



CASTING ABOUT Germany/ USA/GB 2003

PRO: The acting process is joyously celebrated in "Casting About," a captivating documentary shot entirely in audition rooms during the search for three thespians for a feature film. Younger audiences weaned on hyped-up TV star-search programs may have their patience tested by the non-emergence of clear-cut "winners," but film's warm disposition and deliberate lack of razzmatazz will hook discerning, mature viewers. Substantial fest life, quality tube dates and limited arthouse exposure look likely.

DocuDocu came about more by accident than design. Sifting through 350 interviews taped during auditions for the as-yet-unproduced feature, "Moving Still," helmer Barry J. Hershey and editor Marc Grossman selected snippets of no fewer than 184 female hopefuls vying for three key roles. They came from as far afield as Berlin, Boston, New York, London and Los Angeles.

by Richard Kuipers

CONTRA: Casting sessions and tryouts have always held an inordinate amount of interest for some people, from HBO's *Unscripted* to *A Chorus Line* they've seemingly provided a dramatic manner in which to watch hardworking thespians being subjected to ruthless, no-holds-barred criticism and snap judgments that can have lasting impact on their careers; like reality TV, only more so. It may be, though, that people aren't all that terribly interested in the whole process. Maybe it's just that entertainment types, having spent a good part of their lives going through such soul-rending encounters, assume that they would be a font of nearly automatic drama: who wouldn't watch that?

Such an assumption, sadly, may have been the inspiration behind the lifeless new documentary *Casting About*. Filmmaker Barry J. Hershey was casting actresses in 2000 for a feature film (that apparently has not yet been made), and after setting up in Berlin, Boston, Chicago, London, and Los Angeles, had met some 350 of them and collected some 70 hours of audition footage. Those hundreds of monologues, brief chats, and abrupt confessions were later woven together into this film, as a means of creating a non-linear document about the casting process. In theory, this could make for some astounding cinema, ripe with dramatic tension and naked expression; in practice, it's a wretched snooze.

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DVD at amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/Casting-About-Barry-J-Hershey/dp/B000XJD314>



"Fascinating...leaves us with a keen understanding of how exhilarating a process performing must be," says Kenneth Turan of *Los Angeles Times* about this documentary on the experience of casting actors. Shot from indie director Barry J. Hershey's POV, the film is a collage of inspired audition tapes from actresses reading for one of three leading roles in a feature film. Castings were held in Berlin, Boston, Chicago, London and Los Angeles, and hundreds of actors (including Mädchen Amick and Nicole Eggert) laid themselves bare for the camera. "Even as Mr. Hershey and his collaborators visually probe and rate their would-be stars, they also respect their adaptability, tenacity and beauty" (*The New York Times*).

Genre: Documentary USA

Run Time: 86 Minutes,
Not Rated

Format: HD, color

Released by: Kino International

DVD Release Date: January 8, 2008

Director: Barry J. Hershey

Cinematographer: Allie Humenuk

Editor: Marc Grossman

Music: Gernot Rothenbach

Production Company: Moving Still

Producer: Lewis D. Wheeler

Sabine Schroth Casting Director

Matt Bouldry Casting Associate (Boston)

Carolyn Pickman Casting Director (Boston)

Leslie Sellers Casting Associate (Boston)

Mickie Paskal Casting Director (Chicago)

Alex Wilson Jones Casting Associate (London)

Rachel Tenner Casting Director (Chicago)

Marilyn Johnson Casting Director (London)

Michelle Lewitt Casting Director (Los Angeles)

Cast: 184 actresses:

Mädchen Amick, Nicole Eggert, **Nina Franoszek**, Laura Tonke, Elizabeth Bogush, Brigid Brannagh, Diana Cignoni, Jessica Collins, Mary Kay Cook, Tania Emery, Eva Habermann, Alexandra Holden, Jennifer Kern, Deborah King, Johanna Klante, Aislin McGuckin, Marina Morgan, Michelle Morgan, Celeste Oliva, Laura Rogers, Heather Rosbeck, Katja Studt, Clare Swinburne, Gillian Vigman, Petra Wright, Gesine Cukrowski, Anja Kling and 157 more - please visit [imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) or <http://www.kino.com/castingabout/>