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Local man appears in documentary

DEBORAH NICOL - THE DESERT SUN - NOVEMBER 17, 2007

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It's difficult to connect the dots between post-war Germany and a gay couple in Santa Monica, but James Berg does it with a book.

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While traveling in England, the Palm Springs resident discovered the writings of Christopher Isherwood covering the periods between the two world wars. In those pages Berg found thinly veiled gay characters and subtext.

"At the time in college I was coming out myself and recognized the gay content that isn't really apparent to most," Berg said in a recent phone interview. "But for those who knew, they knew."

Tonight, at the "AFI Comes to Palm Springs" film festival at Camelot Theatres, Isherwood's life with lover Don Bachardy will be examined in the documentary, "Chris & Don: A Love Story."

"I have about 45 seconds of screen time," said Berg with a laugh about his 2005 interview for the film.

Berg says the doc provides an interesting angle in its attempt to simultaneously tell the life story of two people. "Documentaries have been done on individuals," Berg said. "But this film looks at them as a couple."

Since Berg's introduction to Isherwood's works, he has become an expert on the artist's life. In 2000, he co-edited "The Isherwood Century" with Chris Freeman, who also appears in the documentary.

Berg's book, "Isherwood on Writing," is slated to be published in December. Covering a collection of lectures Isherwood gave at California universities, Berg feels it provides a foundation for Isherwood's autobiography.



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'CHRIS & DON: A LOVE STORY'
Review:

Rated: Not rated

Length: One hour, 30 minutes

Playing at: 7:30 p.m. today, Camelot Theatres, 2300 E. Baristo Road, Palm Springs; 325-6565

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