

World Festival's "Dark Lullabies" a memorable and haunting documentary

By MYRON GALLOWAY

Now that the awards have been handed out at Serge Loiseux's Ninth World Film Festival and the five cinemas at the Parisien have returned to showing regular commercial releases, a few final comments on some of the more memorable films shown during the last days of the festival. (Look for review of the final film *Creator*, in these pages when it opens its commercial run at a local theatre in the near future.)

Most of the best films were crowded into the festival's first five days. Of the films I saw over the last five days, perhaps the most powerful was Irene Lilienheim Angelico's 87 minute documentary, *Dark Lullabies*, which is a thought provoking study of the impact of the Holocaust, not on its survivors, but on their children, born after the war, and now in their 20s and 30s; as well as young Germans of the same generation, some of whose parents were actually involved in perpetrating many of the atrocities that took place in the camps.

Montrealer Irene Lilienheim Angelico, who wrote the script and co-produced and directed it with Abbey Jack Neidik, is herself the daughter

of two survivors (Henry and Lydia Lilienheim) both of whom were separated shortly after their marriage, interned in Nazi concentration camps and were the only members of their families to survive.

Like many other survivors, they did not discuss their experiences with their daughter as she grew up and it was not until 30 years later, when her father showed her a manuscript he had written about his experiences, that her need to know more became almost an obsession.

She attended a gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Israel and met other children of survivors her own age, and she travelled to Germany where she spoke to the offspring of Germans, some of



Juli Basti, as the aristocratic Young Katinka, displays little interest in the attentions of a would-be suitor during a hunt scene in the Hungarian film *The Red Countess*.

whom are today members of the Neo-Nazi Youth movement, who refuse to believe the Holocaust took place. And finally she visited Dachau, entering the very gates her parents had entered, under very different circumstances, 40 years before.

Dark Lullabies is a straightforward account of her trip back to the past, her conversations with the people she met, both young and old, and her attempts to understand how it was possible that what took place actually did take place.

Meticulously researched and splendidly put together, Lilienheim and Neidik have created an honest, deeply moving and memorably haunting film that should get the widest possible exposure. It's one of the few films in this year's festival I shall remember long after most of the others, even the better ones, have been forgotten.

Australia was poorly represented this year with a series of films that ranged from poor to mediocre and struck bottom with a sticky, sentimental item called *Jenny Kissed Me* directed by Brian Trenchard Smith, which dealt with the relationship between a 10 year-old child, her mother and her step-father and reminded one of the sort of film one might have expected to see Shirley Temple in some 45 or 50 years ago.

The Swiss made *Cavie Rouge* directed by Robert Hossein and starring the director was mainly a static two character dialogue between two secret agents which failed

to hold one's attention beyond the first 15 minutes, while *Pedro and The Captain*, a Mexican entry based on a two character play by Mario Bendetti and directed by Juan Garcia, became a fascinating contest of wills between a revolutionary who refuses to crack under an escalating series of cruel tortures and succeeds in achieving a subtle moral victory over his interrogator, a captain who can rationalize his inhuman behaviour only on the grounds that it invariably extracts the information required from its victim.

The Red Countess is the first part of an intended two film project made in Hungary and directed by Andras Kovacs on the life and times of Countess Katinka Karolyi and her husband Count Mihaly Karolyi, the wealthy Hungarian politician and leader of the Independence Party whose ambition was to break the relations between Austria and Hungary, prior to the First World War.

Mihaly eventually defeated Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza, but in the counter revolution that followed in 1918, was himself defeated and forced to flee the country with his wife.

The film, which is well directed and contains a number of impressive performances, follows the romantic and political fortunes of the Karolyis only up to this point and is more likely to be of interest to students of European history than the average filmgoer.

The British made *Sacred Hearts* directed by Barbara

Rennie, proved to be an enchanting portrait of two troubled teenaged girls, growing up as orphans in a convent in East Anglia during the Second World War. One, a German Jewish refugee has learned the virtue of remaining silent, passes herself off as a devout Catholic and even as a future nun in order to enjoy what she feels is the protection life in a convent, however repressive, offers her.

The other, much more outspoken, alienates herself from the nuns, her would-be benefactors, when she openly declares a loss of faith in her religion.

Babel Opera made in Belgium under the direction of

Andrie Delvaux is an unfocused attempt to compare the modern day lives of the technical staff of an opera company, to the characters in Mozart's opera Don Giovanni during a rehearsal of the opera at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels.

The overture and the voice of the singers on the soundtrack, in a random selection of arias, are glorious, but the so-called plot of the film itself is so uninteresting and confusing one comes away wishing the director had decided to do a film version of the opera itself instead of this meaningless parable which never properly sorts itself out.



Irene Lilienheim Angelico Co-director and producer of *Dark Lullabies*.

Couple holds reception at Ramses exhibition site



Lilij Poulin, who celebrated her marriage to Edouard Préfontaine, is seen signing the Golden Book, with a reception for 60 guests at the Palais de la Civilisation, where the exhibition *Ramses II and his time* is on view until Sept. 29. At far right is Judge Vadboncoeur, commissioner-general of the exhibition. The couple flew to Paris after the reception.