

# And Mother Is Always With Him

David Tabatsky confesses at the Scheinbar Variete

Sugar-sweet Yiddish songs still clatter from the speakers, the bartender is being besieged – there comes David Tabatsky, jumping impatiently onto the bar. "Meine Damen und Herren ..." he courteously addresses the crowded audience, but hesitates immediately: "Why should I say 'Meine Damen' (My ladies)? I have a lady, and she is enough for me". Since his lady is called Ute Lemper and expecting their child, the opening smile from the public is already won – and the German-language part of the show over.

With his new solo program "How I Survived My Jewish Mother", the word-juggling fidgeter is appearing in the Scheinbar Variete through February, Mondays and Tuesdays at 9 p.m. David Tabatsky tells the autobiographically enriched story of a New York Jew whom his relatives still ask in complete bewilderment why he had to pick "Germany, of all 5,000 countries of the world" as his residence.

The condescending businessman who believes that all Jews have a way with money; all the women who ask him whether he *really* is circumcised – David Tabatsky brilliantly caricatures stereotypes and the ignorance that seems so innocent and may yet become so dangerous. The audience is hurt by this because it depicts the truth. Thankfully, they laugh whenever the pitch-black tragedy becomes comical,



David Tabatsky talking about life as a Jewish New Yorker in Germany.  
Photo: Rehfeld

as when Tabatsky worries whether the popcorn is really kosher.

Whether in the middle of the story about his heroic Uncle Walter or at the movies watching "Jesus Christ Superstar – The Return": there's always the imaginary telephone shrieking demandingly, and Mother Tabatsky asks if anybody thinks of her. With her dishevelled hair and her whiny voice she is the nightmare of every adult child come true.

Son David gets entangled in an Oedipus drama Woody Allen himself could not have directed any better. At a family reunion Tabatsky confesses that his pregnant girlfriend is not just not Jewish, but even German. Four relatives are too shocked to survive this revelation and die – just having been instructed that "Ausländer" means "get out

of our land".

David Tabatsky survives his mother thanks to modern technology: When once again a shrieking ring announces a call from Mrs. Tabatsky, it is not her son who answers the phone but his new answering machine: "This is David Tabatsky, I am brushing my teeth right now."

**Carmen Böker**