

Review of the Film *Schwarzwaldmädel* (September 13, 1950)

Abstract

Schwarzwaldmädel [*Black Forest Girl*] was a massive success of the *Heimatfilm* genre, attracting between fourteen to sixteen million people to movie theaters within the first year of its release; it was a massive commercial success and the most successful film since the war. The film is credited with launching the *Heimatfilm* genre to box office dominance for the next decade. One of the reasons for the film's popularity, and the popularity of the *Heimatfilm* genre in general, was the use of color. *Black Forest Girl* emphasized color, and as the review mentions, filmmakers used scenes specifically designed to show off color—scenes of lavish balls and ice shows, but also shots of the Black Forest in full bloom. Color in this film, and in the *Heimatfilm* genre in general, emphasized the natural beauty of the German countryside and molded the genre into the escapist genre that it came to be known as.

Source

New Films: *Schwarzwaldmädel* [*Black Forest Girl*]

This highly anticipated first color film made in Germany since the war has now opened at the Turm Palast cinema. It is based on the eponymous operetta by Leon Jessel and August Neidhart, which caused a pleasing stir in the spirits of our mothers in the year 1917. Spirit is the trump card in this screen adaptation as well, despite all the turbulent embellishments that screenwriter Bobby E. Lüdtge endowed it with—and the “girls of the Black Forest” triumphantly assert themselves against all of Frank Fox’s musical updates. But the driving force behind this film appears to have been neither the script nor the music, but the color, color at any cost. Ice shows, lavish balls, scenes at the Baden-Baden casino, Swabian country fairs—the filmmakers have created an exorbitant plethora of chances to use color. The colors, however—it must be said—are not yet such that they appear natural. And the seriatim of images is not yet the seamless cinematic sequence long since standard in black-and-white films, thanks to the dissolve technique. Still, there are some splendid scenes, the festive procession, for instance, with its wealth of local folk costumes, and an abundance of intimate interiors. The technical difficulties are legion, and you see it in this film. Neither Hans Deppe as director, nor the actors, can make us forget it. All of them—Sonja Ziemann, Rudolf Prack, even distinctive types like Paul Hörbiger, Fritz Kampers, and Hans Richter have an air of haziness, which only Gretl Schörg and the indestructible Ernst Waldow manage to fight. But difficulties are there to be surmounted—let us be surprised by the second ever German color film!

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