

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON HELMUT KÄUTNER

Helmut Käutner (pronounced Koytner) was born in 1908 in the Rhineland and began his career in show business as an actor in the German Cabaret during the 20's. The Cabaret was a source of political satire, and was curtailed by the Nazis. In 1938, he wrote and directed his first film KITTY AND THE WORLD CONFERENCE, which showed a manicurist at a world peace conference. His most celebrated wartime film, ROMANCE IN A MINOR KEY (1943) had great success throughout Europe and was awarded first prize at the Stockholm festival that year.

In January 1945 he undertook one of the first postwar German films SEVEN JOURNEYS (In Jenen Tagen). It tells the story of seven owners of an automobile from 1933 to 1945 and how they are affected by the Nazi regime. Its absolute mastery of the medium shows no sign of the terrible difficulties under which it was made.

Then he wrote the script for FILM WITHOUT A NAME, and directed ORIGINAL SIN (Der Apfel ist Ab), a musical fantasy about the Fall of Adam. After a brief return to the stage as actor and director, Erich Pommer, (assigned by the U. S. Occupation forces to reorganize the industry) brought him back as a director, and his NIGHTS ON THE STREETS won Germany's Best Film of the Year Award.

He continued making a film or two each year and in 1954 his THE LAST BRIDGE won the top award at the Berlin Film Festival and the Selznick Golden Laurel Award as the film of the year which best promoted international understanding.

Among his other pictures are THE DEVIL'S GENERAL and THE CAPTAIN FROM KOEPENICK (to be shown Wednesday October 23 at the Museum of Modern Art).

Universal Pictures signed him to a contract and he has just completed his first Hollywood picture WONDERFUL YEARS.

Mr. Käutner is married to Erica Balgüe, an actress who has assisted him on several films.