

# The Way Out (1941)

**The Way Out** is a German film melodrama from 1941, directed by Rolf Hansen . Zarah Leander plays for the first time under Hansen's direction in her eighth UFA production. She had met Rolf Hansen as Carl Froelich's assistant director and specifically asked UFA to direct this film. <sup>[1]</sup>

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## Plot

The landowner Detlev von Blossin and the opera singer Antonia Corvelli have been married for more than a year. The baron has agreed with his wife that they will finally return to his estate in Pomerania as soon as their current engagement is over . Baroness von Blossin is eagerly awaiting her son and daughter-in-law, but is skeptical as to whether the famous singer will feel comfortable in the isolation of the family estate. The older lady tells her distant relative Luise that different worlds are colliding.

Antonia Corvelli, who has always been able to get her husband to give in to her wishes, has extended her contract again without his knowledge. When the Baron finds out about this, he leaves the theater without a word and annoyed.

film	
title	The way out into the open
Country of production	<u>Germany</u>
Original language	<u>German</u>
Year of publication	<u>1941</u>
length	113 minutes
Age rating	<u>R16</u>
rod	
Direction	<u>Rolf Hansen</u>
script	<u>Rolf Hansen</u> <u>Jacob Geis</u> <u>Harald Braun</u>
production	<u>Carl Froelich</u>
Music	<u>Theo Mackeben</u>
camera	<u>Franz Weihmair</u>
cut	<u>Anna Hoellering</u>
occupation	
▪ <u>Zarah Leander</u> : Antonia Corvelli	
▪ <u>Hans Stüwe</u> : Detlev von Blossin, her husband	
▪ <u>Agnes Windeck</u> : Baroness von Blossin, his mother	
▪ <u>Eva Immermann</u> : Louise	
▪ <u>Siegfried Breuer</u> : Count Stefan Oginski	
▪ <u>Hedwig Wangel</u> : Barbaccia	
▪ <u>Albert Florath</u> : Dr. Hensius	
▪ <u>Herbert Hübner</u> : District Administrator of Stempel	
▪ <u>Antonie Jaeckel</u> : Wife of Stempel	
▪ <u>Ralph Lothar</u> : Achim, whose son	
▪ <u>Karl John</u> : Fritz	

The next day, von Blossin tells his wife that he has to return to his estate after more than a year. She promised to come with him and now she has broken her promise again. This time, Antonia is unable to change her husband's mind. At the family estate, the Baron is greeted happily by his mother, but her disappointment and concern that he has come without his wife is evident. She still has things to do in Vienna and will follow, Detlev tells the Baroness.

Meanwhile, in Vienna, the population is taking to the streets to show their displeasure at Prince Metternich's corrupt economic methods . The shady Count Stefan Oginski, who is also responsible as Metternich's financial advisor, is dismayed to learn that Metternich has fled and that the troublemakers in his house are smashing everything to pieces. Antonia, who used to be with the soldier of fortune, feels obliged to support her former friend in such a situation and gives him refuge in her house in Vienna.

The unrest has not gone unnoticed in the Pomeranian isolation of the Blossin estate, and some men want to use this as an opportunity to instigate Blossin's workers. However, the Baron clarifies the situation in his own unpretentious way. Luise, who had run the estate with his mother during Blossin's absence, continues to stand by his side. Achim, the district administrator's son, who had hoped to win over the charming young woman, also has to realize that she feels more for von Blossin than just friendship.

Because of the help she gives Oginski, Antonia gets into trouble in Vienna. The count doesn't even shy away from calling her his accomplice and extorting money from her. He also wants her to flee with him. The singer's confidante, the loyal Barbaccia, advises Antonia to fake her death when she desperately says that Oginski will always cling to her, that he won't leave her and will find her everywhere. And so it happens.

- Claire Reigbert : Miss Dörte
- Olaf Bach : a Pole
- Walther Ludwig : Thomas Rezzi
- Leo Peukert : Director of the Vienna Court Opera
- Walther Süssenguth : Morescu
- Victor Janson : Manchandel
- Kurt Meisel : a student
- Melanie
- Oscar Sabo : Stage Manager
- Carl Günther : Commissioner
- Hans Reinmar : Baritone in “Semiramis”
- Emil Hess : Muetli
- Josefine Dora : Mrs. Lüchzagel
- Jakob Tiedtke : Director of the Bergamo Opera
- Julia Serda : wife of the opera director
- Sigrid Becker : young maid at Gut Blossin
- Gisela Breiderhoff : Oginski's companion in the gaming room
- Fritz Hintz-Fabrizius : Director of the Casino
- Grete Greeff-Fabri : Woman at the gaming table
- Julius Eckhoff : Man in the gaming room
- Julius Brandt : Opera composer in Vienna
- Vera Complyer : Revolutionary in Vienna
- Louis Ralph : Revolutionary in Vienna
- Karl Etlinger : Oginski's servant Clemens
- Hugo Flink : General at the reception at Antonia
- Hugo Froelich : Hotel owner in Pomerania
- Knut Hartwig : Farm worker on Gut Blossin
- Karl Hellmer : Night porter of the Vienna Court Opera
- Julius E. Herrmann : conductor of the opera in Bergamo
- Fritz Soot : Singer at rehearsal
- Friedrich Honna : Man whose bed is thrown out of the window
- Wilhelm Paul Krüger : Pomeranian civil servant
- Michael von Newlinski : Firefighter at the “Rigoletto” performance

Just as Luise has decided to leave the estate, the Baron's circumstances change dramatically. After von Blossin has not heard from Antonia for several weeks, he tells his mother that his wife must come of her own accord if everything is to be good between them. Shortly afterwards, the Baron is informed by the district administrator of Antonia's suicide, who is said to have drowned in the Danube Canal . He tells his mother that he has learned things about Antonia that he wants to tell her, but that they should never speak of them again. Antonia, who has traveled to Switzerland with Barbaccia after her fake suicide and has been living there for some time, is courted by the Swiss Muetli, who tells her about his wife and that a man can forgive a woman he loves everything. The opera diva then takes courage and postpones her planned onward journey to Italy to visit her husband on his estate. Maybe everything will turn out well after all, she says to Barbaccia. At the estate she is met by Luise, who tells her how much the Baron suffered in the past because he found out from the police that his wife had been involved with another man. He had only just come to his senses, and she should please spare him a confrontation with his past. Antonia has not revealed herself, but has introduced herself as an old friend from Vienna. While she is waiting, she learns from an employee that everyone on the estate hopes that Miss Luise will become more than just a distant relative once the year of mourning is over. So the singer decides, with a heavy heart, to leave the estate without making any further contact. As the car drives away, she cries bitterly on Barbaccia's shoulder.

- Gustav Püttjer : Pomeranian coachman, now at Oginski
- Ernst Rotmund : Innkeeper Filippi in Milan
- Otto Sauter-Sarto : Innkeeper in the "Rigoletto" performance in Bergamo
- Rudolf Vones : Blossin's Servant in Vienna
- Bruno Ziener : Cantor of the Pomeranian Children's Choir
- Arthur Reinhardt : Revolutionary in the Pomeranian village pub
- Reinhold Weiglin : old man in the Pomeranian village pub
- Carl Zickner : old man among the revolutionaries
- Luise Bethke-Zitzmann : old woman among the revolutionaries
- Fritz Draeger : Gambler in the Casino
- Walter Flamm : Theater employee in Bergamo
- Friedel Müller : Employee at the Albergo "Catullo"
- Klaus Seiwert : Guest at the gaming table
- Margarete Arnold : Singer
- Irma Beilke : Singer
- Wilhelm Schirp : Singer
- Else Schmidt-Tegetthoff : singer
- Karl Schmitt-Walter : Singer
- Eva Schroeder : little boy eating
- Harriet Awiszus
- Alfred Stein

Six years have now passed and Antonia is singing on a small stage in Italy under the name of Giulietta. They are rehearsing for "Rigoletto" when the news comes that the role of the Duke of Mantua will be sung that evening by the famous Tamaso Rezzi. Antonia is shocked because of course she knows the singer. But Barbaccia assures her that she will make her up so that he will not recognize her. "Oh, how deceitful women's hearts are!" rings out from the stage that evening to huge applause. Then comes Antonia's duet with Rezzi. Her fear of meeting colleagues from the opera again in the future is so great that she decides to flee once again. As chance would have it, Oginski learns from Rezzi that he had been on stage in Bergamo with a woman whose appearance and voice bore an astonishing resemblance to the great Corvelli; he had the feeling that he was on stage with her again. Antonia is now performing in a tavern because she is afraid of the opera stage. Oginski finds her there. He tells the singer that her husband is remarried and even has a child. It quickly becomes clear that he is

planning blackmail and wants to take advantage of the fact that he is a bigamy . Antonia cannot change his mind. When she is told the next day that the count has left, she suspects that he is on his way to Blossin to blackmail him. She decides to travel to Mecklenburg as well . However, Oginski is already with the baron and tells him that Antonia is still alive. He tries to blackmail von Blossin and even pretends to be acting on the singer's behalf. Von Blossin expels him from the estate. Antonia has also arrived at the estate in the meantime. There she meets the Blossins' young son and shortly afterwards Luise. Antonia tells Luise everything and promises her that Oginski will not destroy her happiness, she will make sure of that, tomorrow everything will be different. Then she drives away. In the small guesthouse where she is staying, she tears up the Baron's love letters, which are so precious to her. Von Blossin learns from Luise about Antonia's visit and her words and suspects something bad. He rushes to the guesthouse as quickly as he can. The doctor present lets him into the dying woman's room. She has taken poison and makes the Baron promise that no one will know who she really is, because then everything will have been in vain. Von Blossin finds it incredibly difficult to deny Antonia, but he grants her last wish. As he leaves the room, Antonia's arm falls limply to her side. She is dead.

## background

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Since Zarah Leander's last films had not been a great success, she insisted that Rolf Hansen should direct this film. She knew Hansen from her work with the director Carl Froelich , with whom she had already made three films. Hansen worked as an assistant director to Froelich. She expected Hansen to bring new ideas and he was also considered less conventional . She got her way, although Hansen had been on bad terms with Goebbels since 1938. He had violated the prevailing ideology with *Life Can Be So Beautiful* (working title *Ultimo* ) . The fact that Zarah's wish was not denied was due to her enormous appeal as a box office star at home and abroad. *The Way Out* was a huge box office success, so that UFA had to put its reservations about Hansen aside. Hansen directed Zarah's next film ( *The Great Love* ) . <sup>[1]</sup>

Hans Stüwe was Zarah Leander's partner in four films, the last time in 1953 in *Ave Maria* (1953) . <sup>[2]</sup>

Songs in the film:

- *I don't want to forget ...* (romance) – Text: Harald Braun , Music: Theo Mackeben
- *Maybe ...* (Chanson) – Text: Hans Fritz Beckmann , Music: Theo Mackeben
- *I don't say yes, I don't say no* , besides
- *The star has found us based on* Gioachino Rossini's opera *Semiramis* and
- *The day has gone brightly* and *O how deceptive* from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Rigoletto* , Act 3.

This film is not identical to Arthur Schnitzler's first novel, *The Way Out* . Schnitzler's work was made into a film in 1983, directed by Karin Brandauer and starring Klaus Maria Brandauer .

Historical background: Klemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich (since 1813 Prince \* 1773 – † 1859) was a statesman in the Austrian Empire and rose to become one of the leading statesmen in Europe from 1813 onwards, playing a leading role in the Congress of Vienna . As a leading politician of the Restoration period, he stood for the monarchical principle and fought against the national and liberal movements.

## production

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The film premiered on May 7, 1941, at the Gloria-Palast in Berlin . The film drama was also released in the Netherlands and Finland in 1941. The film was released in France and Sweden in 1942. The (West) German TV premiere was on May 26, 1988. In Italy, the film was shown under the title *Per la sua felicità* and in Sweden under the title *Två världar* .

The production company responsible was Tonfilm-Studio Carl Froelich & Co. (Berlin) on behalf of Universum-Film AG ( UFA ) Berlin. Friedrich Pflughaupt was in charge of production , Kurt-Fritz Quassowski, Kurt Moos and Paul Kalinowsky were in charge of production. The sets were by Walter Haag , the sound by Werner Pohl and the costumes by Max von Formacher. Milo Harbich and Ernst Mölter served as assistant directors .

Filming took place from September 15, 1940 to February 1941 in Mecklenburg-Strelitz , on the Dannenwalde estate near Neustrelitz , in Innsbruck and near Hall in Tirol . The film was first distributed by UFA-Filmverleih GmbH (Berlin). The film was banned from youth viewing in 1941 (censorship: April 25, 1941, B.55399).

The largely unknown actress Eva Immermann, who was given the supporting role of Luise, is the daughter-in-law of Paul Wegener .

The production costs were about 1,758,000 RM, and the box office revenue by January 1942 was already around 3.5 million RM. <sup>[3]</sup>

Despite its entertainment character, the film also had clear propagandistic elements: the villain in the film is a Pole (Oginski), who “does illegal business with Jewish ‘enemies of the people’, played by Viktor Janson and Walter Süßenguth” <sup>[4]</sup> .

The film was released on DVD in 2009:

- *The Way Out* , Publisher: Black Hill Pictures, first published on May 8, 2009
- Zarah Leander Edition 2 (4 DVDs) *The Great Love* , *The Blue Fox* , *The Way Out* , *I Am Leander* , *That Must Be Enough* , Provider: Black Hill Pictures, first released on May 8, 2009

## criticism

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"Mid-19th century: A famous opera singer, caught up in a scandal, fakes suicide. Her husband remarries. For the sake of his family's happiness, she later considers it right to actually take her own life. A melodrama typical of the time for Zarah Leander in a solid production."

– DICTIONARY OF INTERNATIONAL FILMS <sup>[ 5 ]</sup>

Dr. Erich Ronneburger wrote the following critique in the Steglitzer Anzeiger, Berlin, on 9 May 1941:

"'The Way Out' is a film of interesting format in terms of plot and presentation... The film is carried by the artistic skill of Zarah Leander. She portrays all the emotional conflicts that arise from her love of art and her powerful husband so convincingly, credibly and honestly that the audience is deeply shocked by the heroine's end. In addition to Zarah Leander, the director Rolf Hansen has chosen other great actors who achieve no less significant things. Siegfried Breuer embodies the noble scoundrel Count Oginski so typically authentically that Antonia's desperate step, which is not well considered in all its consequences, can seem psychologically somewhat understandable..."

– DR. ERICH RONNEBURGER, STEGLITZER ANZEIGER, BERLIN <sup>[ 6 ]</sup>

In the Hünfelder Volkszeitung of February 22, 1952, it was stated that there were not "too many films of German origin that leave such an immediate, strong impression on their audiences" as "the Zarah Leander film, which is one of the best achievements of the old German productions and which contributed significantly to making the Swede's name popular." The story of the woman "who is faced with the decision of having to choose between her family obligations and her professional career as a singer is not new in itself and often forms the content of more or less dramatic novels and films." The review continues:

"But this time the main emphasis is not so much on the otherwise appealingly constructed plot. Rather, it is the main roles played by Zarah Leander as the celebrated singer Antonia Corvelli, Hans Stüwe in his portrayal of the noble landowner who is so completely different from his wife's character, and the demonic, worldly appearance of Oginski, to whom the film owes its appeal even today... The atmosphere of a bygone era, from which everything has to be understood and judged, is well captured..."

– ORH, HÜNFELDER VOLKSZEITUNG <sup>[ 6 ]</sup>

## See also

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- List of German feature films premiered during the Nazi era in the German Reich

## Weblinks

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- *The Way Out* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0034380/>) at IMDb
- **' The Way Out '** (<https://www.filmportal.de/3ae3d7f6b6b34ee0b76ca5886d6e3578>) at filmportal.de
- *The Way Out* ([https://i.ebayimg.com/t/IFK-Nr-3202-Der-Weg-ins-Freie-Zarah-Leander-Hans-Stuewe-Agnes-Windeck-K-John-/00/s/MTYwMFgxMTYz/z/p~gAAOSw9mFWK2xT/\\$\\_57.JPG](https://i.ebayimg.com/t/IFK-Nr-3202-Der-Weg-ins-Freie-Zarah-Leander-Hans-Stuewe-Agnes-Windeck-K-John-/00/s/MTYwMFgxMTYz/z/p~gAAOSw9mFWK2xT/$_57.JPG)) Illustrated Film Courier No. 3202

- *Zarah Leander's film roles* (<https://www.zarahleander.de/filmografie.html>) at [zarahleander.de](https://www.zarahleander.de)

## References

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1. Cornelia Zumkeller: *Zarah Leander. Her films – her life* . Heyne Filmbibliothek No. 32/120. Heyne, Munich 1988, pp. 118, 119.
2. Zarah Leander archive (<https://www.zarahleander.de/kollegen.html#Kollegen>) at [zarahleander.de](https://www.zarahleander.de)
3. Ulrich J. Klaus: *German Sound Films, 11th year 1940/41* . Berlin 2000, p. 286.
4. Bogusław Drewniak: *The German film 1938–1945. A general overview* . Düsseldorf 1987, p. 316.
5. *The Way Out*. (<https://www.filmdienst.de/film/details/35784>) In: *Lexicon of International Films* . Filmdienst , accessed on March 2, 2017 .
6. n. bonus material (press clippings) DVD German film classics: *The Way Out* from Black Hill Pictures GmbH.

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