



## The Death of Maria Malibran Germany, 1972 (104 mins.)

Written, directed and produced  
by Werner Schroeter

### Cast:

Magdalena Montezuma  
Christine Kaufmann  
Candy Darling  
Manuela Riva  
Ingrid Caven  
Anette Tirier  
Einar Hanfstaengl  
Gabor von Lessner  
Kurt Jungmann  
Joachim Bauer

**Music:** Hellmuth Pattenhausen

**Cinematography:** Werner  
Schroeter

**Editing:** Werner Schroeter and Ila  
von Hasperg

**Assistant Director:** Ila von Hasperg

"With his 16mm camera, Werner Schroeter makes films as if Cecil B. De Mille had worked with postcards, with nothing. In a natural environment, he was able to act as if he was shooting in the most expensive sets. That's his trademark; but the essential thing about Schroeter is his poetry."

—Henri Langlois (quoted by Jean-Jacques Schuhl,  
"Du fard? du sang?", *Obsessions*, Gallimard, 2014)

Foucault: "What struck me when I saw *The Death of Maria Malibran* (1972) and *Willow Springs* (1973) was that these films were not about love but about passion ... To begin with, you can't really say that these women love each other. There's no love in *Maria Malibran*. What is passion? It's a state; it's something that just happens to you, takes hold of you, and seizes you by both shoulders. It doesn't stop and doesn't begin anywhere. In fact, you have no idea where it's coming from. Passion turns up just like that. It's a constantly mobile state, but it doesn't move to a given point. There are high points and low points and times where it becomes white hot. It drifts. It sways. It's a kind of unstable moment that keeps going for obscure reasons, perhaps through inertia. Ultimately, it tries both to hold firm and to disappear. Passion creates all the conditions necessary for it to continue and yet at the same time it destroys itself. In a state of passion you're not blind. It's simply that in these situations of passion, you are not yourself. Being yourself no longer makes sense. You see things very differently.

"In passion, there is also a quality of pain-pleasure that is very different from what can be found in desire or in so-called sadism or masochism. I don't see a sadistic or masochistic relationship between these women, but what does exist is a completely inseparable state of pain-pleasure. These are not two qualities that are mixed together; they are one and the same. Each woman suffers greatly, but you can't say that they make each other suffer. We see three types of ongoing suffering that are at the same time entirely chosen, because there is no need for this suffering to be there and present.

"These women are chained in a state of suffering that binds them together which they are unable to break away from but which at the same time they would do anything to free themselves from. All of this is different from love. In love there is, in a way, someone who is in charge of this love, whereas passion circulates between the partners."

—Michel Foucault, in conversation with Werner Schroeter  
December 1981. (Trans. Claire O'Farrell)

In conversation: **Alexander Garcia Düttmann**, Professor of Philosophy and the Theory of Art at the University of the Arts in Berlin, Germany; **Gertrud Koch**, Visiting Professor of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University and Professor of Film Studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany; **Peter Szendy**, David Herlihy Professor of Humanities and Comparative Literature at Brown University.