

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Friday Film Fest Series

Join us for our last Friday Film Night
for this season

Friday, May 15 at 6.30pm

"Eine Million Minuten (2024)

German with English Subtitles



Die Kaiserin (2022/ 2024)

German with English Subtitles

April 10 | 6.30pm

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania

611 Spring Garden St.

Philadelphia, PA 19123

“Die Kaiserin” (2022/2024)

(TV-Series – Season 1)

Director: Katrin Gebbe
Florian Cossen

Screenplay: Katharina Eyssen
Bernd Lange
Janna Maria Nandzik

Music: Johannes Lehniger
Lisa Morgenstern
Sebastian Damerius

Camera: Christian Almesberger
Christopher Aoun

Production: Jochen Laube
Fabian Maubach

Company: Netflix/Sommerhaus Serien
Inferno Pictures

Cast: Devrim Lingnau as Elisabeth “Sisi” von Wittelsbach, Duchess in Bavaria turned Empress of Austria
Philip Froissant as Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria,
Melika Foroutan as Sophie, Archduchess of Austria, mother of Emperor Franz Joseph and Elisabeths’s aunt turned mother-in-law
Johannes Nussbaum as Archduke Maximilian, younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph
Elisa Schlott as Duchess Helene in Bavaria, Elisabeth’s older sister
Felix Nölle as Archduke Ludwig Viktor, the youngest brother of Franz Joseph



her. Maximilian talks to Sophie about the throne; while she doesn't approve the idea, she also doesn't disapprove; however Franz gets angry and asks Maximilian to get out. Elisabeth realises she is pregnant, but after a fight with Franz, decides to go back to Bayern. Revolutionaries approach the palace and Franz has the soldiers shoot and kill them, including Egon. Amalia tells Charlotte about Leontine, who tells Leontine herself; a raged Leontine pushes Amalia from the railing and kills her, which is witnessed by Charlotte. Elisabeth, about to leave, sees the people, opens the gate and walks to them as one of them. She tells them that she is with child and shakes their hands and hugs them, in a sign of royal defiance that brings her closer to the people. Maximilian is apprehended on Franz's orders.

Source: Wikipedia.org

proves. Elisabeth tries to mend the relationship with Sophie who reciprocates it, but tells that a son should be her highest priority. After talking with the French ambassador, Max goes behind Franz's back and tries to become the new emperor of Austria with French support. During a hunting trip, Elisabeth upsets Alexander, who thinks Franz is offering peace only to expand into the Russian Empire as they fight France and rejects Franz's plan. Franz blames Elisabeth and she gets drunk with Maximilian later, which results in a reprimand from Franz who doesn't trust Maximilian.

Episode 5

Franz sends his soldiers to the Austrian borders to protect from Russian invasion. Baron Sina cancels the agreement because the Emperor sent sizeable troops to the border. Elisabeth goes to the city with Esterházy and Luziwuzi, but her well-intended gesture at a foundry backfires, resulting in Luziwuzi being injured. Maximilian realizes to get the throne, he needs three things: the supports of the army, the Catholic Church, and that of Sophie. Franz asks Louise to convince Sina to rethink his decision and confronts Elisabeth on ruining the support of the people. Sophie warns Esterházy of dire consequences if Elisabeth doesn't get pregnant soon. Amalia figures out Leontine's identity using Leontine's old photos. Elisabeth can't sleep and strolls downstairs to find a returning Maximilian from a party in the city who offers to go with her to Prague through a secret tunnel and run away from the royal mess.

Episode 6

Elisabeth spends her time partying with Maximilian, angry at Franz for not supporting her at the Foundry incident, while Franz is desperate to reconcile with her. Amalia tells Elisabeth about Leontine, but her claims are dismissed. Leontine tells Egon to come through the unguarded door to the east after sunset where he will find a knife; however it is only a ruse. Sophie presents Elisabeth a choice: either to go back to Bayern and annul the wedding with Franz, or, stay and play by their rules which includes reconciling with Franz. Sophie also fires Esterházy for failing her orders and promotes Margarete over

Season 2 – November 2024 (Netflix)

Season 3 – end of 2026/beginning of 2027

Franz Joseph and his brothers

Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830 -1916) (on the sofa)



Maximilian - Archduke + Emperor of Mexico (1832-1867) (behind sofa with hand on hip)

Archduke Karl Ludwig (1833 – 1896) (on the left)

Archduke Ludwig Viktor (1842 -1919) (on the right)

Maximilian I was an Austrian archduke who became emperor of the Second Mexican Empire from 10 April 1864 until his execution by the Mexican Republic on 19 June 1867. A member of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, Maximilian was the younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria – no children

Archduke Karl Ludwig Josef Maria of Austria was the younger brother of both Franz Joseph I of Austria and Maximilian I of Mexico, and the father of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, whose assassination ignited World War I. His grandson was the last emperor of Austria, Charles I.

Ludwig Viktor, nickname “Luziwuzi”, had a military career, as was usual for archdukes, but did not take part in politics. He was openly homosexual and declined to marry princesses who were sought for him. He is well-known for his art collection and patronage as well as philanthropy – no children

Franz Joseph and his children

Sophie Friederike (1855 -1857)

Gisela (1856 – 1932)

Rudolf (1858 – 1889) (suicide)

Marie Valerie (1868 – 1924)

Since Rudolf, Franz Joseph’s only son, committed suicide in 1889 and Maximilian (and Ludwig Viktor) remained childless, the heir to the Austrian throne fell to Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the son of Franz Joseph’s brother Karl Ludwig.

“Die Kaiserin” is a fictional drama inspired by real events and people. It focusses more on the relationship between the Empress Elisabeth of Austria and Emperor Franz Joseph and the emotional aspects of her life. It’s a fascinating story that is more historical fiction than an accurate historical account.

Season1 (2022) / Episode 1

Franz has recently taken over as a young emperor following the Revolutions of 1848 in the Austrian Empire. In 1853, Elisabeth (Sisi) and Helene travel with their mother, Ludovika, to meet the 23-year-old Franz, who is expected to ask for Helene’s hand. Franz’s mother and Elisabeth’s aunt, Archduchess Sophie, is of the opinion that her son’s union with the Bayern Helene will validate Austria’s claim to the German states. Franz meets Elisabeth and admires her outspokenness; however she repulses his advances as she doesn’t want to betray her sister. During his birthday party the next day, he stuns everyone by deciding to marry Elisabeth; Elisabeth accepts it because she has grown fond of Franz. Helene is upset at Elisabeth.

Episode 2

Elisabeth arrives in Vienna along with family for the wedding, though her father tells her not to fully trust Sophie. Esterházy, Sophie’s confidant introduces her to the maids, including Amalia, Leontine and Charlotte. She also teaches her the palace etiquettes, but Elisabeth feels her freedom is diminished. Johann Strauss II helps Elisabeth and Franz during their waltz rehearsal, while Swedish Prince Gustav, Sophie’s old lover, privately claims to be Franz’s father to Sophie. Franz has a secret meeting with Mr. Stephenson, an engineer, to build a major railway, connecting Vienna to the rest of the world, to bring prosperity and peace to his people. On the night before the wedding, Elisabeth goes with her maids to a soiree organized by Maximilian, Franz’s brother. Maximilian tries to kiss Elisabeth, but she rejects him. The next day, Elisabeth gets an anxiety attack before her wedding; Helene helps her manage it and they bond.

Episode 3

Elisabeth marries Franz and is crowned the empress. Meanwhile, Amalia is suspicious of Leontine due to her mysterious background and unsettling demeanor. Franz’s old lover, Louise is also present. The Russians have amassed large numbers at Austria’s Eastern fronts, upsetting the political situation; Franz asks Maximilian to talk to the French ambassador for support against Russia. Franz meets with businessmen for loans for the railway, but the businessmen are more interested in investing in troops. After a confrontation with her overbearing mother and drunk father, she asks them to leave the palace in the morning. Elisabeth has a confrontation with Louise as well. Later, Baron Sina, Louise’s partner, provides the funds for the railway to Franz. That night, Franz comes clean about Louise and Elisabeth is insecure about people perceiving her as being silly. They consummate their marriage that night.

Episode 4

After the honeymoon, Esterházy feeds raw eggs and the Placenta of a pregnant woman to Elisabeth to get her pregnant on Sophie’s instructions. Sophie and the council push for military action, but instead Franz brings in Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, Nicholas’ son, to make peace with Russia, which Sophie doesn’t approve, but Elisabeth ap-