

Max Frisch & Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Max Frisch, Friedrich Dürrenmatt - Correspondence

Published by Diogenes as *Briefwechsel*
Original title: *Briefwechsel*



Max Frisch
Friedrich
Dürrenmatt
Briefwechsel
Herausgegeben von
Peter Ruedi

Diogenes

The letters published here for the first time document the unusual and not always easy friendship between Switzerland's two most famous 20th century writers: Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The literary world linked Switzerland's two most famous 20th century writers inseparably together like a pair of comedians, something by which both authors were sometimes amused but more often irritated. Their common ground was their experience of Switzerland, isolated and spared from conflict between 1939 and 1945, and the guilt which the country incurred during World War II; their preoccupation with and different approaches to Kierkegaard and Brecht; their dissimilar but equally definite criticism of the army and anticommunism; their work at the Zurich Schauspielhaus theatre with the dramaturgist Kurt Hirschfeld whom they both admired. An epilogue by Peter Ruedi, for many years a critic of both authors, points out some connections between the letters, the authors' lives and work, and contemporary history.

Book factsheet

Letters and Conversations, Contemporary Literature
240 pages
12.5 x 20 cm
October 1998

World rights are handled by Diogenes

Rights currently sold:

English/world (Seagull)
French (Zoé)

📺 Movie adaptations

2015: Im Labyrinth / Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der kritische Geist der Schweiz

Director: Sabine Gisiger
Screenplay: Sabine Gisiger

2010: Schurkenstück

Director: Torsten C. Fischer
Screenplay: Eva Zahn
Cast: Katharina Schüttler und Oliver Korritke

2008: Der Besuch der alten Dame

Director: Nikolaus Leytner
Screenplay: Thomas Eifler
Cast: Christiane Hörbiger, Michael Mendl, Muriel Baumeister, Rolf Hoppe, Rüdiger Vogler

2001: The Pledge

Director: Sean Penn
Cast: Margaret Larsen, Helen Jackson

1997: Es geschah am hellichten Tag

Director: Nico Hofmann
Cast: Joachim Król, Barbara Rudnik, Axel Milberg

1996: Es geschah am hellichten Tag

Director: Bernd Eichinger
Cast: Joachaim Krol, Barbara Rudnik, Axel Milberg

1995: Tod im kalten Morgenlicht

Director: Rudolf van den Berg
Cast: Richard E. Grant, Lynsey Baxter, Perdita Weeks

1994: Der Wiedertäufer

Director: Heinirich Koch

1994: In the Cold Light of Day

Director: Rudolf van den Berg
Cast: Richard E. Grant, Perdita Weeks, Simon Cadell

1993: Justiz

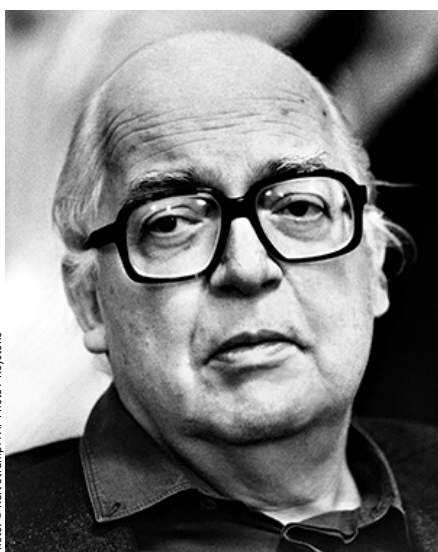
Director: Hans Werner Geißendörfer
Cast: Maximilian Schell, Thomas Heinze, Matthias Gnädinger, Anna Thalbach

1992: Hyänen / Hyènes, Ramatou

Director: Djibril diop Mamberty
Screenplay: Djibril diop Mamberty
Cast: Mansour Diouf, Ami Diakhate



Max Frisch was born in 1911 in Zurich, and was an architect and writer. Alongside stage plays and novels, he also published radio plays and short stories, as well as literary journals. He was awarded with, amongst others, the ›Georg Büchner‹ prize and the ›Peace Prize of the German Booksellers' Association‹. He died in Zurich in 1991.



Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921 – 1990) was born in Konolfingen near Berne as the son of a protestant minister. He studied philosophy, German literature and history of art in Berne and Zurich and worked as a playwright, novelist, essayist and painter in Neuchâtel, where he lived with his family.

Movie adaptations (cont'd)

1992: *Hyènes*

Director: Djibril diop Mamberty
Cast: Mansour Diouf, Ami Diakhate

1989: *Die Welt ist ein Irrenhaus: Achterloo IV*

Director: Roman Brodman

1988: *Abendstunde im Spätherbst*

Director: August Everding
Cast: Mario Adorf, Horst Bollmann

1988: *Achterloo*

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Cast: Helmut Lohner, Georg Preusse

1982: *Der Besuch der alten Dame*

Director: Max Peter Ammann
Cast: Maria Schell, Adolphe Spalinger, Günter Lamprecht

1982: *Der Besuch der alten Dame*

Director: Max Peter Ammann
Cast: Maria Schell, Günter Lamprecht, Ruedi Walter

1975: *Der Richter und sein Henker*

Director: Maximilian Schell
Cast: Jon Voight, Jacqueline Bisset, Helmut Qualtinger, Robert Shaw, Friedrich Dürrenmatt

1974: *Der Mitmacher*

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Cast: Buddy Elias, Elmar Schulte, Werner Schumacher

1973: *Der Wiedertäufer*

Director: Werner Schlechte
Cast: E. Marks, F. Schütter, V. Lechtenbrink

1973: *Der Besuch der alten Dame*

Director: Hans/Cella Gaugler/Ettore
Cast: Hasle Rüegsau

1972: *La piu bella serata della mia vita*

Director: Ettore Scola
Cast: Alberto Sordi, Michel Simon, Pierre Brasseur

1971: *Porträt eines Planeten*

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Cast: W. Reichmann, H. Lohner, Ch. Hörbiger

1971: *König Johann*

Director: Vaclav Hudcek
Cast: H. Qualtinger, H. Seeböck

1967: *Der Meteor*

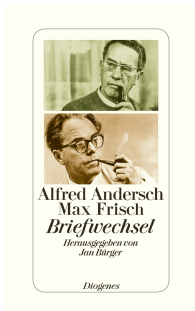
Director: Leopold Lindtberg
Cast: Leonard Steckel, Wolfgang Forester, Gert Westphal, Peter Brogle

1967: *Frank V. Opfer einer Privatbank*

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Cast: Therese Giehse, Hubert von Meyernick

1966: *Griechen sucht Griechin*

Director: Rolf Thiele
Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Irina Demick, Charles Regnier



Correspondence
192 pages
2014



Subject Matter
2352 pages
2021



The Plays
1584 pages
2015

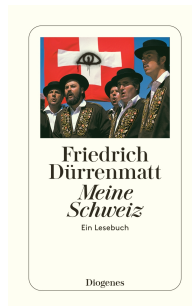


The Crime Novels
992 pages
2011



His Life in Pictures
376 pages
2011

Labyrinth / Turmbau
(Subject Matter I-IX)
736 pages
2002



My Switzerland
256 pages
1998



The Minotaur/ The
Assignment; or, On the
Observing of the
Observer of the
Observers/ Midas
208 pages
1998



Switzerland - A Prison
80 pages
1997

Conversations 1961-1990
1296 pages
1996

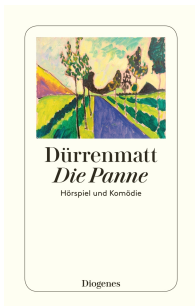


The Pledge
160 pages
1996

Movie Adaptation



The Pensioner
200 pages
1995



Traps
144 pages
1995

Movie Adaptation



The Enormity of the
Possible
144 pages
1993



Gedankenfüge
208 pages
1992



Greek Man Seeks Greek
Wife
160 pages
1992

Movie Adaptation

Movie adaptations (cont'd)

1965: Romulus der Große

Director: Helmut Käutner
Cast: Romuald Pekny

1964: Die Physiker

Director: Fritz Umgelter
Cast: Therese Giehse, Gustav Knuth, Kurt Ehrhardt, Wolfgang Kieling, Siegfried Lowitz

1964: Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon

Director: William Dieterle

1963: The Visit

Director: Bernhard Wicki
Cast: Ingrid Bergmann, Anthony Quinn, Hans-Christian Blech

1961: Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi

Director: Kurt Hoffmann
Cast: O.E. Hasse, Johanna von Koczian, Martin Held, Charles Regnier, Max Haufler

1960: Abendstunde im Spätherbst

Director: Rudolf Noelte
Cast: Ernst Schröder, Friedrich Maurer, Günter Meissner

1959: Der Besuch der alten Dame

Director: Ludwig Cremer
Cast: R. Wanka, E. Flickenschildt, A. Schradiek

1958: Es geschah am hellichten Tag

Director: Ladislao Vajda
Screenplay: Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Michel Simon, Gert Fröbe

1957: Die Panne

Director: Fritz Umgelter
Cast: Peter Ahrweiler, Carl Wery, Harry Hardt

1957: Der Richter und sein Henker

Director: Franz Peter Wirth
Cast: Herbert Tiede, Maria Körber, K.G. Saebisch

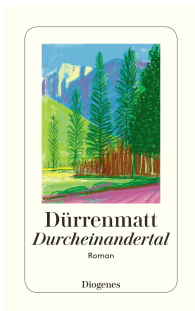
Praise

Friedrich Dürrenmatt

»Even after the death of its author, his huge and unique work is still a dark continent, largely unilluminated and untested, a continent in motion, always good for intellectual surprises and dramatic adventures.« – Gert Ueding

»One of Europe's most important postwar dramatists.« – The Daily Telegraph, London

»Dürrenmatt was addressing the real crowd assembled in real theaters with all their swiftly changing feelings, their ignorance, bad habits and vaulting possibilities. At the same time he was a philosopher-poet with one eye on the picture of the real, on artifice, and on the long preoccupations of philosophy and art through the ages.« – Arthur Miller



The Vale of Confusion
176 pages
1989



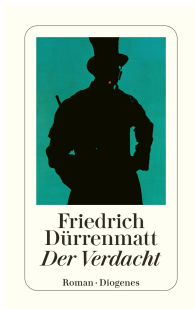
Trials
184 pages
1988



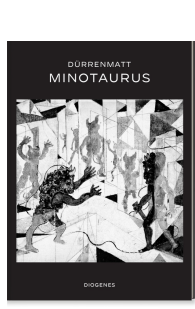
The Judge and His Hangman
128 pages
1986



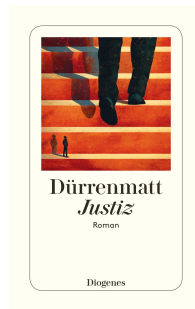
The Assignment
136 pages
1986



Suspicion
128 pages
1986



The Minotaur
56 pages
1985

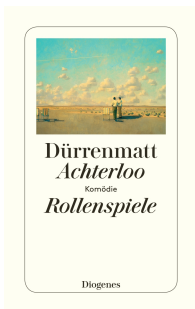


Justice
376 pages
1985

Movie Adaptation



The Winter War in Tibet
192 pages
1984



Achterloo
128 pages
1983

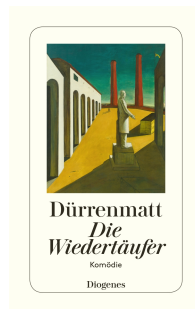


The Winter War in Tibet/ Lunar Eclipse/ The Rebel
360 pages
1981

Movie Adaptation



Nexus
240 pages
1980



The Anabaptists
144 pages
1980

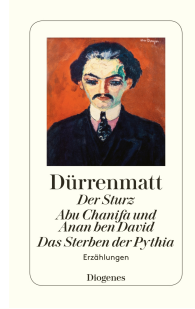
Movie Adaptation



Urfaust/ Woyzeck. Adaptations
208 pages
1980



Theatre
272 pages
1980



The Coup/ Abu Chanifa and Anan ben David/ Smithy/ The Dying of the Pythia
160 pages
1980



Romulus the Great
176 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation

Praise (cont'd)

»Dürrenmatt has always been too impulsive for his times but the chaotic world has quickly caught up with him. That's why his work will last. The purifying force of his irony becomes the more important and useful – particularly because it is driven by the profound humanity that Dürrenmatt's friends always knew in him.« – Peter Brook

»Now, like an avalanche in far-off mountains, comes Friedrich Dürrenmatt, a detective-story writer with a genius for the theater, to give us a new theme, or rather to remind us of an ancient one: justice. His vision is a cold one but pure, and very nearly unique in our day, for in his devotion to the idea of justice he has succeeded in casting across an age committed to false Love the dark shadow of the scales.« – Gore Vidal

»It was once observed by Oscar Wilde that a writer should be able to write anything. Mr. Dürrenmatt meets Wilde's requirement. He adopts a manner well liked by some of our better writers, that of a Roman of the later Empire, a golden weariness. Mr. Dürrenmatt chooses compression of style and strictness of form, but the late Imperial feeling is still there.« – Saul Bellow

»One of the greatest writers of our century.« – Corriere della Sera, Milan

»Next to Kafka and Camus, he is one of the great questioners of this world.« – Martin Ebel / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»Friedrich Dürrenmatt belonged to the most cheerful apocalyptic writers of the 20th century.« – Thomas Hürlimann / Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich

»Universal, uncomfortable and visionary: Friedrich Dürrenmatt is the worthy reigning literary monarch of the year.« – Wener Krause / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»He is evil, he doesn't think anything good of humanity, and he describes this – but he does it with wit.« – Elke Heidenreich / SRF2, Zurich

»Friedrich Dürrenmatt is a centennial author, because he saw the century that was to follow him too.« – Daniele Muscionico / Aargauer Zeitung, Aarau



The Complete Prose Oeuvre
3024 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Politik
Essays, Gedichte und Reden
Diogenes

Politics
192 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Play Strindberg
Portrait eines Planeten
Übungsstücke für Schauspieler
Diogenes

Play Strinberg/ Portrait of a Planet
208 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation



Dürrenmatt Die Physiker
Komödie
Diogenes

The Physicists
96 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation



Dürrenmatt Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft
Essays, Gedichte und Reden
Diogenes

Philosophical Essays
208 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Der Mitmacher
Ein Komplex
Diogenes

The Conformist
336 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Der Meteor
Dichterdämmerung
Nobelpreisträgerstücke
Diogenes

The Meteor/ Twilight of the Poets
208 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation



Dürrenmatt Literatur und Kunst
Essays, Gedichte und Reden
Diogenes

Literature and Painting
240 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Kritik
Kritiken und Zeichnungen
Diogenes

Reviews
176 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt König Johann
Titus Andronicus
Shakespeare-Umarbeitungen
Diogenes

King John/ Titus Andronicus
240 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation



Dürrenmatt Der Hund
Der Tunnel
Die Panne
Erzählungen
Diogenes

The Dog/ The Tunnel/ Traps
112 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Herkules und der Stall des Augias
Der Prozeß um des Esels Schatten
Griechische Stücke
Diogenes

Hercules and the Augean Stables/ The Trial about the Donkey's Shadow
240 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Grieche sucht Griechin
Mister X macht Ferien
Groschen
Diogenes

Greek Man Seeks Greek Wife/ Mr. X Goes on Holiday/ News about the State of Press during the Stone Age
208 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Nächtliches Gespräch mit einem verachteten Menschen
Hörspiele und Kabarett
Diogenes

Nocturnal Conversation with a Scorned Man/ Stranitzky and the National Hero/ The Vega Enterprise
160 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Die Frist
Komödie
Diogenes

The Deadline
160 pages
1980



Dürrenmatt Frank der Fünfte
Komödie einer Privatbank
Diogenes

Frank V
176 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation



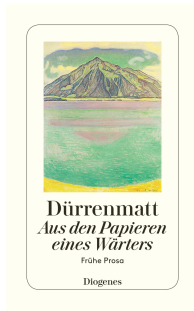
Dürrenmatt
Es steht geschrieben
Der Blinde
Frühe Stücke
Diogenes



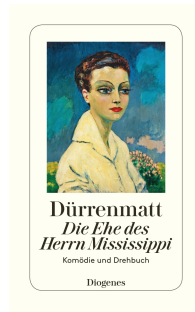
Dürrenmatt
Der Besuch
der alten Dame
Tragische Komödie
Diogenes



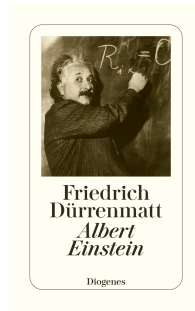
Dürrenmatt
Ein Engel kommt
nach Babylon
Fragmentarische Komödie
Diogenes



Dürrenmatt
Aus den Papieren
eines Wärters
Frühe Prosa
Diogenes



Dürrenmatt
Die Ehe des
Herrn Mississippi
Komödie und Drehbuch
Diogenes



Friedrich
Dürrenmatt
Albert
Einstein
Diogenes



The Complete Dramatic
Oeuvre
3408 pages
1980

Movie Adaptation

Movie Adaptation

Movie Adaptation

The Visit
160 pages
1980

Early Prose: Christmas/
The Torturer/ The
Sausage/ The Son/ The
Old Man/ Portrait of
Sisyphos/ The Theatre
Director/ The Trap/
Pilatos/ The Town/ From
the Papers of a
Guardzman
208 pages
1980

Albert Einstein
80 pages
1979