

## Document Citation

Title	<b>2 minutes silence, please</b>
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1999 Nov 08
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	39, 41
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	2 minuten stilte a.u.b. (2 minutes silence, please), Honigmann, Heddy, 1998

## VANCOUVER

Variety 11/8-14/99 p.39;41

# 2 MINUTES SILENCE, PLEASE

(2 MINUTEN STILTE A.U.B.)

(DOCU — DUTCH)

A Public Film release (in the Netherlands) of a Pieter van Huystee Film & TV/NPS production. (International sales: Fortuna Film, Amsterdam.) Produced by Pieter van Huystee.

Directed by Hedy Honigmann. Screenplay, research, Honigmann, Hans Dortmans. Camera (color), Maarten Kramer; editor, Mario Steenbergen; sound, Nosh van der Lely. Reviewed on videocassette, Rome, Oct. 15, 1999. (In Rotterdam, Vancouver film festivals.) Running time: 87 MIN.

By DAVID ROONEY

**A**ccomplished Dutch docu-maker Hedy Honigmann has looked far afield — to her native Peru, to Brazil and to exiles in Paris — for the subjects of her widely traveled films “Metal and Melancholy,” “O Amor Natural” and “The Underground Orchestra.” In “2 Minutes Silence, Please” she turns her attention for the first time to Holland, in particular, to the different ways in which people there were touched by the experience of WWII and in which they commemorate its victims. While it’s more solemn and not as immediately engaging as the filmmaker’s previous work, this thoughtful examination of complex questions should fit into quality TV lineups.

Docu was shot entirely on Dutch Memorial Day, May 4, 1998. The day culminates each year in two minutes of national silence at 8 p.m. in memory of those who died during WWII. Using 12 small crews, Honigmann follows several men and women over

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the course of the day as they discuss what it means to them and the importance of keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive. The stoicism and reserve that appear to be an inherent part of the Dutch character — seemingly preferring to keep a lid on emotions and leave sorrow unexpressed — makes many statements all the more quietly affecting.

The subjects include both Jewish and non-Jewish war veterans; those whose family members were killed or were victims of Jewish persecution, and those who merely witnessed the many “disappearances” in their neighborhoods or schools but seem perhaps no less haunted by them. The interviewees range in

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age from old-timers who lived through the war to their children and grandchildren, whose difficulty in grasping the full extent of the experience has led to conflicting feelings.

Perhaps the most fascinating subject is the daughter of Nazi sympathizers. She recounts her confusion as a child, when taunting schoolmates became aware of her family’s history before she did; her unspoken exclusion from commemorative services, feeling Jewish mourners could smell the taint of Nazism on her; and her efforts through songwriting to make peace with her father’s past and with her own response to it. Also interesting is a lively rest home resident who cleaned house for a Jewish family, and a psychotherapist who deals with war and loss in her poetry. The latter also plays cello in an orchestra performing Mozart’s Requiem in a recital that follows the two minutes silence and eloquently concludes this simple, moving film.