

THE GERMAN SOCIETY'S

Friday Film Fest Series



Der bewegte Mann

Credits:

Director: Sonke Wortmann

Producer: Bernd Eichinger

Script: Ralf König, Sonke Wortmann

Cast: Til Schweiger (*Axel*), Katja Riemann (*Doro*), Joachim Król
(*Norbert*), Rufus Beck (*Waltraud*)

Produced: 1994

Running time: 93 minutes

Director:

Sonke Wortmann was born in Marl Germany in August 1959. He has worked as an actor, writer and director. His film *Der Bewegte Mann* established him as one of Germany's top directors.

Précis – Allen Krumm

"It's not what you think." **Der Axel** has immortalized this phrase, ranking it with "Fourscore and seven..." and "In the beginning..." And so der Axel would have us think that it's not what we think. Unfortunately for der Axel, it is what we think. Der Axel is ganz unverbindlich, the ultimate in *Treulosigkeit*. Der Axel is, in the final analysis, *ein Hund* (ask your neighbor for translations).

Although he would have his girl **Doro** believe she is Miss Right, he is always on the lookout for Miss Tonight. Doro knows this, but has tried to work with him. When she finally catches der Axel in flagrante *in der Toilette*, he is alas, at least for the moment, homeless. All of his former girlfriends have experienced epiphanies similar to Doro's. He has taken them all in, and now they all return the favor by refusing to take him in.

Having exhausted the entries in his "*Fraulodex*" in his search for a place to stay, der Axel finally contacts an old friend who is the host of a men's support group. Unlike der Axel, these befuddled losers are sincerely baffled by women and life in general. The old friend is not much help in the end, but serendipity being a prerequisite of comedies of manners and error, a guest of the group, **Waltraud** aka Walter, evinces a burning desire to help der Axel.

Everyone needs a Waltraud in their life, a grounded, focussed type of individual who can always point to what is important and who knows how to accessorize. Waltraud's world is not exactly what der Axel had in mind when he began his search for a place to crash. But Waltraud's good buddy **Norbert** seems a safe bet, so der Axel crashes at his place. Norbert, still innocent despite having loved and lost a few times too many, is for the most part merely seeking domestic tranquility.

Since Norbert's compass isn't pointing north, der Axel's hunkish magnetism functions as usual and Norbert find's himself smitten. Ratiocination is not der Axel's forte. He wonders why there are no women at the homo-hop to

which Waltraud and Norbert take him, and he laments to Norbert about what it was like to be in the army and not see a woman for weeks. Despite der Axel's denseness, and despite Norbert's unrequited feelings, Norbert begins to do his best to turn der Axel into a human being, a task ranking on the difficulty index somewhere along with cold fusion. Norbert would have been better advised to concentrate his efforts on **Schevarnadze**, der Axel's demented, terrorist parrot.

Comedies of errors and manners needing twists and turns, Doro finds that she is getting great with der Axel's offspring. She decides the best course is to bring der Axel back and marry him. Removing der Axel's axle not being an option, she hopes the responsibilities of fatherhood will at least partially domesticate him. Despite her chagrin on finding a naked Norbert in her closet, she and der Axel do get married. Axel being der Axel, he falls back into his old habits, which leads to a denouement fraught with confusion and consternation, mostly on the part of Doro and Norbert, who are the only reasonably normal people in this cast of misfits.

Norbert, noble spirit that he is, despite having suffered Doro's suspicion and hostility that he is out to steal her worthless man, sheppards her through the birth of Axel junior (whose chief misfortune is to have Axel for a father). A thankful Axel gives us a glimmer of hope that Norbert has perhaps succeeded in switching on the dim bulb within Axel's libido-laden brain. **Maybe, but maybe not.** So it is only fitting to close this review with a quote from **Mark Twain**: "*PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.*"

Filmography:

Das Wunder von Bern 2003, *Himmel von Hollywood* (Hollywood Sign) 2001, *St. Pauli Nacht* 1999, *Der Campus* 1998, *Das Superweib* (Superwife) 1996, *Der Bewegte Mann* (Maybe, Maybe Not) 1994,

Mr. Bluesman 1993, *Kleine Haie* (Little Sharks) 1992, *Allein unter Frauen* (Alone Among Women) 1991, *Drei D* 1990, *Hochzeit des Figaro* 1988, *Fotofinish* 1986, *Anderthalb* 1984, *Nachtfahrer* 1981