

THE GERMAN SOCIETY'S

Friday Film Fest Series



Herr Lehmann (Berlin Blues)

Director Leander Haussmann

Screenplay Sven Regener

Editor Peter R. Adam

Producer Claus Boje

Year of Production 2003

Principal Cast Christian Ulmen, Katja Danowski, Detlev Buck, Janek Rieke, Uwe-Dag Berlin, Hartmut Lange, Martin Olbertz

Length 115 min, 3,220 m

Precis – Allen Krumm

Frank Lehmann, bartender and bohemian bummler extraordinaire, tolerates no threat to his aimless existence; the purpose of his life is to have no purpose. The Lehmann doctrine, like the Monroe doctrine, privileges the motif of non-interference, and Herr Lehmann shares this doctrine with a dedicated circle of dissolute confreres, chief among them his best friend, the bartender and artist Karl.

Herr Lehmann may espouse the Lehmann doctrine, but he is only human, and when he meets the lovely Katrin, after briefly arguing about pork roast and debating the nature of time, and with a little help from the faithful Karl, he falls in love. After one night of bliss, Lehmann is sure of this love thing, even though Katrin tries to educate him about love just as she did about pork roast.

Seemingly without warning, both Lehmann and Karl find themselves dangerously in touch with real life – Lehmann via Katrin and Karl via the impending exhibition of his art work. Unlike Lehmann, Karl knows he might fail and he solves this dilemma by going nuts. It has never dawned on Lehmann that love might fail him, and when it does he reverts to the Lehmann doctrine and goes drinking.

Quaffing a prodigious amount of beer, Lehmann soliloquizes about his recent misfortunes – the loss of Katrin, Karl's breakdown - and wonders, how did these things happen? "Its like the decline of the Roman Empire; nobody knows when it all began." Informed that the wall has fallen, Lehmann joins the crowd of revelers and experiences his own personal sense of liberation, informing his boss that he is quitting his job. He is not sure what the future holds, but "...something will turn up."

With a light yet poignant touch, Leander Haussmann captures the essence of a place and time (the Kreuzberg bar scene of the eighties) and populates that intersection with wonderfully eccentric yet utterly familiar and believable characters.

Leander Haussmann was born in Quedlinburg/East Germany in 1959. After attending the Ernst Busch Acting Academy in Berlin, he acted in the theater for several years before taking over as a director. He was the artistic director of Bochum's Schauspielhaus from 1995-2000, during which time he played his first lead role in Detlev Buck's *Jailbirds* (*Maennerpension*). His big breakthrough as a film director came with **Sun Alley** (**Sonnenallee**, 2000).