbH*, and *Leora Films, Inc*, located in Santa Monica, California.

The Adlons live in Pacific Palisades, California. They have one daughter, Saskia, and one son, Felix, who made his feature film debut in 1997 with *EAT YOU HEART OUT*, and also starred in *THE GLAMOROUS WORLD OF THE ADLON HOTEL*.

Percy Adlon is a voting member of the Director's Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and is a recipient of the Officer's Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany.

From All Movie Guide: German New Wave film director Percy Adlon is perhaps best known for his trilogy of films starring Marianne Sägebrecht: *Sugarbaby* (1985), *Bagdad Café* (1988), and *Rosalie Goes Shopping* (1989). With these vehicles, using scripts especially written for the unique talent of Sägebrecht, Adlon and his films' leading lady received acclaim from audiences around the world. Adlon's international stature continued to grow with the release of his later films, all of which exhibit his signature passion for innovative cinematography and quirky character studies. Light and color change with the emotions of the characters, adding an indefinable dimension to the unique settings, which are integral to all of the artist's work. These traits exemplify his artist's sensibility, refined by years of formal study. He first had a go at the theater after studying art, literature, and theater at Ludwigs-Maximilian-University in Munich, and then moved over to making television documentaries in his native land.

With his literary background, it is not surprising that his first film examined the life of the great writer Marcel Proust, as told from the point-of-view of the author's housekeeper. *Céleste* was made in 1981, and was followed by two more films on serious subjects: *Fünf letzte Tage* (1982) (aka *Five Last Days*) was based on a true story about a young girl named Sophie Scholl, who, along with her brother, was executed for her activities in the Nazi Resistance; and *Die Schaukel* (1983) (aka *The Swing*), which presented a portrait of the German aristocracy before the first World War.

Adlon's films took a turn toward the whimsical with the making of *Zuckerbaby*. The story of a Rubenesque mortician's assistant (Marianne Sägebrecht) starved for love, and the subway conductor (Eisi Gulp) who wins her heart, was a hit as a German-language film. It was released overseas as *Sugarbaby*, and did well in the art houses.

Two English-language films followed, also starring the luminous Sägebrecht. *Bagdad Café* pictured the lives of the unusual clientele at a dusty diner in the Mojave Desert. A German tourist (Sägebrecht) stops and ends up staying on, changing her own life and the lives of everyone around her. The film became a cult classic, which put the actual diner on the pilgrimage trail for film buffs. Adlon's next film, *Rosalie Goes Shopping*, finds Sägebrecht living in Stuttgart, AR, where the happy housewife embraces American consumerism with her personal no-limit credit card philosophy. *Salmonberries* (1991) is another film about Germans living in America, this time in Alaska, where salmonberries are the main groundcover in the tundra country. There, some benevolent misfits have gathered in a community based on building the pipeline. Adlon's atmospheric film techniques, and memorable characterizations by k.d. lang, Rosel Zech, and Chuck Connors make this movie one of the director's best.

Adlon worked in production on the darkly humorous *Younger & Younger* (1993) and *Eat Your Heart Out* (1997). He returned to directing in the German language with the 2000 movie *Hawaiian Gardens*.

## LOS ANGELES TIMES RETROSPECTIVE

Moviegoers may know director Percy Adlon from the international success of BAGDAD CAFE (or perhaps its predecessor, the exquisitely droll SUGARBABY). Once viewers have experienced his unique documentaries and historical recreations, the displacement of Adlon's feature protagonists and their sincere efforts to better themselves in new environments will not only be even more touchingly funny but have added emotional resonance as well. Born in Munich in 1935, Adlon grew up in Bavaria, the son of a noted tenor and the heiress to a hotel chain. He studied literature, theatre, and art history before moving into radio. He began making films in 1970 and soon developed a documentary style of using real people in real locations, "not exotic spots. I went more for Des Moines than Niagara Falls, but I always tried to give my documentaries the color of dreams." He made more than 100 such films in the seventies before turning to feature film production. A true original, Adlon and his filmic voice seem to spring whole from a worldview that embraces personal belief and action over all. "I never went to film school," he told *The New York Times* in 1985, "When I try to decide something about a film, I listen to a Beethoven string quartet. This gives me more dramaturgical ideas--of rhythm, of tension--than any film." Adlon and his wife and collaborator Eleonore (a classical dancer whom he met in the early sixties) now split their time between the United States and Europe. A unique and absorbing body of work, these films speak to a distinctive and compassionate filmmaker who treats social issues with the mercurial but sincere power of human emotions.

L.A. Times, UCLA/Goethe-Institute Retrospective, July 17-Sept 6, 1991