



DESTINATION TIME TRAVEL: PLAYING WITH TIME IN FILM AND TV

Run Lola Run (Lola rennt)

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Director: Tom Tykwer

Production Company: X Filme Creative Pool

With the participation of: WDR – Westdeutscher

Rundfunk, ARTE, Filmstiftung NRW

With the support of: FilmFernsehFonds Bayern,

MBI - Bundesministerium des Innern,

Filmförderung in Berlin-Brandenburg

Executive Producer: Maria Köpf

Producer: Stefan Arndt

Commissioning Editor (WDR): Gebhard Henke

Commissioning Editor (ARTE):

Andreas Schreitmüller

Unit Production Manager: René Löw

Unit Production Manager (Flash Forward):

Jörg Trentmann

Production Manager: Ralph Brosche

Pre-production Managers: Ralph Remstedt,

Kathrin Rohm

Set Production Manager: Natalie Clausen

Additional Set Production Manager: Mario Striehn

Production Administrators:

Carsten Neumärker, Swantje Matthaui

Assistant Director: Sebastian Fahr

Continuity: Sabine Zimmer

Casting Advisers: An Dorthe Braker,

Cinova Casting, Barbara Schernthaner

Screenplay: Tom Tykwer

Director of Photography: Frank Griebe

Helicopter Photography: Jan Hoffmann

2nd Camera: Jan Hartmann

2nd Unit Camera: Marc Kubik, Susanna Salonen

Steadicam: Tilman Büttner, Sebastian Meuschel,

Klaus Liebertz, Christof Wahl

Flash Forward Stills Photography: Frank Griebe

Visual Effects: Studio Film Bilder

Digital Effects: Das Werk AG

Special Effects: Berliner Spezialeffekte,

Gerd Voll, Roland Trops

Editor: Mathilde Bonnefoy

Art Director: Alexander Manasse

Set Decorator: Attila Saygel

Set Decorator (Flash Forward): Irene Otterpohl

Property Master (Exteriors): Cary Gayler

Property Master (Interiors): Sonja König

Costume Designer: Monika Jacobs

Wardrobe: Ingrid Buhrmann

Make-up: Margrit Neufink

Additional Make-up: Jekaterina Oertel

Make-up (Flash Forward): Babette Bröseke

Hair Design (Lola): Christa Krista

End Titles: Thomas Wilk

Opticals: Klaus-Peter Schulze, Norbert Keil

Music: Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek, Reinhold Heil

Music Supervisors: Daydream Filmmusik

Productions GmbH, Klaus Frers, Stefan Broedner

Sound Design: Dirk Jacob

Sound Recording: Frank Behnke

Dialogue Recording: Günter Friedhoff

Re-recording Mixer: Matthias Lempert,

Ruhr Sound Studios

Post-production Sound Co-ordinator:

Marita Strotkötter

Sound Editor: Markus Münz

Post-production: Nurit Israeli, Kai Storck

Sound Effects: Joern Poetzel

Sound Effects Recordist: Normann Büttner

Stunt Co-ordinator: Buff Connection

Stunt Drivers: Volkhart Buff, Leo Plank, Piet Paes,

Frank Christoffer, Stefan Manteuffel,

Sascha Kuchenbuch

BMW Stunts: Ralf Haeger, Frank Jablonski,

Emanuel Raasch, Dani Stein

‘Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your mind.’

Marilyn Bergman and Alan Bergman

This roller-coaster of a film established Tom Tykwer as one of the most exciting writer-directors at work in European cinema. In part its success is due to the charismatic personality of Franka Potente as Lola, but even more it's the tremendous narrative verve of the film that grabs the spectator by the throat from start to finish. Tykwer tells us that the spur for the film was an image of a woman running, and from this developed the concept of reversing the normal format of a feature film. Some 20 minutes of action would be stretched out to fill four times that extent, instead of compressing a huge amount of story material into regular feature length.

So the flame-haired Lola must run not for her own life so much as for that of Manni, her boyfriend, who has lost a hundred thousand marks of drug money he was carrying for his vengeful boss. Lola fulfils three scenarios, each as hectic as the last, trying to force her banker dad to cough up the dough, while Manni pursues the tramp who's grabbed the loot after Manni left it in a subway car. There's a sub-plot involving Lola's father and his mistress, and some marginal characters who are forcefully sketched. But the emotional heart of the film is a series of conversations between Lola and Manni as they lie in bed, viewed in close-up, from above and through a red filter that renders the dialogue more intimate, even secretive. The bond between them becomes more and more powerful and, as Tykwer notes, 'Lola's strength grows out of this passionate desire.' Like Cassavetes, Tykwer writes his scenes very precisely but films them in such a way as to give them the whiff of improvisation in real time.

Although Lola seems to cheat death and to transcend physical norms in terms of endurance (only about 5% of her 'running' scenes made the final cut!), she possesses an emotional third dimension denied to comic-strip heroines like Wonder Woman or Lara Croft. It's a dimension of tenderness, in someone who could be the girl next door, as down to earth as beer and potato salad. Franka Potente plunges wholeheartedly into her role, refusing to admit defeat, and standing up to her father with heated indignation. The camera never abandons her, even when she's hurtling through the streets of Berlin, and with each close-up we seem to understand her a little better. Since the start of his career, Tykwer has been drawn to female characters. His women, like Bergman's, are tougher and more resilient psychologically than their male partners.

Run Lola Run teems with invention. As Lola rushes past people in the street, Tykwer interjects hilarious, accelerated flashes forward into the lives of these characters. Each time she races out of her apartment, a neighbour watches a cartoon on the TV that features a girl just like Lola charging down the stairs in an endless spiral. The flashbacks showing the drug connection are filmed in grainy black-and-white, while – in a nod to Brian De Palma – Tykwer uses a split screen to heighten the suspense as Lola runs and Manni prepares to rob a store to get some cash. This mix of 35mm colour and monochrome film, video and animation gels in part because of the audacious rubato imposed on their material by Tykwer and his editor Mathilde Bonnefoy.

Glass Stunts: Micha Bornhütter,
Andi Stein-Strauss, Berno Buff
Stuntwoman: Rossi Alvarez

Cast:

Franka Potente (*Lola*)
Moritz Bleibtreu (*Manni*)
Herbert Knaup (*father*)
Nina Petri (*Jutta Hansen*)
Armin Rohde (*Herr Schuster*)
Joachim Król (*Norbert von Au*)
Ludger Pistor (*Herr Meier*)
Suzanne von Borsody (*Frau Jäger*)
Sebastian Schipper (*Mike*)
Julia Lindig (*Doris*)
Lars Rudolph (*Herr Kruse*)
Andreas Petri (*cleaner*)
Klaus Müller (*croupier*)
Utz Krause (*casino manager*)
Beate Finckh (*casino cashier*)
Volkhart Buff (*ambulance driver*)
Heino Ferch (*Ronnie*)
Ute Lubosch (*mother*)
Dora Raddy (*old woman*)
Monica Bleibtreu (*blind woman*)
Peter Pauli (*supermarket security guard*)
Marc Bischoff (*policeman*)
Hans Paetsch (*narrator*)
Germany 1998
80 mins
Digital 4K

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The pacing is absolutely crucial in *Run Lola Run*. Visually, it's accentuated by the recurring close-ups of a clock, as the minutes tick towards 'high noon', when Manni must hand the money over to his boss. More fundamentally, the soundtrack constantly reminds us of the need for speed, 'like a heartbeat that never comes to rest,' to quote one lyric heard off-screen. Music was important in Tykwer's *Winter Sleepers* (1997), but here it becomes even more dominant, throbbing and pulsating with only a few charmed intervals of silence. These moments of stillness on the soundtrack leave the image naked and vulnerable, as when a bank clerk goes down to the vault to fetch more money while Lola guards her father with a stolen gun.

It's all too easy to dismiss Tom Tykwer as a product of the MTV era. He may be talented as a composer (and in 2003 he contributed a song to *The Matrix Revolutions*), but he's steeped in film history too. That painting of a woman hanging in the casino where Lola wins a fortune is a riff on Kim Novak's Carlotta Valdes portrait in *Vertigo*. The group of impassive gamblers at the close of that same sequence are straight out of *Village of the Damned*, and Lola's dashes forward into the very lens of the camera recall *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Her high-pitched scream shatters glass and glasses with a brio reminiscent of little Oskar in *The Tin Drum*.

The darker themes that flow beneath the film's surface have grown ever more vital in Tykwer's cinema: coincidence as the arbiter of destiny; crime and its effect on essentially 'innocent' individuals; time as an unforgiving concept, drawing its subjects back to the future. Tykwer uses a quote from T.S. Eliot's 'Little Gidding' at the outset of the film, and another line from the same poet sounds almost as apposite: 'The journey not the arrival matters.'

Shot on a budget of just \$2 million, *Run Lola Run* proved a hit wherever it opened around the world. In North America it grossed more than \$7 million, making it at that time one of the top ten foreign-language films ever released Stateside. Critical reception was also rapturous, and *Run Lola Run* took the coveted Audience Award at Sundance in 1999 as well as picking up the Independent Spirit Award. The technical crew contains some of the most gifted names in German film – Frank Griebe behind the camera, Monika Jacobs designing costumes, Tilman Büttner (*Russian Ark*) on Steadicam, Dirk Jacob as sound designer, Matthias Lampert as re-recording mixer, and many others. For sheer kinetic panache and good humour, *Run Lola Run* remains the most accessible and enjoyable of all Tykwer's films to date.

Peter Cowie, tomtykwer.com