

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Friday Film Fest Series



KeinOhrHasen

(“Rabbit Without Ears ”)

By Till Schweiger

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Film, Food & Discussion

Donations \$15, Members \$12

The German Society of PA

611 Spring Garden St.

215-627-2332



KeinOhrHasen

Director: Til Schweiger
Drehbuch: Anika Decker, Til Schweiger
Producers: Til Schweiger, Thomas Zickler, Stefan Gärtner
Cinematography: Christof Wahl
Music: Stefan Hansen, Dirk Reichardt, Mirko Schaffer
Release Date: 20 December 2007
Spieldauer: 116 minutes
Cast: Til Schweiger (Ludo Dekker); Nora Tschirner (Anna Gutschowsky); Matthias Schweighöfer (photographer Moritz); Alwara Höfels (Miriam); Jürgen Vogel (himself - famous movie star); Wladimir Klitschko (himself - Celebrity-Groom); Yvonne Catterfeld (herself - Celebrity-Bride); Emma Schweiger (Cheyenne-Blue)

Commentary by Sharan Knoell

Not a country widely known for its romantic comedies, Germany's top movie in 2007 was *KeinOhrHasen*, which grossed over \$74 million.¹ That year, it beat out installments of both the *Harry Potter* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* series and was only one of two German-language movies to be #1 since the turn of the century (the other being *(T)Raumschiff Surprise - Periode 1*, in which Til Schweiger also starred). By those standards, *KeinOhrHasen* - written by, directed by, produced by and starring Til Schweiger - is a remarkable film.

Der Mann für alles

Though his acting career began in 1989 with a role in the TV series *Lindenstraße*, Tilman Valentin Schweiger, a native of Freiburg, made his debut as producer / director / star in 1997 with *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*. He followed suit with *Der Eisbär* (1998). In 2005, he became producer / director / star / writer with *Barfuss*, for which he also won another one of his five Bambis (Bavarian Film Award). He is known for his roles in *Der bewegte Mann* (1994), *Männerpension* (1995), *Was tun wenn's brennt* (2001), *The Red Baron* (2008), and *Wo ist Fred?* (2006). His seventh film as producer / director / star / writer was 2011's *Kokowääh*, in which he starred alongside his youngest daughter Emma Schweiger.

Aside from his German film career, he has also been quite successful in the United States in films such as *Driven* (2001), *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Cradle of Life* (2003), *Joe and Max* (2002), and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). He presently owns his own production company, Barefoot Films, based in Berlin.

The Plot

The plot centers around Schweiger's character, Ludo Dekker, a yellow press journalist who unapologetically solicits both candid celebrity photos and one night stands. After a blundered assignment at a celebrity wedding, he is sentenced to 300 hours of community service in a day care center, where he has his meet-cute with Anna Gutschowsky (Nora Tschirner), who turns out to be the nerdy and uncoordinated girl with braces he tortured mercilessly as a child. They argue and fight like the children they're supposed to be taking care of, which often ends in exasperation on both parts. The typical romantic comedy

exploits occur: "she loves me not, he loves me not, she begins to love me, he realizes he loves me at the 11th hour." Anna's klutziness adds to the physical comedy, and Schweiger's youngest daughter amps up the cuteness factor as one of the day care kids, Cheyenne-Blue.

The Rom-Com Formula

By American standards, this plot structure spans decades - *The Goodbye Girl* (1977), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *As Good As It Gets* (1997), *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002) - and the list continues into the contemporary Hollywood scene. *KeinOhrHasen* can be added to this list. Both characters fit into romantic comedy stereotypes. Ludo is the playboy with a fast-paced glamorous life who gets relegated to temporarily living a more mundane existence. Anna is the clumsy, uptight plain jane who reunites with said playboy and ignites the internal "are we friends or something more?" debate. Each of the two main characters has the token best friend who is there to make jokes, pass the tissues, and dispense the advice.

In the center of the movie, Anna and Ludo spend an afternoon walking and talking about men, women, and the nature of relationships. Anna concludes that women are unable to have physical relationships without feelings being involved, and she proves her theory correct as the movie goes on. Ludo is skeptical of this and feels the woman is to blame if she develops feelings that lead to heartbreak when it is stated upfront that a relationship is purely physical. In the end, both parties prove themselves correct. Anna develops feelings for Ludo after their relationship becomes physical, and Ludo blames Anna for this when neither had agreed to an exclusive relationship.



The KeinOhrHase

The actual KeinOhrHase is introduced when Ludo, who is quite accomplished with a sewing machine, creates this rabbit without ears. A word that doesn't exist in German, this has since become a character of note. In fact, on *amazon.de* one can actually purchase a plush KeinOhrHase (with or without the accompanying DVD), as well as a story book about both the KeinOhrHase and the ZweiOhrKüken, the latter of which is the title of the sequel.

The Sequel

ZweiOhrKüken was the #6 top grossing movie in German in 2009, earning \$34 million short of its predecessor. While the first film won the Ernst Lubitsch Prize, a Bambi, a Deutscher Comedypreis, a Jupiter Award, and a DIVA Award (all media and film awards in Germany), the sequel only yielded a Deutscher Comedypreis and much more tepid reviews. According to Wikipedia, a further sequel is planned.

Warning: This film contains explicit language, brief nudity, and talk about sex.

1) Germany Box Office Index, <http://boxofficemojo.com/intl/germany/>