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FACT SHEET:

LOGLINE:

BOYZ follows Gen Z friends Maxime, Julian and Vilas through the day and night of their student life in Munich. But they know this phase won't last forever and soon they will part ways. We become part of an intimate boy friendship that takes us into their world of love, sex and penis sizes.

DETAILS:

Country: Germany Year: 2023

Runtime: 72 Minutes
Genre: Documentary
Language: English, German

Format: 1,66:1 / 4K / Dolby SRD

Produced by: madfilms Cruiziat & Egert GbR

HFF Munich

Funded by: FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

Friends of HFF München

World Sales: Rise & Shine World Sales UG

CREDITS:

Director: Sylvain Cruiziat
Cinematography: Nikolai Huber
Editing: Felicitas Sonvilla
Sound Design: Philip Hutter
Sound Mix: Andrew Mottl

Colourist: Nicholas Coleman

Producers: Jonas Egert, Sylvain Cruiziat

Protagonists: Maxime, Vilas, Julian

FESTIVALS / AWARDS:

40. Filmfest München, World Premiere (NDK & Kinderfilmfest) 36th IDFA, International Premiere (Youth Documentary

Competition: Special Mention)

True/False Filmfestival 2024, North America Premiere

Reel2Real 2024, Canada Premiere (Senior Youth Awards Best

Feature Film; Adult Jury Awards Honourable Mention)
Zagrebdox 2024. Croatia Premiere (Teen Dox Programme

Special Mention)

Fünfseen Filmfestival, 2023

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PRODUCTION NOTE:

With humour and lightness, BOYZ musically, swiftly and colourfully celebrates the last weeks of a shared adolescence. With a tender and precise look at its young protagonists, we peek behind the facade of penis jokes onto the real insecurities, worries and desires.

In his first feature-length documentary, director Sylvain Cruiziat observes his younger brother and his friends through every step of an exciting transitional phase. Cruiziat explores the vulnerabilities and insecurities surrounding love, sex and affirmation as

they grow up, whilst also paying tribute to the power of friendship and trust in navigating this transitional period.

BOYZ is a production of madfilms Cruiziat & Egert GbR in cooperation with HFF Munich (graduation film), supported by Film-FernsehFonds Bayern and the Friends of HFF Munich. The film premiered at the 40th Munich Film Festival in the New German Cinema and Youth Sections and got a *special mention* at the Youth Documentary Competition with its international premiere at IDFA 2023. BOYZ PRESS KIT PAGE 4 / 14

SYNOPSIS:

The three Gen Z friends Maxime, Julian and Vilas have been living in Munich for two years and spend their early adulthood here in late adolescent carelessness - their everyday life consists of studying, partying and Playstation. Slowly, the three begin to move in different directions, pursue individual goals, develop their own values. And yet they all share a common challenge: the search for recognition, love and sex. Maxime comes out as a virgin and doesn't understand the fuss about it, Julian isn't sure if his fear of a serious relationship is chronic and Vilas doesn't feel like comparing dick sizes anymore, until he finally opens up to his two friends.

In the midst of finding each other, the three BOYZ have to learn how to deal with goodbyes and coordinate how a friendship can work under the new conditions of growing up. Their special intimacy with each other seems unaffected by taboos and stereotypes of becoming a man, so the three boys cuddle in the daybed as a matter of course and introduce us to a new concept of male friendship. Soon Maxime will leave the group to study abroad, which seems like a caesura in their shared youth. It's difficult to leave, but even harder to stay behind.

With humour and lightness, BOYZ celebrates the last weeks of a shared youth in a musical, fast and colourful way. With an affectionate look at the young protagonists, we look behind the façade of penis jokes at the real insecurities of young men - and thus a little bit at ourselves.



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INTERVIEW WITH SYLVAIN CRUIZIAT (DIRECTOR):

How did you come to make a documentary about your brother and his friends? Take us through the inception of this project.

The journey of this film began when my little brother Maxime moved into my shared flat in Munich after his Abitur. His primary school friends Vilas and Julian had also decided to study in Munich and so the three London boys met up again in Germany to study. I never had a specific desire to make a film about a family member, but when I started spending time with Maxime and the two friends at Lockdown, I observed an insanely beautiful and honest male friendship that I didn't know even existed. One where there was a longstanding familiarity and a safe space for the thoughts, desires, questions and reflections of a young man on his way to adulthood.

What interested you most about the protagonists?

I was interested in the search movements of all three protagonists in their new phase of life. What questions they ask of themselves, but also of their environment, how they try to find their feet and get to know themselves in the process. Of course, it was another gift for me and the film that the three protagonists could not have been more different and each had a different way of dealing with growing up. Julian who overplays his insecurities with an apparent self-confidence, Maxime who is very con-

cerned with his young appearance and actively seeks recognition and Vilas who is more withdrawn and negotiates these issues with himself.

What made you decide to focus on the themes of sex and male insecurities? Gen Z could just as easily have been about privilege, environmental protection, politics.

The topics of sex, love, recognition and the insecurities that go with them were very present in the three boys' lives and were also discussed intensively in every possible situation. So it was clear pretty quickly that the film had to revolve around this. Although the topic of the "privileged expat bubble" naturally has its place in this story, I didn't want to focus on it because I didn't want to make a milieu study with this film. In addition, of course, there was my personal interest in these topics, because in the presence of the boys I felt strongly reminded of the time when I was searching a lot for orientation and support. Back then, at least in my group of friends at the time, there was a very different tone. Dealing with male insecurities about sex, love and friendship was more secretive, one's own façade was never really discarded - even among good friends. That's what made the particular way these Gen Z boys dealt with it so exciting for me and hopefully strikes a chord with the viewers as well.

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The film takes place very close to the Gen Z teenagers. How did you create this closeness?

I have a similar background to Vilas and Julian, and of course to my brother Maxime, as I also grew up in London and went to German school there. I have known Maxime's friends since their early childhood. In Munich, partly also during the lockdown, where we were all trapped in this city in a way, I spent a lot of time with the group and became part of it - almost in the form of a big brother for all three boys. At first I was just an observer, but more and more I became a participant in their discovery phase. The intimacy and trust I share with the protagonists and which are tangible in the film result from this special relationship. It intensified during the filming and before we said goodbye to Maxime together.

And how did you manage to transfer this closeness to the film?

We shot purely observationally and collected about 130 hours of footage over the course of three months. We waited for moments instead of constructing them and were constantly with the boys - in the group as well as alone. Our goal from the beginning was to immerse the viewers in the world of the protagonists and to experience it up close and unfiltered. The entire film was shot with a fixed focal length and almost exclusively with handheld cameras so as not to lose the immediacy I felt between the boys. In editing, we decided to work scene by scene and tell the story linearly. For example, we also took up the diegetic music of the respective scene, that is, the music that was actually heard at that moment, in the editing process - we always stay in the moment of the three boys.

What feeling or insight would you like the audience to leave the film with?

I would like viewers to be able to connect to the film and enrich their viewing experience with their personal stories and experiences. I wanted the film to explore the vulnerabilities and insecurities around love, acceptance and sex in young men's coming of age, while also celebrating the power of friendship in overcoming these issues.



PROTAGONISTEN



MAXIME:

Maxime is the youngest of three brothers. As the son of German/French parents, he grew up in London. He graduated from the German School in London in 2019 together with his friends Vilas and Julian. In 2019, Maxime moved to Munich to study business administration at the Technical University TUM. When his eldest brother and, at the time, flatmate Sylvain Cruiziat asked him if he could make a film about the three of them, his first reaction was incomprehension: "Why about us? What's interesting about us?" Sylvain kept a low profile, but during the course of the filming Maxime realised that his eldest brother was seeing himself in him as well as a new way of tackling masculinity.



VILAS:

Vilas was also born in London and is the son of German/British parents with an Indian background on his father's side. He did his A-levels there together with Julian and Maxime, but only moved to Munich a year later. Since then, he has been studying physics and philosophy. As the only one of the three, he has to finance a decisive part of his livelihood himself by working as a courier for a delivery service. At first he thought the idea of a film was absurd: "We're just average students.... What's the appeal?" he asks the director in a voice message. But in conversations with Sylvain Cruiziat, he understands his narrative approach and opens up - to the film, but also to his best friends.

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JULIAN:

Julian was born in 2001 in London, where he lived and grew up all his school life. Born to German parents, he attended the German School in London from first grade, where he met Maxime and Vilas, and moved to Munich in 2019 to start a dual architecture degree. He accepted Sylvain's idea of a documentary without hesitation, "Let's go for it" was his answer to the request of the director and older brother of his best friend Maxime. He quickly shed the facade of the self-confident go-getter in front of the camera as well as his friends - and in Sylvain's Cruiziat's presence he shows a sensitive and self-reflective side of himself.



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TEAM



SYLVAIN CRUIZIAT (Director):

Sylvain Cruiziat is a franco/german filmmaker. Born in July of 1995, he grew up in London, Paris and Hong- Kong before pursuing his studies at the University of Television and Film 2014. Since his enrolment there, Sylvain has directed several short films including: Find Fix Finish (2017) and The Raft (2019) which screened at prestigious film festivals worldwide. Festival selections include the San Sebastián International Film Festival, Visions du Réel, IDFA, Toronto International Film Festival and many more. BOYZ is his first feature-length film and graduation film at the HFF Munich.

(Filmography: IMDb)



JONAS EGERT (Producer):

Jonas Egert, born 1994 in Bielefeld, is a documentary film director and producer. In 2015 he began his studies in documentary directing and television journalism at the HFF Munich. His short film COMFORT ZONE (director) premiered at the Hot Docs International Film Festival in Toronto before being screened at various European film festivals. Since 2019, Egert has been working at if...Productions Film GmbH and founded his own company madfilms Cruiziat & Egert GbR together with Sylvain Cruiziat in 2021. He is currently in post-production for his directorial debut PING PONG, also produced by madfilms.

(Filmography: IMDb)

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NIKOLAI HUBER (Cinematographer):

Nikolai Huber was born in Munich in 1994 and has been studying Cinematography at the HFF Munich since 2014. His work on the documentary film FIND FIX FINISH was awarded at the Camerimage Film Festival 2017 and THE RAFT was nominated for Best Cinematography in a Short Film at the German Camera Award 2020. Nikolai Huber also works closely with Peter Zeitlinger (A.S.C.) as a camera operator and assistant on international productions such as Abel Ferrara's TOMMASO and Werner Herzog's FIREBALL.

(Filmography: IMDb)



FELICITAS SONVILLA (Editing):

Felicitas Sonvilla was born near Vienna in 1988 and grew up in Vienna, Brussels and Helsinki. She studied theatre, film and media sciences at the University of Vienna and from 2010 at the HFF Munich. During her studies, she began to focus more on montage and assisted the montage professor Karina Ressler from 2017-2019. In 2021 she worked as a director and editor on the documentary web series "Boys" for ZDF Kleines Fernsehspiel. It was through this series, among others, that she collaborated on the almost eponymous graduation film BOYZ, which she edited in 2022. In 2022 she also worked as an editor on "GEAMANA - DAS HAUS AM SEE (AT)" (director: Matthäus Wörle), also funded by FFF Bayern.

(Filmography: IMDb)

