

Vivere in Pace (1947)

'To Live in Peace,' Italian Film, With Aldo Fabrizi Playing Humorous Role, at World

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The revived Italian film industry, which has sent us such powerful post-war films as "Shoe Shine" and "Open City," has now sent another one along that takes a place of distinction among the fine motion pictures of our times. Less grim and emotionally lacerating than the two pictures mentioned above, yet equally (if not more) absorbing in its keen comprehension of mankind, it follows a rich vein of satire in its bold tragi-comedy. "To Live in Peace" is its title and it replaced the long-run "Open City" at the World last night.

As did those two previous pictures, this one also explores the extraordinary effects upon people that derive from a climate of war. But where "Shoe Shine" and "Open City" were on levels of violences and concerned various strata of society complicated in urban life, "To Live in Peace" finds its substance upon a much more tranquil plane and among a group of peasants who are closer to nature and to the soil.

Actually, it is the story of the reactions of some Italian villagers to their moral responsibilities when they suddenly find in their midst a wounded American Negro soldier and an American journalist, both of whom have escaped from their Nazi captors and are lost behind the lines. And particularly it is the story of one stout and self-respecting villager who is sick of political dogmatism and who rallies the other villagers to the moral test.

On a broader basis, however, it is a study of fundamental humanity and of the towering irony of simple people of peaceful disposition being compelled to hate one another because of war. And it is in this area of contemplation that the superior satire of the story is achieved—first in the attitude of the peasants toward the soldiers and, second, in the disposition of a Nazi to the American Negro when both are drunk.

There is beautiful compassion and glowing humor in the caution yet determination with which the villagers hide the two Americans, after children have found them in the woods, and treat and protect them with

the same husbandry that they naturally give all decent living things. But the height of the side-splitting irony comes when the one Nazi guard in the town gets rip-roaring drunk, finds the Negro (who is hidden in a wine cellar and has got drunk, too) and goes howling through the night and the village with him, leading the villagers to assume the end of the war. The nocturnal merger of all divisions and then the tragic realizations in the morn make for some of the most indignant derision of anti-human factionalism that we've seen.

Not only is it a good story but it is pungently and credibly played by a fine cast, headed by Aldo Fabrizi, who also helped write the script. Fabrizi, who is vividly remembered for his brilliant performance of the priest in "Open City," here manifests a superior and unsuspected talent for comedy. As the most involved peasant in the village, since the fugitives are hidden in his barn, he gives a delightfully humored performance of an endangered yet stoical man. And his interior passion and dignity in the tragic moments of the film attest the scope of his talents. He is most strikingly comparable to the late and great French actor, Raimu.

Gar Moore and John Kitzmiller are remarkably forthright and genuine as the American journalist and Negro, respectively, and Heinrich Bode is aptly dense as the Hun, while Mirella Monti is glowingly nubile yet appropriately resolute as the peasant girl. Ernesto Almirante as a squeaky ancient, Ave Minchi as a scolding wife and Gino Cavalieri as an owl-eyed prelate contribute other gems of characterization.

Directed by Luigi Zampa at an expressively modulated pace and against beautifully realistic backgrounds, "To Live in Peace" does that wonderful thing of supporting our faith in humanity in as enjoyable and moving way.

TO LIVE IN PEACE; Screen play by Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Aldo Fabrizi and Piero Tellini; directed by Luigi Zampa; produced by Carlo Ponti for Lux-Pao Films and presented by Times Film Corporation. At the World Theatre.

Uncle Tigna Aldo Fabrizi

Ronald Gar Moore

Silvia Mirella Monti

Joe John Kitzmiller

Hans Heinrich Bode
Corinna Ave Ninchi
The Grandfather Ernesto Almirante
Political Secretary Nando Bruno
The Doctor Aldo Silvani
The Priest Gino Cavalieri
Franco Piero Palermini
Citto Franco Serpilli