

***Tiger Bay* is an April, 2024 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Library of the Heritage Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that dvd film.**

17 of a total 20 points = a minor film classic

United Kingdom 1959 black-and-white 105 minutes

live action feature drama Independent Artists

Producers: John Hawkesworth, Leslie Parkyn, Julian White

Key: *indicates an outstanding performance or technical achievement

(j) designates a juvenile performer

Points:

2 Direction: Jack Lee Thompson*

2 Editing: Sidney Hayers*

2 Cinematography: Eric Cross*

Still Photography: Ian Jeayes*

1 Lighting

1 Screenplay: John Hawkesworth and Shelley Smith based on the story

"Rodolphe et le Revolver" by Noël Calef

Musical Direction: Laurie Johnson

2 Music: Laurie Johnson*

Choreography: Boscoe Holder

1 Art Direction: Edward Carrick

Wardrobe: John Irwin and Vi Murray

Makeup: Trevor Crole-Rees

2 Sound

Sound Editing: Arthur Cox*

Sound Recording: Len Page*

Casting: James Liggat

2 Acting

2 Creativity

17 total points

Cast: John Mills* (Superintendent Graham), Horst Bucholz* (Bronislaw Korchinsky), Hayley Mills (j)* (Gillie), Yvonne Mitchell (Anya), Megs Jenkins (Mrs. Phillips), Anthony Dawson (Barclay), George Selway (Detective Sergeant Harvey), Shari (Christine), George Pastell* (Paloma captain), Paul Stassino (Paloma first officer), Marne Maitland* (Dr. Das), Meredith Edwards (Police Constable Williams), Marianne Stone (Mrs. Williams), Rachel Thomas (Mrs. Perry), Brian Hammond (Dal Perry), Kenneth Griffith (Choirmaster), Eynon Evans (Mr. Morgan), Christopher Rhodes (Inspector Bridges), Edward Cast (Detective Constable Thomas), David Davies (Desk Sergeant), Michael Anderson Jr. (j) (Youth), Harry Baird (Bridegroom), Tom Bowman (Seaman), Jim Brady (Pub Customer), Peter Halliday (Seaman), Hubert Hill (Policeman), Glyn Houston (Detective at Police Station), John Howard (Detective), Jack May (Mr. Willis), Harry Phipps (Man in Bar), Stan Simmons (Referee), Neil Sinclair (j) (Youth), John Wilder (Man in Police Lineup)

Tiger Bay is a black-and-white British feature drama from 1959 that features eleven-year-old Hayley Mills in the role of Gillie Evans, a nosy tomgirl who inadvertently witnesses a crime of passion. Set mainly in Cardiff, Wales, it offers unusual views into the multicultural population of Tiger Bay, a dockside slum section of the capital. There sailors on shore leave from home ports around the globe mingle with West Indian immigrants, East Indians relocated to the Empire's center, and central African black newcomers.

A Polish sailor returning to visit a young woman of similar nationality he intends to marry discovers with considerable anger and chagrin she is not particularly interested in his offer and is being financially supported by a lover unfamiliar to him. Carried away with jealousy, enraged Bronislaw Korchinsky allows temper to control his actions, leading to escalated fighting between man and girlfriend. When faithless Anya accesses a gun to end their dispute, ensuing struggle results in her death. Thoroughly alarmed by what has transpired, Korchinsky takes the fatal weapon and attempts to hide it in a nearby hallway recess.

Continuing his streak of bad luck, that botched concealment is observed by ever-wandering Gillie Evans, who lives in a nearby apartment. Having been denied participation in playing cops and robbers due to lack of a toy pistol, she

appropriates Bronislaw's for personal use. This sets in motion a cat-and-mouse pursuit as the Pole obsessively tracks Little Miss Meddler into a neighboring church where she has choir practice to attend. While others depart after their rehearsal, Gillie and the murderer remain, the former finally being cornered in the church's attic by the latter. Short of shooting her way out of a trap, which she's too callow to manage, Gillie has no choice but to surrender both herself and her hardware to the sailor.

Since leaving the child alone to roam the city would be terribly risky, Bronislaw, for unknown reasons kindly disposed to youngsters, decides to take the girl into protective custody, making sure she stays free of police detention.

Meanwhile, Police Inspector Graham has learned through interviews with apartment residents that two male visitors called on Anya the day she was shot. One had been a frequent guest at her flat, the other being an unfamiliar foreigner. During that process, Graham had even questioned prevaricating Gillie, who tried to mislead him in order to keep her stolen firearm for future recreational use. The troublemaker's evasions threw suspicion on Mr. Barclay, a sports announcer conducting an adulterous affair with Anya, who had come upon her corpse during an ill-timed visitation. That anticipated meeting was duly observed by other apartment building residents.

On the lam together, Gillie forms a sentimental bond with her captor.

Later that night, he saves her from a negligent fall into the harbor, then sneaks her out to a hillside farm. He eventually leaves her there in order to return dockside in order to check all scheduled imminent ship departures for foreign destinations. The sooner he makes good his escape, the better. Once aboard an outbound freighter, the criminal would have little to fear from British police if he could just reach open water beyond the three-mile national territorial limit.

However, Korchinsky has landed on Inspector Graham's suspect list. Graham doesn't want him to leave the country just yet. Not without further probing about his activities since coming ashore in Wales. Diligent canvassing of ship crew lists reveal the telltale Korchinsky name on *Paloma's*. The *Paloma* is scheduled to sail almost immediately. So a rush to the harbor is essential for both prey and hunter.

Out at the farm, day-trippers have located a “missing child” whose photograph appeared their newspaper’s front page. They chase and catch a rebellious Gillie, who’s promptly turned over to authorities.

Despite another intensive grilling, the truant thief refuses to disclose her kidnapper’s identity. She does blurt out accidentally the fact his spoken language is other than English. Since the victim’s homeland was already ascertained to be Poland, investigators zero in on everyone recently arrived from that country. This leads them rapidly to the name of Bronislaw Korchinsky.

In order to deny the fugitive free movement out and about, Graham collars the balky liar, compelling her to accompany him on an excursion to the *Paloma*.

Can guardians of the law stop Korchinsky from making a clear exit from their shores? Or will physical barriers and Gillie’s verbal dodges allow him to leave their jurisdiction untouched? Watch the suspenseful conclusion to this film for the answers.

Tiger Bay has a raftful of assets.

Cinematography is virtually flawless, capturing fully and relentlessly both the ambience of Cardiff’s nether regions and details of gestures. Tracking shots abound, used to superb effect in generating a driving, insistent pace.

Sound recording is likewise impressively comprehensive, though some viewers may be bothered by lack of translated subtitling for Polish conversations.

Always engaging without being unduly intrusive, Laurie Johnson’s score reinforces the ongoing battle between a child’s naïveté and adult transgression of social boundaries.

Brisk editing builds up suspense to a breathless climax, never easing until the film’s conclusion.

Horst Bucholz’s conflicted revenger is admirably portrayed in a sympathetic manner, with Korchinsky’s innate sensitivity to emotions of those around him seesawing back and forth with childish desires to exact payback and elude concomitant punishment. His partner in duplicity, Hayley Mills’ Gillie Evans, is persuasively amoral and selfish, disrespectful of both adult society and restraints coming from external sources. This was Hayley’s initial film performance, a true indicator of exciting, memorable characterizations to follow, notably as lead actress in Disney’s *Pollyanna* and juvenile center of attention Kathy Bostock in *Whistle Down the Wind*.

Able support was supplied by Anthony Dawson as sleazy, furtive philanderer Barclay and by John Mills, portraying a crusty, aggravatingly bullying detective who crossed swords vigorously and ceaselessly with Gillie, enacted by his real-life daughter. Whether their actual relationship at the time was mirrored onscreen is open to viewer speculation. Marne Maitland's smarmy, cynical Dr. Das and George Pastell's aggressively uncooperative captain of the *Paloma* also stand out performances.

Jack Lee Thompson's directing made the most of whatever underlying tensions pre-existed between father and child. He also utilized to full advantage the awkwardness of a German-speaking actor struggling with mainly English dialogue.

Winner of numerous international awards, *Tiger Bay* is a minor suspense classic comparable to first-rate Hitchcock or prime Peter Weir. Due to violence and its adultery theme, the film is suited only to adult viewers. For them, most highly recommended.