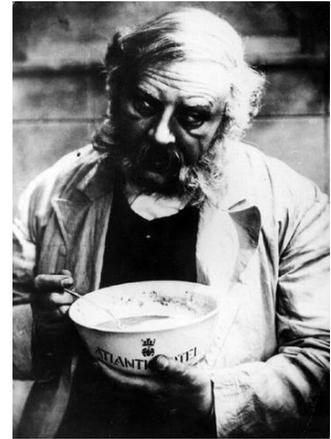


## THE LAST LAUGH – DER LETZTE MANN

Germany, 1924

### CREDITS

Director	Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau
Script	Carl Mayer
Production	Unionfilm der Universum-Film AG (Ufa)
Producer	Erich Pommer
Director of Photography	Karl Freund
Set Design	Robert Herlth, Walter Röhrig
Music	Giuseppe Becce (1924), arranged, orchestrated and revised by Detlev Glanert (2002)
Principal Cast	Emil Jannings, Maly Delschaft, Max Hiller, Emilie Kurz, etc.
Length	88 min./ 20 fps



THE LAST LAUGH was hailed as a masterpiece both in Germany and abroad. It became one of the most important films to emerge from Weimar Germany and was influential in Hollywood, where it aroused an enthusiasm for German films and filmmakers.

Dispensing with the customary intertitles, and filming while moving the camera in extraordinarily inventive ways, Murnau and his cinematographer, Karl Freund, transformed the language of film. In shooting the opening sequence, the camera descended in the hotel's glass elevator and was then carried on a bicycle through the lobby. In addition, THE LAST LAUGH succeeds in combining expressionist elements, such as extreme camera angles, distorted dream imagery, and disturbing light and shadow effects, with a complex psychological study of the main character.

### SYNOPSIS

As a doorman Emil Jannings carries out his duties, greeting the wealthy and notable patrons that continually whirl through the ever revolving doors of the upscale Hotel Atlantis. He takes great pride in his position and in his uniform that affords him respect at the tenement where he lives with his daughter. The manager, however, notes that the old man now has difficulty handling heavy luggage and has to take more frequent breaks. So, one day he loses his job to a younger, stronger man and is given an easier, but less respectable position in the washroom. In the evening, he manages to steal his old uniform and wears it home to avoid the derision of his neighbors. The next day, one of his relatives discovers his lowered status, and it spreads throughout the tenement. When he comes home that evening he is harshly ridiculed and returns to the hotel to escape humiliation. The doorman gives back his uniform and goes to stay in the washroom.

The story should end here, but the author has taken pity on the doorman and given him an "improbable epilogue". A newspaper article relays that he has inherited a huge amount of money. The doorman is then shown at his old hotel eating an extravagant meal with the night watchman. He helps out the new washroom attendant and rides off in a fancy carriage, respected and content.

### INSTRUMENTATION

1+1/picc.1+1/ca.2.1+1/cbn - 2.2.1.0 - timp.perc(2).pno.harmonium - strings (min. 6.5.4.3.2)

Musicians: 38



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