

# Hot off the Press 22!

Members recommend.....

## FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

The Times 17.1.22

Berliners are obsessed with David Bowie, even though he spent much of his time in the city feeding his appetite for its Nazi heritage

Oliver Moody

BERLIN



A couple of doors down the road from my flat, a semi-permanent shrine has appeared on the pavement.

Outside what some maps of the city still optimistically call the "David Bowie Berlin Experience", but is really just a tattoo parlour and a chiropractor's office, there are two dozen lanterns, bunches of white roses and pink lilies, and laminated cards with devotional messages.

"You are missed, our hero, Starman, Blackstar," one says. On another placard a Polish fan has written: "Warszawa misses you, biggest star who fell to earth."

On what would have been his 75th birthday he is already halfway to sainthood in Berlin. My local pub is dedicated to his memory, and his portrait is even proudly displayed next to Ataturk's in the window of the neighbourhood's Turkish bar.

As of last year he is eligible to have streets named after him under a city bylaw. It can only be a matter of time.

The Christian Democrats on the district council have applied to rebrand the utterly

undistinguished crossroads at the top of our street, the Hauptstrasse, David-Bowie-Platz. More than 13,000 Berliners have signed a petition to rename the Hauptstrasse itself after the British pop star.

I find the city's Bowie cult a little baffling. He came to West Berlin in 1976, primarily to dry out after a monumental spell of cocaine abuse during his Thin White Duke period in Los Angeles, but also because he was fascinated by West German bands such as Neul, Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream.

He stayed for only three years, returning in 1987 for a famous concert next to the Berlin Wall. In fact the word "stayed" is misleading; he recorded more than half of his so-called Berlin trilogy of albums elsewhere, *Heroes* being the only one entirely produced in the city.

Bowie, who died in 2016 aged 69, certainly had a lot of affection for Berlin. By day he would trawl its modern art galleries, paint, cycle through the streets on a Raleigh bike, take a train out to the Wannsee lake, or shop for books and experimental pop

Only one album in Bowie's Berlin Trilogy was made in the city

records. By night he would go out dancing in its discotheques with Iggy Pop and Romy Haag, his glamorous trans lover.

By Bowie's hectic standards, it was a period of discipline and calm, when he got through a mere three packs of Gitanes a day and the occasional noseful of charlie at weekends. He took pleasure in the relative anonymity of being a "stranger in a neighbourhood of strangers".

Yet I can't help suspecting that Berlin was not much more than a glorified rehab clinic for him. He never learnt enough German to order a bread roll. He even misspelt Neukölln, the West Berlin district that lent its name to a bleak instrumental on *Heroes*.

A few German influences can definitely be discerned in his work from this era: the motorik beats on *Low*; the EP written to accompany Berthold Brecht's play *Baal*; the cover of *Heroes*, inspired by an Ernst Ludwig Kirchner painting he saw in the Brücke museum.

But what gets lost in all the mawkish Bowie hagiography is the chief focus of his interest in Germany: Nazi imagery. In 1976 alone he made an infamous gesture resembling a Hitler salute, told a Swedish journalist that Britain would "benefit from a fascist leader", and

filled his Berlin flat with Third Reich junk. One of his ex-girlfriends once claimed that he had written the lyrics to *Heroes* while sitting at Goebbels' old writing desk.

Bowie patently wasn't a Nazi. But he wasn't much of a Berliner,

either.

Much as I like his music, the prospect of changing my address to the David-Bowie-Strasse does not exactly fill me with enthusiasm.



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## Greens Plan four-parent families in Germany The Times 17.01.2022

### Germany

Oliver Moody Berlin

Each child should be able to have up to four parents to reflect modern “rainbow” and “patchwork” families, Germany’s LGBTQ commissioner has said.

Sven Lehmann said a third of children were brought up outside conventional marriages and the rules on parenthood needed to be updated.

The coalition government under Olaf Scholz has vowed to modernise family law as part of a programme of liberal social reforms, including gender self-identification and the relaxation of regulations on abortion.

It has come up with the idea of a “community of responsibility”, under which adults who are not related to or romantically involved with one another would be able to enter legally binding family-like relationships.

These could include rights traditionally afforded to spouses, such as access to another adult’s medical information.

“In the future, more than two parents should be able to share custody of a child,” Lehmann, 42, a Green MP and Germany’s first “queer affairs commissioner”, told the Funke media group of local newspapers. “It should be possible for a child to have up to four people with an entitlement to custody,” he said.

A rainbow family is one in which at least one parent is gay, lesbian, trans, bisexual or queer. A patchwork or step-family involves at least one parent with a child from a previous relationship.

One example cited by the Greens is when a lesbian couple has a child. Under the present law only the biological mother is automatically recognised as a parent, while her partner has to adopt the child to gain parental rights.

The reform would not only extend parenthood to both women but also allow them to identify the biological father of the child as its third parent.

Dorothee Bär, 43, an MP from the Bavarian Christian Social Union party, said the reforms threatened the “foundations of society”.

Gerhard Papke, 60, of the Free Democratic Party, tweeted: “What supposedly serves the interests of the children is in truth a dangerous attack on the family, the core of a free society.”

### FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/117149534977456/posts/7638468086178859/>

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Weitere Informationen und den Link zur Anmeldung gibt es hier:

[www.pfronten.de/aktiv/outdoorerlebnisse/pfrontener-alpinvortraege](http://www.pfronten.de/aktiv/outdoorerlebnisse/pfrontener-alpinvortraege)

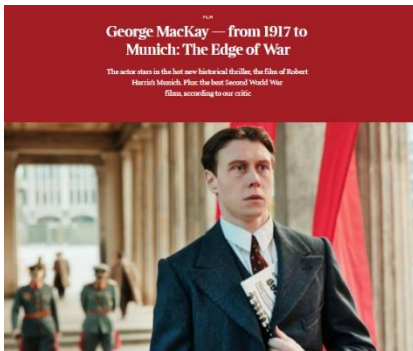
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## **NEW GERMAN TV SERIES is beginning on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January – “Dark Woods”**

The first episode is on **More4 at 9pm**, but as it's a “Walter presents” it may then just be available on **All4**. It is set near Hamburg and is based on real murder cases in the 1980s.

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## **A NEW FILM called ‘MUNICH: the edge of War’**



It's based on Robert Harris's 2018 novel "Munich" and is in English but has a German Director (Christian Schwochow) and some German actors (Jannis Niewöhner playing Paul Von Hartmann and Ulrich Matthes playing Hitler). The main British actors are Jeremy Irons playing Neville Chamberlain and George MacKay playing his secretary Hugh Legat.