

Into the Arms of Strangers (2000)

Stories of the Kindertransport

Rated PG. Running time: 2 hours 2 min. Our content ratings (1-10): Violence 3; Language 0; Sex/Nudity 0. Our star rating (1-5): 5

...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...

Matthew 25:35

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2



Just when you think the Holocaust has been explored thoroughly, along comes a filmmaker approaching it from a fresh angle. Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer manage to find a positive side to the most horrific crime of the 20th Century. Their film is both a

celebration of the rescue of ten thousand Jewish children from Hitler-controlled Europe and a living memorial to the lives of the rescued and rescuers. For nine all too brief months before WW 2, the British government and people took into their homes the children of parents who wanted so badly to see their children live in safety that they were willing to send them off "into the arms of strangers." Of course, they expected to be re-united in an indeterminate future, but as it turned out, few of the children ever saw their parents again. Most of the elders died in Nazi extermination camps.

The story of the "Kindertransport," as the children came to be called, is told through interviews with the now grown children and their British hosts, all tied together by narration read by Dame Judi Dench. The stories are moving, sometimes containing humor, and always interesting. Many of the rescued have gone on to make great contributions to British and American society, leaving the viewer with the question of what we have lost from those children who were not included. A shameful footnote relating to America is the fact that our government chose not to participate in the program, a virulent strain of anti-Semitism infecting virtually every level of our society then. A U.S. Senator lamely, and piously, declared that it would be going against God to separate the children from their parents! To their credit, the filmmakers do not dwell on this, just mentioning it and then moving on to more testimonials affirming the goodness of those who did respond by offering loving hospitality.

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