

Heinz Erhardt (1909-1979) was the reigning king of comedians during the German economic miracle of the fifties. He was discovered by Willi Schaeffers for Berlin's Cabaret of the Comedians (Kabarett der Komiker) in 1938 as a solo entertainer at the piano; appearances in the Scala and other variety theaters and cabarets followed, as well as shows for the troops. After 1945, he appeared in countless films as a moronic, teasing anarchist with revolutionary tendencies. He also performed in solo programs, on the radio, and on stage, for there was always time for "One More Poem" ("Noch 'n Gedicht," his slogan). As an entertainer who cleverly maneuvered between his love for language and rhymes on one hand and pointless nonsense on the other, he was a spark of light in the claustrophobic philistinism of the Adenauer era. His merriness hovered somewhere between subversion and affirmation.

"His humor was soft and double-edged. He developed inhibitions and bashfulness into well-apportioned roadblocks that he tried to avoid with tireless energy and the apathy of a hippopotamus, only to be caught up ever more tightly in chains of nonsense. A pure fool, he used his awkward mental acrobatics to deal with the injustices of everyday life." (Die Zeit, 1983)

