

STARHAUS FILMPRODUKTION
MILLENNIUM FILMS MARIANNA FILMS & ZDF/arte
PRESENT



A FILM BY
MIKA KAURISMÄKI



Technical Details

Running Time	90 minutes
Genre	Documentary, Biography
Format	HD 16:9 colour / b/w
Sound	Digital Sound 5.1
Original Language	English, French
Subtitles	English
	German version available
Year of Production	2011
Countries of Production	Germany, South Africa, Finland



"Unify us– Don't divide us"

WESTWIND

Text + Musik: Bongi Makeba

Westwind blow ye gentle
Over the sores of Africa
My sons proud and noble
Here within my heart they lay

Westwind with your wisdom
Gather all the young for me
Dark cloud hanging over
Nest that bosom strong and free

Make us free from exploitation and strive
Cause nothing is, is more precious in life

Westwind with your splendor
Take my people by the hand
Spread your glory sunshine
Unify mother Africa
Unify my precious land

Unify us don't divide us unify us don't divide us
We don't need it now lord, let us not fight over trivials
Let us learn how to love ourselves first because unification is the thing
I said unification is the thing

Unify us don't divide us unify us don't divide us
Do you hear my friends? Do you hear me my brothers?
Do you hear me my sisters? Do you hear me mama?
Do you hear me god? Do you hear me everybody?

Unify us oh don't divide us, don't divide us unify us
We're tired of poverty, we're tired of dying
We don't wanna die, we don't wanna be poor
We're tired, unify us

Unify us don't divide us don't divide us unify us
Unify us don't divide us don't divide us unify us
Unify us don't divide us don't divide us unify us,
Don't divide us unify us

DON'T DIVIDE US!

ArtMattan Productions
535 Cathedral Parkway – St 14B – NY NY 10025
T : 212-864-1760 - F : 212-316-6020
info@africanfilm.com

SYNOPSIS

MAMA AFRICA: MIRIAM MAKEBA serves as a powerful introduction to a new generation of Americans to Miriam Makeba, South African singer and anti-apartheid activist, the voice and the hope of Africa.



Miriam Makeba was the first African musician to become a true international star. Her music - which influenced artists across the globe - always remained anchored in her traditional South African roots and conveyed strong messages against racism and poverty.

Miriam Makeba was forced into a life in exile, after starring in the 1959 documentary film “COME BACK AFRICA” which exposed the harsh realities of apartheid. She sang for John F. Kennedy and Marlon Brando, performed with Harry Belafonte, Nina Simone and Dizzie Gillespie, was married to Hugh Masekela and also the radical Black Panther, Stokely Carmichael. Her life was tumultuous but always fascinating. She stood for truth and justice, fought for the oppressed and campaigned tirelessly against apartheid.

She died collapsing after leaving the stage at a concert in the Southern Italian town of Castel Volturno in November 2008. Makeba was 76 years old.

This documentary, directed by Mika Kaurismäki, traces her life and music through more than fifty years of performing. Using rare archive footage of her performances, interviews and intimate scenes filmed over the years, this powerful documentary expertly exposes the biography of a unique person, a world icon. Friends and colleagues, some who knew her since she started performing in the dance halls of South Africa (remember “Pata Pata”), together with her grandchildren Zenzi Monique Lee and Nelson Lumumba Lee, allow us to learn about the remarkable journey of Miriam Makeba, “Mama Africa”.

FILMMAKERS (MAIN CREW)

Director	Mika Kaurismäki
Screenwriter	Mika Kaurismäki, Don Ekins
Producer	Rainer Kölmel
Co-Producers	Don Ekins, Hans Robert Eisenhauer, Mika Kaurismäki
Production Companies	Starhaus Filmproduktion, Millennium Films, Marianna Films, ZDF/arte
Cinematographers	Jacques Cheuiche, Wolfgang Held, Frank Lehmann, Martina Radwan, Eran Tahor
Sound	Uwe Dresch
Editors	Karen Harley, Uwe Dresch, André Bendocchi-Alves
Music by	Miriam Makeba
Music Composer	Andreas Schilling
Music Supervisor	Uwe Kirbach
Creative Producer	Wasiliki Bleser
Line Producer	Peter Dress
Production Manager	Nina Spilger
Commissioning Editors	Hans Robert Eisenhauer (ZDF/arte), Iikka Vehkalathi (YLE TV2), Kurt Schneider (SWR), Franz Grabner (ORF), Annemiek van der Zanden (NTR), Hjalmar Palmgren (SVT)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"I'm old enough to remember Miriam Makeba and her songs from the 60s, I remember how exceptional her voice and performance in songs like Pata Pata, Malaika, The Click Song, Forbidden Games etc. was for me, growing up in northern and isolated Finland, something completely new. Her music opened my eyes and ears to Africa, at that point an artistically unknown continent for me.

In the last ten years I've made three documentaries about music: "Moro no Brasil" (2002), "Brasileirinho" (2005) and "Sonic Mirror" (2007). In fact, they're not only about music; all the films have a very strong social aspect, too. I've tried to show how music can be a strong and positive force in the lives of human beings and how people who perform music also send a certain social message.

In this regard, "Mama Africa" about Miriam Makeba (1932-2008), is a very natural and logical continuation to my previous work. Miriam Makeba and her life is probably one of the strongest examples of how art can be used in the service of a social and political purpose and vice versa. Her art always had a very strong message; during a long enforced exile from her native country she became an endeared symbol in the fight for racial equality.

When we started the project, Miriam Makeba was still alive, but then on the morning of November 10th, 2008, I got a phone call informing me that she had passed on. It was a shock of course. At first I thought this is it, the film won't be made but after discussions with my co-producers and other people involved we decided to move on and make the film. We thought that now it was even more important than before. Of course, the whole concept changed as she wasn't there anymore. Now we had to rely more on archive footage and statements from her grandchildren, friends and colleagues in order to draw a bigger picture of her and her extraordinary life.

The film approaches Miriam Makeba from different angles; Miriam Makeba as an artist, activist, mother, grandmother and - a human being. Besides this, her own life struggle reflects the struggle of her motherland, South Africa, from apartheid to democracy. Even if exiled, she witnessed it all very closely, and this is one of the film's undertones.

Miriam Makeba left a big legacy behind, not only in South Africa but throughout the world, her unique melodic voice became the voice of freedom and dignity for her people, both old and young. However, the film will not only tell the history of Miriam Makeba, but also show South Africa's present day by introducing younger artists, who were born, when Mama Africa was still in exile and banned, but who were inspired by her and her art nevertheless.

Mika Kaurismäki
Director

FEATURED INTERVIEW SUBJECT'S



Zenzi Monique Lee

Zenzi Lee is Miriam Makeba's granddaughter. She was born in Manhattan, New York. Her mother Bongi Makeba Lee died in 1985. She grew up with her grandmother. Zenzi Lee sang as a backup vocalist for Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela. Her debut album "Daynights" was released the 26th of November 1999 in South Africa.



Nelson Lumumba Lee

Lumumba Lee is Miriam Makeba's grandson, and Zenzi Lee's big brother. Lumumba Lee joined the Miriam Makeba Band on synthesizers and produced some of Miriam Makeba's music.



Hugh Ramopolo Masekela

Hugh Masekela, born on April 4th, 1939 in Witbank, SA, began singing and playing piano as a child. But at age 14 he began his career as a trumpeter. In the '60s Miriam Makeba helped Hugh Masekela obtain admission to the Manhattan School of Music (NY). Masekela can be heard adding his trumpet, singing and arranging talents to some of the singer's very best records. In 1964 Makeba and Masekela married. Two years later, in 1966, they divorced and Masekela relocated to Los Angeles.



Angélique Kidjo

Angélique Kidjo is a Beninoise singer-songwriter and activist. Her music is influenced by her childhood idol Miriam Makeba. Other musical influences include Afropop, Caribbean zouk, gospel, Congolese rumba, jazz and Latin styles. In 1989 Kidjo opened a Miriam Makeba concert and they became friends. In 2008 she won the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Music Album. On September 2009, The Festival D'Ile De France in Paris asked Angélique to curate a tribute to Miriam Makeba.



Abigail Kubeka

Abigail Kubeka was discovered at the age of sixteen by Miriam Makeba, when she joined her female singing group, "The Skylarks" and understudied her in the acclaimed musical King Kong. Abigail has performed in every major country in Africa, Europe and Asia and is an acclaimed television, film and theatre actress.



Dorothy Masuku

Dorothy Masuku (a.k.a. Masuka) is a jazz singer who was born in Zimbabwe in 1935, then called Southern Rhodesia. Her family moved to South Africa when she was 12. By the time she was 19, she was touring in South Africa with singers she had admired as a girl. Masuku's music was popular in SA throughout the '50s, but when her songs became more serious, the government began questioning her. Her song "Dr.

Malan," was banned and in 1961 she sang a song for Patrice Lumumba which led to her exile. Being a friend of Miriam Makeba, she wrote several of her songs and spent time with her in exile.



Joe Mogotsi

Joe Mogotsi was a band member of "The Manhattan Brothers" who have their origin in the early '30s. The group (consisting of four male vocalists) was one of the most influential vocal groups in the history of South Africa's music. During the late '40s and '50s, they appeared regularly on South African television and radio and influenced succeeding generations with their style of dress, speech, attitude, and lifestyle. In

the early '50s, the Manhattan Brothers expanded with the addition of female vocalist, Miriam Makeba, who had just started her career and was part of the group for much of the '50s.



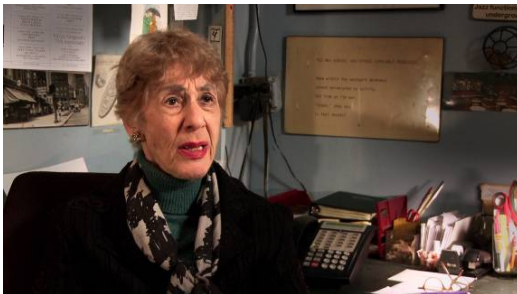
Leopoldo Fleming and William "Bill" Salter

Leopoldo Fleming is a musician, composer, lyricist and arranger with a rich and multicoloured palette of inspiration from his Puerto Rican Latin-Afro-Indian roots. He accompanied Miriam Makeba during her time in the US as did the bassist Bill Salter who wrote most of her English songs. Both musicians played with Makeba among others at the "Live at Bern's Salonger, Stockholm, Sweden" concert in 1966.



Kathleen Neal Cleaver

From 1967 till 1987, Kathleen Cleaver was married to the Black Panther cofounder Eldridge Cleaver († 1.05. 1998). She became the first female member of the Black Panther Party's decision-making body as communications secretary. Today, Professor Cleaver is a Senior Research Associate at the Yale Law School, and a Senior Lecturer in the African American Studies department at Yale University.



Lorraine Gordon

Lorraine Gordon is a jazz icon who has lived more than a few lives: downtown bohemian, uptown grande dame, music business pioneer, wife, lover, mother and finally – at a point when most women at her age were just settling into grandmotherhood – owner of the most famous jazz club in the world, the “Village Vanguard” in New York. This famous venue was where Miriam Makeba debuted in the USA.

ABOUT MIRIAM MAKEBA

"Miriam Makeba was born in Johannesburg. She was the first of the great singers from her country to bring South African music to the world. In 1959, she began a world tour and when she attempted to return home one year later, she was refused admittance. She has been in political exile now for 27 years. They call her "Mama Africa" the Queen of South African music. Miriam Makeba."

Paul Simon, Graceland Tour, Zimbabwe, 1987



* 4th March 1932 Prospect Township, South Africa † 9th November 2008 in Castel Volturno, Italy

EARLY YEARS

Miriam Makeba was born in Prospect Township near Johannesburg in 1932, during a time of economic depression. Her mother, a domestic worker, was imprisoned for six months for illegally brewing beer "Umqombothi" to help make ends meet, and Miriam went to prison with her as she was just 18 days old.

Makeba's mother was also a sangoma, or a practitioner of herbal medicine, divination and counselling in traditional Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi (Nguni) societies of Southern Africa.

After her father died, Miriam was sent to live with her grandmother at a compound in Riverside, Pretoria. From a young age, Makeba loved to sing at church, and performed her first solo during the 1947 Royal Visit.

Miriam began her working life helping her mother clean houses. In the 1950s, she lived in Sophiatown when it was a vibrant place and one of the few areas where all races could mix. It was the scene of kwela music, marabi and African jazz and big band music became popular.

Miriam Makeba began her music career singing for her cousin's band, the "Cuban Brothers", but it was only when she began to sing for the "Manhattan Brothers" in 1954 that she began to build a reputation. She toured South Africa, Zimbabwe (former Rhodesia) and the Congo with the band until 1957. After this Makeba sang for all-women group, "the Skylarks," which combined jazz and traditional African melodies.

Makeba's appearances in the film "COME BACK, AFRICA" (1957) and as the female lead in Todd Matshikiza's musical "KING KONG" (1959) cemented her reputation in the music industry both locally and abroad. She later married her "KING KONG" co-star, Hugh Masekela, in 1964.

"KING KONG" was about a boxer who kills his sweetheart and later dies in prison. The musical, publicised as a 'jazz opera', was a big success in South Africa. To avoid the apartheid laws that divided the public, the musical was often performed at universities.

For her small part in "COME BACK, AFRICA" (as a 'shebeen' singer singing the titles '*Lakutshoni Ilanga*' and '*Saduva*'), Makeba was flown to the Venice film festival in 1959 so that she could personally receive an award for the movie. The film was a documentary on South Africa made by an American film director, Lionel Rogosin.

Makeba was soon in trouble with the South African authorities, who had received negative attention through the presentation of the film. Makeba then decided not to return to the country that gave her little or nothing in terms of payment for her performances.

EXILE

The South African government then revoked her passport and denied her the possibility of returning to South Africa. She was the first black musician to leave South Africa on account of apartheid, and over the years many others would follow her.

Makeba took up refuge in London after the Venice film festival and met Harry Belafonte, who helped her to immigrate to the USA. In the early 1960s, she shot to fame in the USA overnight, and performed for former US President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden in 1962. Among her admirers were Marlon Brando, Bette Davis, Nina Simone and Miles Davis.

Makeba said of people imitating her 'look':

"I see other black women imitate my style, which is no style at all, but just letting our hair be itself. They call it the Afro Look."

In 1960, when she tried to return to South Africa for her mother's funeral, she discovered that her passport had been revoked. In 1963, she testified about apartheid at the United Nations and her South African citizenship was taken away from her. She lived in the US thereafter and her records were banned in South Africa.

In 1966, she won a Grammy award for An Evening with Harry Belafonte in 1965. She was also the first black woman to have a Top-Ten worldwide hit with Pata Pata in 1967. In total, she recorded four albums in the USA. It was in the United States that she also recorded her famous *Qogothwane* (The “Click” Song).

In 1968, she married militant African-American civil rights activist and Black Panther leader Stokely Carmichael but harassment from the US government forced them to move to Guinea. They separated in 1978. After moving to Guinea, Makeba managed to find work outside the USA. She toured Europe, South America and Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. During these years, she performed mostly in trade union halls, cultural institutions and on other small stages. She also appeared at jazz festivals like the Montreux in Switzerland.

It was during this period that Makeba addressed the United Nations’ General Assembly twice, speaking out against apartheid as a Guinean delegate to the United Nations (UN). In 1986, she was awarded the Dag Hammerskjold Peace Prize from the Diplomatic Academy for Peace.



According to her biography, the 1980s were a difficult time for Makeba, as she separated from Carmichael and her daughter, Bongi, died in tragic circumstances. She also battled with alcohol abuse and cervical cancer during this period.

In 1987, she joined American folk singer Paul Simon’s highly successful Graceland tour to newly independent Zimbabwe. The concert featured multicultural sounds and drew attention to racist policies still prevalent in South Africa, despite the fact that it technically violated the cultural boycott of South Africa. After Graceland, Miriam was in great demand, and went on to perform for heads of state, and even the Pope.

Return to South Africa

In 1990, ANC leader Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in prison, and encouraged Miriam Makeba to return to South Africa. She then returned, after 31 years in exile, and became a goodwill ambassador for South Africa to the United Nations. After her return to South Africa, Makeba struggled to find collaborators, but six years later, she produced the album “Homecoming”. In 1997, she embarked on her Farewell Tour and appeared in the movie “MAMA” by Veronique Patte Dombé.

In 1998, she toured Africa, the USA and Europe and sold out theatres. In 2002, Makeba starred in Lee Hirsch’s opulent and exciting documentary “AMANDLA!” about the powerful part of music in the struggle against apartheid.

Makeba has received honorary doctorates from both local and international academic institutions. The city of Berkeley proclaimed the 16 June to be Miriam Makeba Day and she has received the highest decoration from Tunisia. In 1999, Nelson Mandela presented her with the Presidential Award. In 2005, Makeba announced her retirement from the mainstream music industry but she continued to make appearances and to do smaller performances.



Throughout her career, Makeba insisted that her music was not consciously political. In an interview with the British times she said:

"I'm not a political singer... I don't know what the word means. People think I consciously decided to tell the world what was happening in South Africa. No! I was singing about my life, and in South Africa we always sang about what was happening to us - especially the things that hurt us."

Makeba continued her humanitarian work through her Zenzile Miriam Makeba Foundation, including the Miriam Makeba Rehabilitation Centre for abused girls. She also supported campaigns against drug abuse and HIV/Aids awareness. Furthermore, she appeared as President Mbeki's Goodwill Ambassador to the UN.

Makeba died in 2008, at the age 76, after having a heart attack after a 30 minute performance at a concert organised to support writer Roberto Saviano in his stand against the Camorra, a mafia-like organisation near the southern Italian town of Caserta.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



MIKA KAURISMÄKI

Director, Screenwriter and Co-Producer, born in 1955 in Orimattila, Finland

Mika Kaurismäki's first film "THE LIAR" (1980) was an overnight sensation, when first shown in Finland. It marked the beginning of the cinema of the Kaurismäki brothers and started a new era in the Finnish cinema.

After high school, Mika Kaurismäki used to work as a painter of houses and apartments in a small town of Kuusankoski in the South-eastern part of Finland. In the autumn of 1976, when the winter was coming and the annual high season for painting houses was over, he thought of doing something else in life. Still wearing his painter overall, he walked into a bookstore and bought the newly published "History of Cinema" by Peter von Bagh. He started reading it from page one and decided to become a film director.

Mika Kaurismäki studied cinema in Munich, Germany, (Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen) 1977-1981 and made his diploma film "THE LIAR" in 1980 in Finland. His younger brother Aki Kaurismäki, then a student of journalism, played the main role and co-wrote the screenplay. After the success of "THE LIAR", Mika Kaurismäki decided to stay in Finland and together with his brother and some friends, he founded the production company Villealfa Filmproductions that soon became a home of vital low- or no-budget film making. By the end of the 80's, it was the third biggest film production company of all time in Finland. The Villealfa film family consisted, besides the Kaurismäki brothers, of many colleagues and friends, including the actors Matti Pellonpää and Kari Väänänen and the cinematographer Timo Salminen. Mika Kaurismäki's films of this era include among others the road movies "THE WORTHLESS" (1982) and "ROSSO" (1985), the action comedy "HELSINKI NAPOLI – ALL NIGHT LONG" (1987) and the environmental adventure "THE AMAZON" (1990). Aki Kaurismäki, who had worked as Mika's assistant and a screenwriter, began his career as a director when Mika produced his first film "THE CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" (1984). During the active Villealfa years, Mika co-founded the legendary Midnight Sun Film Festival (1986) and the distribution company Senso Films (1987) and the Andorra cinemas in Helsinki.

The 90's meant a gradual disappearance of the Villealfa spirit and both Mika and Aki started to produce their films through their own production companies. Mika had founded Marianna Films in 1987 and its first independent production was the award winning "ZOMBIE AND THE GHOST TRAIN" (1991). In 1994, Mika returned to the Brazilian jungle with Samuel Fuller and Jim Jarmusch and made the feature length documentary "TIGRERO – A FILM THAT WAS NEVER MADE". The film was awarded the International Critics' Award at the Berlin Film Festival in 1994.

In the course of the 90's, Mika established his base and second home in Rio de Janeiro and started to concentrate more in international co-productions. In 1996, in Philadelphia, he directed the no-budget thriller "CONDITION RED" with James Russo, Cynda Williams and Paul Calderon. His biggest

production so far is the comedy “LA WITHOUT A MAP” (1998), with David Tennant, July Delpy, Vincent Gallo, Johnny Depp, James Le Gros, Anouk Aimee, Joe Dallesandro etc.

The new millennium started for Mika with the production of “MORO NO BRASIL” (2002), the praised documentary of Brazilian music. During the production of this film, he opened a live music club “Mika’s Bar” in Rio de Janeiro, but gave it up later and decided to concentrate primarily in film making. In 2003, he directed “HONEY BABY”, a road movie between Germany and Russia, starring Henry Thomas, Irina Björklund and Helmut Berger. “BRASILEIRINHO”, a film about Brazilian choro music, premiered at the Berlinale 2005 and “SONIC MIRROR”, a film with legendary drummer Billy Cobham, in Nyon 2007.

In 2008 and 2009 two Mika Kaurismäki films premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival: The award winning “THREE WISE MEN” (2008) and the box-office hit “THE HOUSE OF BRANCHING LOVE” (2009). The documentary “VESKU FROM FINLAND,” released 2010, was very successful both critically and at the box-office in Finland. At the end of 2010, Mika also completed the fiction “BROTHERS” which was released in 2011. He has produced “ROAD NORTH” and produced/directed “KUNINGAS LITMANEN” in 2012. In 2015, he has produced both “HOMECOMING” and “THE GIRL KING” and he is currently producing/directing “RYHMIS”.



Rainer Kölmel

Producer, born in Karlsruhe, Germany

Rainer Kölmel studied history at the Universities of Munich and Heidelberg where he did his PhD on a Holocaust subject. He taught at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh and Edinburgh University from 1974 until 1989 during which time he also worked for the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Together with his brother Michael, he was involved in Kinowelt from its foundation in 1984, when he was first in charge of acquisition and television sales. Among the hundreds of films he acquired one can find titles like “THE ENGLISH PATIENT” and “MARCH OF THE PENGUINS”. Kinowelt went public in 1998 and Rainer Kölmel was on the board of directors. Having reached a dominant position as an independent in Germany, Kinowelt became victim of the downturn in the German media business and went insolvent in 2001. In January 2003, Rainer Kölmel and his brother bought back the core business of Kinowelt Medien AG and moved the company from Munich to Leipzig. Today Kinowelt is again a leading independent in the German market. The company was sold to Studio Canal in 2008.

In 1994, Rainer Kölmel founded the Kinowelt Filmproduktion GmbH which in May 2003 became a subsidiary of Starhaus Produktionen GmbH based in Munich. Kinowelt Filmproduktion changed its name to Starhaus Filmproduktion in July 2008. Starhaus Filmproduktion is focused on producing and coproducing feature films and documentaries like István Szabó’s “SUNSHINE”, Todd Louiso’s “LOVE LIZA”, Susan Streitfeld’s “FEMALE PERVERSIONS”, Ben Verbong’s “THE SLURB” and Dominik Wessely’s “REVERSE SHOT - REBELLION OF THE FILMMAKERS”.

Rainer Kölmel is a member of the German and the European Film Academy.



Don Edkins

Co-Producer and Screenwriter, born in 1953 in Cape Town, South Africa

Don Edkins is a South African documentary filmmaker and producer based in Cape Town. With an academic background in Development Studies and African Languages, he has extensive work experience in the field of media and social change, and in Lesotho founded a mobile cinema in 1993 that distributes and screens films at a community level. His films include "GOLDWIDOWS" (1990), "THE COLOUR OF GOLD" (1992), and "THE BROKEN STRING" (1996). He produced the Southern African series on truth and reconciliation "LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY" (1998), and the multi-awarded documentary project "STEPS FOR THE FUTURE" (2001/04) – a collection of 38 films about Southern Africa in the time of HIV and AIDS (www.stepsforthefuture.co.za). He is Executive Producer of the Steps International global documentary project "WHY DEMOCRACY?" (www.whydemocracy.net) 10 long and 17 short films screened by 48 broadcasters in 180 countries, using cross-media platforms to engage people in discussing and understanding contemporary democracy. He has co-authored a book on documentary filmmaking – "STEPS BY STEPS", and is currently developing a new Steps International global documentary project about poverty and inequality, "WHY POVERTY?"



Hans Robert Eisenhauer

Co-Producer and Commissioning Editor of ZDF/arte, born in 1945 in Heppenheim an der Bergstrasse, Germany

After his studies in Political Science in Heidelberg, Hans Robert Eisenhauer worked as an assistant and scientific collaborator of the Minister of Finance in Bonn. Until 1979, he also worked as an assistant to several Members of Parliament and as freelance journalist for print media and radio. At the end of 1979, he changed profession and place: Hans Robert Eisenhauer became first dramatic adviser and then producer of television programmes in Berlin.

In 1983, he worked as a scriptwriter and producer for television series and factual programmes for Studio Hamburg Atelier GmbH. In 1985, he became editor for press and public relations and producer at the Second German Television (ZDF) and the German-speaking cultural channel 3Sat. In November 1987, Hans Robert Eisenhauer became the Head of the Berlin Film Fund at the Berlin Government, where he was also responsible for the formation of the European Film Academy.

In November 1991, he was engaged as Deputy Programme Director of ARTE and Head of the Theme Evenings. Since January 2005, Hans Robert Eisenhauer works at the Head of Thema in ZDF/ARTE.

Some examples of commissioned international coproductions theatrical length are "BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB" (Wim Wenders), "NACH SAISON" (Pepe Danquart), "ALL ABOUT EU" (Nick Fraser and Ben Lewis), "SUPER 8 STORIES" (Emir Kusturica), "MORO NO BRASIL" (Mika Kaurismäki), "WHY WE FIGHT" (Eugene Jarecki), "HÖLLENTOUR" (Pepe Danquart), "TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE" (Alex Gibney), "LOVE IN INDIA" (Qaushiq Mukherjee) and "BEHIND THE RAINBOW" (Jihan El Tahri).