



Mike and Stefani: Reviews

Because of the limited release of *Mike and Stefani*, there are few reviews of it as an individual film, though there are more frequent references to it in more general news reports. Below we reproduce two of those few reviews:

***Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1951**

'Top Australian Documentary'

by Robin Slessor

Yesterday I attended a private screening of an Australian documentary which ranks in world class.

It is the first Australian feature-length documentary film to be made abroad.

It is called 'Mike and Stefani' and was written and directed by the Department of the Interior senior producer R. Maslyn Williams, who spent more than a year in Austria at the I.R.O camp for Displaced Persons at Leipheim, Bavaria, making the film.

I found it more human, more moving, and better enacted than any previous documentary I have seen.

Shown to Australian audiences, there is no doubt that it would do a great deal to promote a more tolerant attitude to immigrants and dispel forever any doubts as to the rigidity of the screening to which intending immigrants must submit before they are accepted.

Factual Story

Every scene, every situation is factual and genuine. It tells the true story of two young people who married just before the outbreak of war, whose happiness was shattered and who became, after tremendous privations, displaced persons.

Almost breathlessly you follow their fortunes through I.R.O camps until they are accepted for Australia.

The two stars, unnamed because of their relatives abroad, are now in Australia with their child.

In my opinion, from every viewpoint, 'Mike and Stefani' is the best effort in documentary films made by Australians, a tremendous advertisement for Australian ability and a film which, when shown, will accomplish untold good.

R.G.Pearse, another Australian, accompanied Williams to Austria and Bavaria and photographed the film with a minimum of equipment. Some of his camera angles are remarkable.

***Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 October 1953**

'Film Finds A Theatre'

By Our Film Critic

A feature-length Australian documentary film which won a special award in the Jubilee Film Competition had its first theatrical screening last night - more than two years after it was made.

The film, *Mike and Stefani*, was shot in Europe by the Films Division of the Department of the Interior. Its object was to show Australians the problems of war refugees who were to live among us as New Australians.

But it was cold-shouldered by Australian exhibitors, who found it, among other things, "too long" (it runs for 55 minutes).

It is now showing for three nights at the Village Theatre, Watson's Bay, an independent theatre which specialises in Continental films.

It is unfortunate that it has not had a wider screening, for it is in almost every respect the most grown-up and craftsmanlike feature-length film ever made by Australians, as well as being a sincere and sometimes moving treatment of its subject.

It does not set out to be a masterpiece, but it could certainly be accepted as a respectable and responsible piece of film-making on any screen anywhere - which puts it well ahead of the pretentious immaturity of most Australian feature films.

The director is R. Maslyn Williams.