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La Paloma

(SWISS-FRENCH-COLOR)

Variety 74
Cannes, May 14.

Citel Film - Films De Losange production and release. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Daniel Schmid. Camera (Eastmancolor), Renato Berta; editor, Ila Von Hasperg; music, Gottfried Hungsberg. Reviewed at Cannes Film Fest (Cannes Critics Week), May 10, '74. Running time, 107 MINS.

La Paloma Ingrid Cave
Husband Peter Kern
Mother Bulle Ogier
Friend Peter Chatel

Daniel Schmid has lovingly made a sort of romantic, expressionist tale that pays homage to the German style of the early Twenties. It skirts kitsch but nimbly sends up this form of Teutonic sentimentalism. It should find its way on its expertise and is a fest must.

A sad and joyful tale of dogged love, romantic love and class consciousness and climbing with a neat dose of the occult which all combine to keep this stylish affair effortlessly bouncy, witty and finally even touching. Director Schmid now gives the German-speaking Swiss an international flourish after the French-Swiss have made fest and international dents through the work of Alain Tanner, Claude Gretta and Michel Soutter.

La Paloma is a Dietrich-looking chantoosy who is wooed by a fat but ardent rich man. She sings in a club sometime in the 20s and is supposedly suffering from a terminal disease. She marries her rich admirer but is miraculously cured. She thinks it is due to his love and tries to return it. But into this eerie idyll come an old school chum of the friend and it is real love.

But he does not want the husband to know. However she says the latter will give them money to go off. When he does not she begins to take strange drugs and use magical makeup potions as she withers away. She had always wanted her bones buried in a special vase in her husband's family's crypt.

She dies cursing her husband but years later the husband asks his friend to come and they open the coffin as asked for in her will. But there she is still fresh and untouched as if to mock her husband. As the others run off he hacks her up to get her bones to their resting place.

Done with directorial finesse, it should have buffs twittering with delight and straighter audiences too on its sheer rightness in tone, acting and execution. Specialized, but a new talent on the Swiss scene.

—Mosk.