

TRAVEL IN STYLE

{ SMART OFFERINGS AND INSIDER TIPS }

SETTLING OLD SCORES
Cate Blanchett stars
as the tormented
conductor Lydia Tár

MOVIE MAESTRO

As Cate Blanchett looks set for awards glory with her towering turn as a problematic classical music titan in *Tár*, **Jane Crowther** finds Berlin spots as scintillating as the symphonies she conducts

In order to play Lydia Tár, the imperious principal conductor at the Berlin Philharmonic whose tailoring is as sharp as her tongue, Cate Blanchett took a deep dive into classical music, learning the piano compositions her character plays in the upcoming film and training to conduct an orchestra made up of real top-flight musicians from the Dresden Philharmonic. The actress studied the masterclasses of Ilya Musin, worked with conductor Natalie Murray Beale and honed idiosyncratic moves by practicing in the bathroom, on a train and in her home office. The resulting performance prompted a six-minute standing ovation when it premiered at Venice Film Festival, won her the top acting award there and set Blanchett on the path (again) to likely Oscar glory.

And though she's undoubtedly the star of Todd Field's meditation on the #MeToo movement, cancel culture, the abuse of power and the sacrifices at the altar of artistry, Berlin – Tár's Brutalist architecture stomping ground – is as much a character as the conductor is. But don't expect postcard shots of the 'grey city'. Tár's adopted hometown is given life in local spots, heritage restaurants and linear streets that reflect the musician's approach to life (she drives down the iconic 2.4km-long Tunnel Tiergarten Spreebogen as she contemplates her mistakes and jogs through the 520-acre Tiergarten to try to outrun her demons). This is functional, cool, minimal Berlin: the Charlottenburg neighbourhood in former West Germany the location for Tár's apartment where her past catches up with her, the clean lines of the library, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in Haus Potsdamer Straße, becoming the offices and corridors she paces like a trapped animal.

Berlin also stands in for other cities, as the production based itself in the German capital – the famous Alice Tully Hall in New York and The Carlyle Hotel (see right) actually filmed on German soil. Even a British Airways flight to the Big Apple was recreated on a set here. But when it came to finding the concert hall where Lydia rehearses (and unravels) while prepping for a career-best recital, Berlin couldn't accommodate the needs of the film crew. No major concert hall could provide the space for a nine-day shoot so the team travelled just outside the city, taking over the Kulturpalast and Dresdner Philharmonie hall in Dresden. Like the Philharmonie in Berlin and the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the mid-century hall is built in a 'vineyard shape', prized for its acoustics, and offered undisturbed access to Blanchett and her team. It's an easy trip from Berlin to channel your inner conductor, though Mahler's fifth symphony, as conducted by Tár, may be better experienced than attempted.

The film hits cinemas in January in the middle of awards season. And though there'll be plenty of talk about Blanchett's dedication to her craft, it is equally sure to get travellers lusting for the architecture, cool vibes and cultural opportunities that Berlin has to offer...

Photographs: © 2022 Focus Features, LLC; Henning Moser; Raphael Guillou



GERMAN BITES

|<| WHERE LE FAUBOURG

Tár meets her conducting nemesis for lunch at this modern French-inspired eatery where the artwork on the walls competes with the innovative dishes. lefaubourg.berlin

STAY THE SAVOY

This Charlottenburg hotel plays The Carlyle in New York where Tár enjoys a corner suite with a piano. That room doesn't exist but the hotel has just had a world-class modern overhaul. hotel-savoy.com

|<| WHERE EGON BRANDSTETTER

Tár is seen having suits cut at this tailor, which specialises in lightweight fabrics. If it's good enough for Lydia... egonbrandstetter.de

STAY SCHLOSSHOTEL BERLIN BY PATRICK HELLMANN

Style hunters should head to this Grunewald mansion once owned by Karl Lagerfeld. Think slick interiors and a sexy bar. schlosshotelberlin.com

|<| WHERE MAX & MORITZ

This heritage tavern established in 1902 is loaded with stunning Art Nouveau stained glass and ironwork and a traditional menu across three intimate rooms. maxundmoritzberlin.de

STAY ADLON KEMPINSKI

Berlin's famous 1907 hotel stands in for Asia in *Tár* as Lydia attends a spa 'with benefits' (ahem). The real hotel offers a prime spot opposite the Brandenburg Gate from which to explore. ba.com/berlin-adlon

