# films and filming

JULY 1963 3s

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# LETTERS

*write to 16 Buckingham Palace-road, London SW1*

In 'In Camera' (March) there were a few paragraphs entitled 'how to get in' into the film industry. How to get in is just the question I've been asking around, but nobody seems to know the answer. I'm sure that many would-be producers and directors, either still at school or job, are asking the same question.

Surely Britain needs a batch of good directors and producers for future years?

A. HANUS,
7, *Rutland Gardens, Hove* 3, *Sussex*

*On page 11 you can find out how a representative number of the young British film-makers got into films.—Editor.*

## *Barbaric*

I am glad to read that the stag hunt in *Tom Jones* is portrayed 'as cruel as stag-hunting is in reality' (In Camera, May) and I hope that director Tony Richardson will not give way to RSPCA pressure to tone it down. It is shocking that the RSPCA is reluctant for the public to see this barbaric sport as it really is, but not surprising because the Society's membership is now swamped by members of the British Field Sports Society who dictate its policy.

GWENDOLEN BARTER,
*Sea House, North Foreland Avenue, Broadstairs, Kent.*

## *Humility*

I do not pretend to know whether Miss E Myhill was right or wrong in her assessment of the clipped version of *Lawrence of Arabia*, but I do strongly disagree with Mr Mason-Lowe's dismissal of public opinion (Letters, May). Surely the public have every right to judge objectively what they see and criticise accordingly without having first to enlighten themselves on the details and technicalities of the production?

As far as Mr Mason-Lowe is concerned, we are to view these works with awe and humility, saying to ourselves, 'This film is by a great director; it must be good; I am far too humble and ignorant to criticise it.' This sort of attitude by professional men is objectionable in its obsession with self-importance and superiority; Miss Myhill may have been wrong, but Mr Mason-Lowe is far more in error. A. SELINA

336, *Stainbeck-road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds* 7.

## *Starting young*

In your article on *All Quiet on the Western Front* (April) this interesting statement is made: 'Lew Ayres, born Minneapolis on December 28, 1908, made his screen debut in *The Kiss* ('21) playing Garbo's youthful lover.' 'Youthful lover' indeed! According to those figures, he would have been twelve years old. FREDERICK LAMB,

10048, *Cielo Drive, Beverly Hills, California, U.S.A.*

## *London only*

John Vicary's letter (May) concerning the non re-issue of *Alexander's Ragtime Band* in your May issue only further bolsters my theory that cinema companies do not care a brass farthing for the likes and dislikes of cinemagoers.

My own particular piece of bitterness concerns the classic *Wizard of Oz*. With a small daughter fallen in love with the Baum story and with my own happy memories of an almost annual re-showing of the film still in my mind I wrote to the distributor asking whether the possibility ever existed of its re-issue. No indeed, I was told but in a postcript was reminded that 'for the greatest in the great outdoors see *Cimarron*.' I didn't and wouldn't not even with free dishes.

Finally, I saw that the distributors had apparently had second thoughts and both *Wizard* and *Tom Thumb* were shown at London's Coliseum as 'The Greatest Holiday Show Ever'. This was coupled with a Film Time spot on sound radio—completely assuring my small daughter that in time the great show would be coming her way. Just to make sure I wrote to a national newspaper to confirm. Reply?—There are no plans to re-issue *Oz*. The Greatest Holiday Show Ever was just for London and just for that holiday.

CON DIAMANTI,
35, *Upper Queen-street, North Shields, Northumberland.*

## *Epic stepping stones*

Recently in *films and filming*, there appears to have been quite a bit of controversy over the so-called 'epic' films—those films with a cast of thousands and a cost of millions. What I fail to understand is why most critics should treat them so harshly, especially if the subject depicted on the screen is Biblical or has a religious theme.

I have seen a great many Biblical and religious 'epics,' including *Samson and Delilah, Solomon and Sheba, King of Kings, Ben-Hur, Quo Vadis*, and *The Ten Commandments*. All of these, particularly the latter two, have awakened the seed of Christian faith within me and I am now a very firm, serious-minded Christian.

I won't say that these films actually converted me, but they were strong stepping stones towards my conversion. Seeing them has made me pick up the Bible and read it from cover to cover. Surely, if a Biblical 'epic' has the power to unfold one's faith, it is well worth seeing. RONALD PECK (14½)

149, *Aylward-road, Merton Park, S.W.*20


**films and filming**

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*Advertisement directors*

ANNE GARDINER · ALFRED FISHBURN

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# X

*Producers will take into account the fact that X certificate films are becoming harder to market and this will affect their choice of subject.*

*—Press statement by the Federation of British Film Makers.*

Cinema owners have been protesting to British film producers that there are too many films barred by the British Board of Film Censors to persons under 16 years of age and that cinemas want 'more films of a family entertainment character'. The implication is quite simple. The men who own cinemas do not think pictures like *Room at the Top, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* or *This Sporting Life* are suitable for a family but, providing they make money, they are suitable for individuals (who, alone, are no less a part of a family) who drop into a cinema for what?, an orgy of sexual promiscuity and titillation?

We are surprised the producer associations are as polite to the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association as they have been to date. Because the exhibitor mentality that wants to plunge the cinema back to pre-TV days when audiences only wanted to kill time watching Clark Gable or Hedy Lamarr is as out of touch with reality as the man who ordered the charge of the Light Brigade. There is no evidence that a good X film does not make money; neither is there evidence that a bad U film will. The certificate has nothing to do with whether or not audiences see a particular film except insofar as under-sixteens are excluded from X films and over-sixteens of low mentality are coaxed to see the more lurid by the gimmicks of the publicists.

We deplore that the British Board of Film Censors should have dropped the H (for Horror) category, thus lumping the werewolves and monsters with Jimmy Porter and Tom Machin. But it is even more deplorable that because Britain's 'new wave' film-makers treat life as it is their films should be censored as roughly as the film-makers who treat life as it never could be.

The producer associations should not play the exhibitor and censor game of public hypocrisy. At no time for a generation has Britain made better films and, for the most part, made them profitably. The producers should shout about it — and tell the exhibitors to shut up.

# *in camera*

As was to be expected, Fleet-street editors sent more gossip writers than critics to Cannes. Scandal outside the festival cinema was more interesting than the films inside. But Fleet-street and the film industry is due for a shock come August when the Venice festival takes place. The new director, Professor Luigi Chiarini (himself a critic and Professor of Film Theory at the University of Pisa) is determined to keep out the salesmen, the publicists and the gossip writers.

He has been talking about his plans with my Rome correspondent, John Francis Lane. The first thing he wished to make clear was that at Venice it has never been called a film *festival*. In Italy it has always been a *mostra*, (*ie* an exhibition, and seeing that it functions under the auspices of the biennale it couldn't be otherwise). Chiarini wants to ensure that this year it will be a mostra rather than a festival.

There have been changes in the mostra's regulations, made before Chiarini agreed to accept the appointment. The idea of a selection committee, formed of Italian critics who spent the year searching for films that appealed to their personal tastes, has been abolished. The responsibility for the ultimate choice is now in the director's own hands. Rather than depend on the opinions of four or five critics, he intends to consult critics in every country and see the films with them.

Under the new regulations, the director may choose a maximum of 28 films, including those outside the competition. Those countries which in the preceding three years have produced over seventy films a year for the international market (and not just for home consumption, as in India) are entitled to present one entry at least among the competitive films. There are seven countries which qualify under this category: Britain, the US, Italy, France, Japan, Spain and the USSR.

Apart from the seven films, the Venice director can choose other films from those countries and from other countries. Chiarini doesn't expect to find 28 films worthy of the competition but he will fill out the programme with experimental productions, works which have general interests, documentaries, cinema-verite, and so on. He also hopes to begin one of the 'retrospective' series on a festival evening, thus giving the 'museum' aspect more prestige. This year, Chiarini hopes to persuade the Russians to let him have the films of the early Soviet directors. As far as the Jury goes, Chiarini wants to avoid putting film-makers amongst the jurers. 'Film directors are the worst possible judges of others' films' he says. He is thinking of certain directors who admit their prejudices in public: the one for example who dislikes Antonioni, or the veteran French director who won't accept anything made by the *nouvelle vague*.

The next mostra at Venice will thus depend entirely for its success on personal judgment and integrity of its new director. Chiarini has declared war on the publicity boys and wants to avoid making of the Excelsior Hotel foyer a market square. Invitations will be extended to critics rather than columnists, to creative film-makers rather than buyers or press agents. They will try to attract leading actors and actresses rather than the publicity-seeking starlets. Above all, Chiarini plans to invite famous writers, artists and musicians who have collaborated at one time or another for the cinema. He wants the atmosphere to be worthy of the city which is playing host to the mostra. His attitude might be summed up thus: to bring to Venice people who would rather spend the afternoon at the Accademia than at a cocktail party or on the beach.

## Their audience

If book publishers behaved in the way of the cinema circuit bosses there would be little else to read except Hank Janson and Micky Spillane. D J Goodlatte, the managing director of Associated British Cinemas, told his cinema managers recently, 'We have faith and belief in the future, but it must be appreciated that we aim more and more at the teenage business'. Some people, he argued, continued to talk about the family audience; but it no longer existed. 'The box-office successes are those where we get the youngsters in'.

So far as ABC is concerned, then, when a body becomes twenty years of age it might as well head off for the nearest undertaker (or exist for a few more years on a diet of the telly).

As I interpret Mr Goodlatte's speech, he is in effect saying 'We have failed to show films that sufficient people over nineteen want to see.' A pity for the cinemas, because there are more people alive and kicking (and with money to spend) who are twenty-plus than there are twenty-minus.

Unlike book publishers (take a look at the Penguin range for example) the cinema men can't, or don't want to, reach them.

## Productivity

The British Film Producers Association earlier this year set up a National Productivity Sub-committee which, after several months debate, has recommended the producers such classic pieces of advice as 'Unnecessary "takes" spell inefficiency'.

Here's another. 'Clutter on stages, whether equipment or visitors, is to be deplored and should be rigorously controlled'. Or, 'Television will soon require increased use

of filmed colour material'.

The BFPA adds that the work of the sub-committee will of course continue for some time to come. During which time television will go on doing so cheaply and efficiently what many film studios do at such time and cost that it is a wonder many independent film producers can make films at all.

## Reds at work

If you want a clear outline of how the Soviet production machine works I cannot do better than recommend an English language pamphlet recently published by the Society for Cultural Relations With the USSR (118 Tottenham Court-road, London W 1, at three shillings). It is a summary of a paper delivered by the Soviet director, Mikhail Romm, to a cultural relations conference in Italy in October last year.

The most surprising revelation is that Soviet directors are paid a substantial bonus if a committee of other directors and critics put their film in the first category. In a way, films are not made for ordinary people; audiences, as represented by box-office returns, don't count when it comes to paying the piper.

## Wide open

The United States is now wide open to foreign language films. A recent survey by the trade paper, *Variety*, shows that last year 718 foreign films earnt more than twenty-five million dollars.

In recent years there has been a dramatic change in the American distribution and exhibition pattern. Unlike Britain where, outside of London, it is a rarity to find a cinema showing a foreign language film. I suggest it is not that American cinemagoers are more adventurous than the British, it is just that the American film industry is not strangled by cinema circuit monopolies and 'free enterprise' competition gives the cinemagoer almost limitless choice.

## Big three

Robert O'Brien, the head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production, told me over the lunch table at his British studio that he is involved in talks with the production heads of Columbia and 20th Century-Fox with a view to building an 'all colossal' Hollywood.

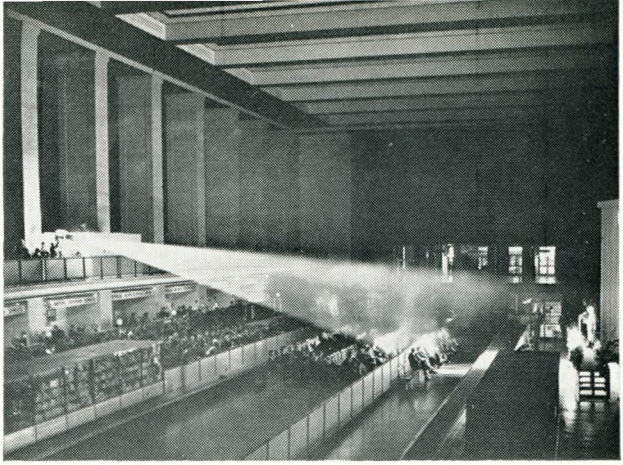
The big three may pool their production resources to set up the most highly organised and efficient central film studio modern techniques, and money, can allow. A sort of Twenty First Century-Fox?

## Buried

Jack Leewood's anti-Communist documentary, *We'll Bury You*, distributed by Columbia, has run into unexpected trouble. Audiences did not want to see an anti-Communist documentary.

In many cinemas where it has been shown, seats were ripped and bottles hurled through the screens. In Ecuador a messenger taking a print of the film to a local theatre was assassinated.

Columbia has decided to withdraw the film from distribution . . . and bury it.



● *Will Tremper's 'Die endlose Nacht' had its premiere in the main hall at Tempelhof airport, where most of the film was shot. See: Grounded*

## Say it with . . .

Irving Berlin, at 75, is old fashioned only in the sense that he believes popular songs should be tuneful, not sick, and well sung. He has a reputation unequalled by other composers; not one film with Berlin music has lost money.

Now, still young in heart, he is working with veteran musical producer Arthur Freed and director Vincente Minnelli on another lavish musical. It will be called simply, *Say it with Music*.

## Politics pay

Exhibitors invariably tell you that political films don't make money. Oddly producers disagree. Preminger is quite happy with the returns of *Advise and Consent*: and it looks as though whether they like it or not cinema owners are in for a cycle of political subjects in the next few months.

Paramount is making *Seven Days in May* (an attempted military take-over in Washington). Millar-Turman productions are planning *The Best Man* (behind-the-scenes for presidential nominations). *Fail-Safe* (Washington nuclear diplomacy) is already in the studios and so is Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* (more nuclear politics).

## Our heritage

First a Hollywood company plans to dramatise the early life of Sir Winston Churchill. Now Jack le Vien, who made the Hitler documentary *The Black Fox*, plans a documentary on Churchill. He is working out how he can cover the production budget so it technically counts as British and collects a share of the British Film Production Fund.

Don't blame the Americans for cashing in on a slice of Britain's heritage. Blame British producers for being fast asleep.

## Jazz in London

John Mortimer (he wrote in *films and filming* recently about making inexpensive second features) has joined with director James Hill and actors Robert Stephens and Shirley Anne Field in setting up a company to make a film about jazz in London. The title: *The Gigsters*.

An excellent subject. The last attempt to capture the London jazz scene was *All Night Long*: but somehow those professional studio gremlins jolted the music out of the groove.

## Grounded

It's not often that a film has its première in the place where it was shot. Atlas Film recently invited me over for the opening of their second German production. *Die endlose Nacht* which was shown in the main hall of Berlin's Tempelhof Airport where most of the film was shot. The hall itself is about twice the size of a large sound stage and made an ideal 'studio' for director Will Tremper to shoot his story about a group of travellers who are stranded at the airport by fog. Tremper, who wrote, directed and produced the film (he previously made the dynamic *Flucht nach Berlin*), is hampered by the episodic nature of the subject but nevertheless shows enterprise and originality successfully catching the cold isolation of the airport. Unlike Asquith's *VIPs*, which has a similar theme only set in London Airport, the cast lacks star personalities. The director has integrated the different stories quite easily without having any particular char-

acters too dominant. An enterprising venture which may help to restore a little lost prestige to German cinema.

## History in St Ives

A museum devoted to the history of the cinema has long been needed, but it has been left to two brothers, John and William Barnes, to achieve what the British Film Institute has failed to do. They recently opened a museum, called the Barnes Museum of Cinematography, in St Ives, which is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. It is the first time a museum of its type has been opened in Britain, and the 1,000 exhibits illustrate some 300 years in the development of pictures. Some of the items have been shown in the past at exhibitions such as the Observer Film Exhibition in 1956, but it is the first time the entire collection has been open to the public. A pity though that it has to be left to private individuals to inaugurate it.

## Special Offer

An accustomed sight is the double-bill poster, in which two films are advertised as a kind of 'package' deal. Columbia recently issued a trailer in the cinemas to publicise the co-features of *Maniac* and *The Damned*, which intercut footage from both films. Although Joseph Losey's *The Damned* has since had very favourable reviews, it was not given an official press show. Neither was *Maniac*. Incidentally, this programme opened at two London pre-release cinemas before it opened at a higher price West End cinema.

## English Roundabout

Last month I reported the London opening of Circlorama. This 360 degree screen looks like being with us for some while. A second Soviet programme, to follow *Russian Roundabout*, will open in a few weeks with scenes of the Bolshoi Ballet, Moscow State Circus, and the Soviet Army, Georgian and Ukrainian dancers. I hear that there is to be an English film made using the eleven camera Soviet principle, directed by Arnold Miller, to include an English circus, scenes of London, Windsor and Edinburgh and a run on a scenic railway. This is where Cinerama came in, only you can't look the other way.

## Dead

FRED R ARCHER, photographer who developed use of miniature sets, at 75, in Hollywood.

ROWLAND BROWN, writer-director, at 62, of heart attack, in Balbao, Calif. Did screenplays for *Angels with Dirty Faces*, *What Price Hollywood*; directed *Quick Millions*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

ELISE CAVANNA, at 61, of cancer, in Hollywood. Comedienne, appeared in films with W C Fields and Wallace Beery.

GEORGE HUBERT, at 82, in Hollywood. Began in vaudeville in 1910, started in films in 1917 with the old Metro company.

CLIFTON JAMES, at 65, in Worthing. Actor who impersonated Montgomery during the war, and played the title rôle in the film based on his experiences, *I Was Monty's Double*.

JAMES B LOWE at 83, in Hollywood. Silent film actor, played the lead in the 1927 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

JOHN MEEHAN, at 61, of cancer in Hollywood. Art director, won Oscars for *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Heiress* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

WILLIAM MELLOR, top cinematographer, closely associated with George Stevens (he was working on *The Greatest Story Ever Told*) at 59, in Hollywood.

MAX MILLER, last of the British vaudeville comics, at 68, in Brighton. Laurence Olivier based his interpretation of Archie Rice in *The Entertainer* on him. Miller appeared in several British pre-war films.

BYRON MORGAN, screenwriter from 1919-45 (*Roaring Road*, *Hell Diggers*, *Five Star Final*), at 74, of heart attack, in Hollywood.

FORREST H ORR, an actor for 45 years (he appeared with Hepburn in *The Philadelphia Story*), in Paterson N J, after a long illness.

ROLAND PERTWEE, who wrote many Hollywood scenarios of the 'thirties including *They Were Sisters*, and the play *Pink String and Sealing Wax*, at 78, in London.

IVAN SAMSON, British actor who appeared in many films, at 68, in London.

MYRON MORRIS STEARNS, Hollywood producer, writer, editor, at 78, of cancer, in Palm Beach.

RUDOLPH STERNAD, production designer (he did *On the Beach*), at 57, of heart attack, in Knoxville, Tenn.

BRYANT WASHBURN, star of silent comedies, at 74, of a heart ailment, in Hollywood.

EDDIE WELCH, stuntman for among others Tom Mix and Buck Jones, at 63, of diabetes, in Miami.

MONTY WOOLLEY, 'The Man Who Came to Dinner', former assistant professor of drama at Yale, at 74, of a heart ailment, in New York. He starred in many pre-war Hollywood comedies.

## Cuttings

The same people were in the front office signing me up this time who engaged me in 1931 when I started—Bette Davis on her return to Warner Bros to make *What ever Happened to Baby Jane?* in the London *Evening Standard*.

'I used 28,000 birds' said Hitchcock, 'of which 3,500 were professionally trained'. 'How did you get them to act so well?' inquired a reverent press woman. 'It was because they were so well paid' replied Hitchcock.—Report on the Cannes festival showing of *The Birds* in the *Sunday Times*.

Questioned about causing malicious damage to a cinema screen, R— J— H—, aged 17, told police: 'I didn't like Cliff Richard, so I put a hole in his face'—reported in the London *Evening News*.

Today we have a restless type of audience, composed of emotional young people who need to know, and to be reminded, that a strong manager — preferably a good-humoured character — is in charge of the cinema and will stand no nonsense.—W. Cartlidge, assistant managing director of ABC cinemas, in *Kine Weekly*.

Another early film which made an impact on me was Cecil B DeMille's *King of Kings*. This probably taught me more about the life of Christ than did a great deal of the Sunday school training I had as a boy. — Billy Graham in *Show* magazine.

## COVER

**'Our holiday picture' is how Tony Richardson describes his latest film, *Tom Jones*, which is his first excursion into a period subject, and his first in colour. John Osborne had the task of converting the rambling Henry Fielding novel into a compact, fast-paced, screenplay, retaining the bawdy humour of the 18th century. The film was shot on location, using towns in Somerset and Dorset that provided an authentic 18th century background, like Beaminster, Nettlecombe and Cranbourne. Albert Finney plays the title rôle, as the adopted youth whose amorous adventures with a squire's daughter (Susannah York), the daughter of a gamekeeper (Diane Cilento) and the Lady Bellaston (Joan Greenwood) lead him to Tyburn gallows. The film was photographed by Walter Lassally.**

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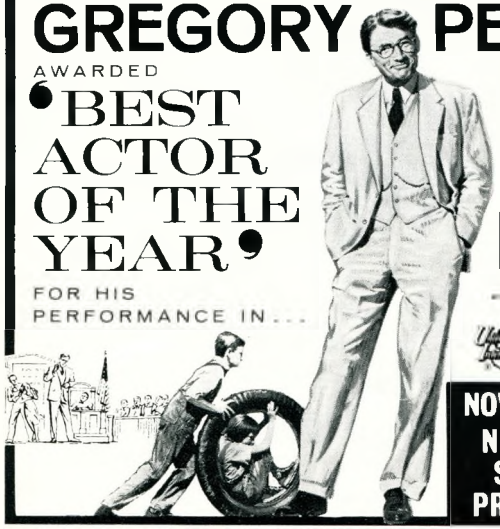

# To kill a Mockingbird

(A)

MARY BADHAM PHILLIP ALFORD JOHN MEGNA RUTH WHITE PAUL FIX
BROCK PETERS FRANK OVERTON

Screenplay by HORTON FOOTE Based upon HARPER LEE'S novel "To Kill a Mockingbird"
Directed by ROBERT MULLIGAN Produced by ALAN PAKULA Music by ELMER BERNSTEIN

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# *Tom Jones!*

ALBERT FINNEY SUSANNAH YORK
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JOAN GREENWOOD in ***Tom Jones***
also starring DIANE CILENTO

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UNITED ARTISTS

with GEORGE DEVINE and the guest appearance of DAVID TOMLINSON

Screenplay by JOHN OSBORNE

Produced and Directed by TONY RICHARDSON

EASTMAN COLOUR

A WOODFALL PRODUCTION

*'Interest charges alone on the money required to make "Cleopatra" are said to be accounting for £2,500 a day while the picture is being finished'*

# THE MONEY IN FILMS

SIR MICHAEL BALCON

Does the independent producer exist, or is he a myth? Sir Michael Balcon, who in the 'forties created Ealing Studios as an international symbol of creative progress of film-making, is in the 'sixties chairman of a new kind of creative co-operative, Bryanston Films.

TO BE AN independent film producer you need money—a vast amount of money. In this way—and this way only—one can be freed from all the tiresome problems of convincing other people that the pictures one wants to make are likely to be successful not as essays in artistry but as commercial enterprises. Without virtually limitless financial resources, the independent producer is a myth.

It is true that the new pattern of film production, both in Britain and Hollywood, has ended the rule of the massive production companies who were responsible for almost all the pictures they put into release. These companies employed producers and directors on a salary or long-term contract basis and produced scripts by a gigantic machine process.

Now all that is changed. The great majority of pictures are made by individual production companies which must obtain backing: first from the potential distributor who, if it approves the script and its producer, may advance up to seventy per cent of the production cost. This still leaves a not inconsiderable sum of money to be raised before the picture can go on the floor and now, backed by the distributor's guarantee, the producer must go to a joint stock bank to discount the guarantee and then to some other financing organisation, such as the National Film Finance Corporation. The NFFC is empowered only to make grants to pictures which it believes likely to achieve commercial success, not unreasonable when this fund is seen in its right context. It is not a supply of public money intended to inspire artistic adventures. It is a practical form of support for a commercial industry; even when seeking to assess the likely appeal of a picture the corporation has to bear in mind that any possible return on the money it advances, coming almost last in the order of recoupment, forms a not inconsiderable gamble.

All the same it must be remembered that the powers of the NFFC have been to some extent varied from those conferred by the original Act of Parliament. 'Hope deferred maketh a man's heart sick' . . . and there have been cases of producers assuming (perhaps optimistically) from protracted negotiations with the executive that their projects are likely to be approved, only to suffer disappointment later. This problem as far as producers are concerned is not, of course, unique to the NFFC.

Also, in my view, the corporation's powers have sometimes been used somewhat harshly, which makes me think that the amendment to the original Act might well have been a mistake. As, however, this mistake was made by Parliament, one must of necessity appreciate the difficulties which the NFFC has to face.

Even if a producer succeeds in getting the requisite finance and a completion guarantee, he will nevertheless also personally be committed for a substantial sum of money, largely by deferment of fees in part or whole. In addition he must be well enough off financially to stand the amount of expenditure which is necessary in preparing a production for the stage in which it will be possible to go to the sources of finance and to enlist their help.

I have personally helped producers overcome this sizeable obstacle and the Bryanston organisation, with which I am associated, also hopes to be able to give practical assistance in this direction; but at present its terms of operation preclude such help.

By now the picture I have painted must seem sombre enough, but there is yet another factor to which I must draw attention: the influence of the exhibitor.

If a picture hopes to recoup any substantial part of its cost in the United Kingdom it is dependent on obtaining suitable bookings from one or other of the two major circuits. Without such circuit bookings a film has virtually no chance of grossing substantial money in Britain. An appeal has recently been made through one of the industry's unions, the ACTT, for the formation of a sufficiently strong third

cinema circuit; but it is difficult to see how this will be possible when it is clear that the numbers of cinemas must continue to shrink for some time before any real period of stabilisation sets in. The Federation of British Film Makers has also expressed views on the need to change the pattern of exhibition.

Despite all these problems there are now more production companies than pictures actually made, for the West End of London is full of producers with pet projects, who fight, often vainly, to find the money to translate their dreams on to celluloid.

The core of the problem is the very considerable sums involved in film-making. A few pictures are made for comparatively small budgets, of course, but these are often as great a gamble in their own way as their big brothers. They usually end up with stray bookings from the tiny number of cinemas able to book a picture solely on its individual merits, without consideration of stars or the cumulative effect of a big publicity machine.

By and large, therefore, any attempt by an individual producer to obtain finance for a pet project must involve him in negotiations for at least £100,000 — often very much more. To obtain money on such a scale it is clearly necessary that he should have a good case to support his belief that he has a property (and possibly the stars and director to go with it) capable of earning at least twice that sum of money in a comparatively short time.

Twice that sum? Yes, for production costs represent rather less than half the net takings required. The cost of making all the necessary prints, arranging for sufficiently widespread advertising, and covering all office, clerical and servicing charges is at least as great as that of shooting the entire picture.

A film like *Lawrence of Arabia*, for example, which is estimated to have cost £5,000,000, will have to take something like £12,000,000 at the box-office before the profits begin to accrue. Interest charges alone on the money required to make *Cleopatra* are said to be accounting for £2,500 *a day* while the picture is being finished.

How can producers be independent when such sums may be involved?

Yet to demonstrate that independence cannot exist is like proving by spurious logic that black is white, or that one equals nought. Merely to demonstrate the overwhelming odds against the producer is not to allow for the streak of independence in human nature, without which the greatest achievement of our kind would never have been realised.

In its more diverse form, and despite the decline in cinemagoing, the British film industry, in recent years, has been often an exciting and virile experience in which not only has youth had its head but has also demonstrated that new ideas and new formulae can bring a much needed stimulus to the flagging box-office.

In some part I believe this exciting development has been brought about by a new conception of production responsibility in the Bryanston organisation. Bryanston is a co-operative venture — a loosely-knit association of people with a wide variety of talent to offer, pooling their resources for the benefit of them all. By this method we have from the start been able to view with greater sympathy than could be obtained elsewhere projects breaking new ground in the attempt to find a fresh method of expression for film story-telling.

To recall today that Bryanston enabled such pictures as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *A Taste of Honey* to be made is to invite the comment, 'Well, they must have done very nicely out of those two'. This ignores the fact that there was a considerable gamble involved in deciding to back the production of these pictures in the first place, for they were trend setters, not carbon copies of tried and tested screen ideas.

It is significant that a full fifty per cent of Bryanston films has been made by 'outsiders'. This is accounted for by the whole conception of the organisation, which is not merely to provide finance for 'safe' subjects but play a real part in developing the cinema as a popular art form.

A basic tenet of Bryanston is to provide complete freedom to the producer, once the basic elements — script, director, principal casting and budget — have been approved. Nobody demands to see rushes or in any way looks over the producer's shoulder while he is suffering his creative agonies.

We are able to affirm that every idea put forward in a reasonable shape is given serious consideration. The procedure is simple and as fair as we can make it. A permanent sub-committee of three directors (who are changed at regular intervals) weeds out the possibles from the impossibles. Even if only one member of the sub-committee is strongly in favour of a subject it will still go through for consideration by the board.

Although Bryanston or any major distributor will normally offer seventy per cent of the budget for an approved project, this still leaves a substantial balance which the producer must find. Sometimes we are able to assist here by negotiating foreign financial participation before production starts, thus enabling further money to become available against eventual distribution in different parts of the world.

Here, of course, lies a danger. British cinema box-office returns represent only a comparatively small part of the amount of money a picture can gross if it is equally successful in a wide number of countries— particularly, of course, the United States. This has resulted in a number of producers believing that the road to financial success must lie in a form of co-production which results in an 'international' subject. This, as often as not, introduces that screen bastard the Mid-Atlantic citizen, his accents carefully toned to be neither fish nor fowl.

It is my belief that the genuinely national picture is the only truly international one.

The type of British film most likely to succeed in other lands is the one which tells most excitingly of an aspect of life in Britain or the Commonwealth and not of fictional happenings in a producer's cloud-cuckoo land.

While it is important to emphasise the well-nigh intolerable problems of independent film production, I would not like it to be thought that Britain is full of producers and would-be producers trying in vain to obtain support for brilliant new ideas and scripts. The truth is that there are many half-baked propositions being hawked around and the amount of genuine original thinking is small.

It is true that the production based upon a successful play or novel is still likely to gain more attention than an original idea, yet our belief at Bryanston is in the need for the off-beat idea as such, irrespective of its origin, and every encouragement is given to an original screenplay which states a definite point of view.

In its hey-day Ealing provided a valuable stamping-ground for new talent. We never once imported a ready-made director and almost all our technicians grew up with us. We seldom plunged into the top star market—such big names of today as Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins and Peter Sellers were helped to stardom because of the films they made for us and did not at the time have a big box-office appeal in their own right.

Now that the major companies no longer have big production programmes, the organised training facilities we had at Ealing are today virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, the policy at Bryanston of providing openings for newcomers is to some degree an extension of the Ealing idea and has given support to directors of the calibre of Tony Richardson and Karel Reisz.

Like many other people, I confess to being tired of the constant labelling of films, 'New wave', 'kitchen sink' ... these terms leave me cold, and the whole conception of producing a series of pictures tied to the bandwagon of any trail-blazing success is equally abhorrent to me.

To be vital, films must reflect the temper of their times. Ealing comedies caught an irreverent approach to post-war problems which, I like to think, was socially acceptable while adding to the gaiety of the nation.

The most recent trend has been to explore the angry frustration of vast numbers of young people trying to come to grips with a society which has no real meaning for them. Films in this *genre* have had some valuable things to say. Now they have said them we need to move on to fresh fields.

The British screen 'document' of the mid-'sixties will take a different form from its percursors. What this form will be is not yet apparent, yet I am sure that it will be hammered out by the individual, if hardly independent, producer who, undeterred by the tremendous and always-growing difficulties, will somehow win through in the way that human expression always does triumph in the end.

# HOW TO GET INTO FILMS

## by the People who got in Themselves

Two years ago *films and filming* investigated the plight of thousands of people who want to get into films but who are frustrated by trade union restrictions, commercial suspicions on unproved talent and a lack of an industry training and apprenticeship scheme. Since then nothing has changed, except the films themselves. The modern renaissance of British cinema is self-evident that new blood is getting into films. How?

*films and filming* asked three questions of a representative number of the young generation now making films. How did you get a job? Have you experienced any reaction against you from the older generation? What do you think now needs to be done to increase the intake of more new blood?

Here, in their own words, is the story of Britain's break-through in the cinema by some of the people who in five years have changed the values of a generation

JOHN BLEZARD, *among the younger art directors in films and TV, wants a limited-entry training scheme—*

AFTER TRAINING at the Old Vic Theatre School and working in the theatre for several years I wrote around to all the film companies I could find. Finally I was lucky in being taken on as an assistant to the art director of a television film company. This was very unusual—the pace being so hectic that an art director finds it very difficult to find the time to 'break in' an inexperienced person.

At first, when I was working, I did find a certain amount of resentment from some of the people who were out of work.

As the film industry is a relatively small and fluctuating world I think some measure of control of entry is necessary in order to ensure that people who are spending their lives making films should have a reasonable level of employment.

Some kind of training school for a limited number of students would seem to be indicated. I believe the Royal College of Art has a course; but the lack of knowledge of it within the industry seems to imply that there is insufficient contact with the eventual outlet.

ANNE V COATES, *who edited 'Lawrence of Arabia' for David Lean, started with religion—*

I GOT INTO the industry through influence. I think you will find very few people in the industry today who have not had a helping hand to start them off. I went into a small religious company and did projection, sound recording library and helped in the cutting room. After the union 'suggested' I should join, it was not too difficult to transfer to the cutting rooms at Pinewood, which had always been my aim.

I think there always have been certain people who are frightened of their jobs and try to keep young people down (I myself suffered once from this soon after I had started). But with the growth of television, which has used up quite a lot of technicians, promotion is now quicker. Also the outgrown idea that you had to have been in the industry for years before you were given 'a break' is now obsolete, as I think it was realised that to use young people while their talent was still fresh was much more important than technical perfection.

I don't think that there is enough of the right sort of talent in the industry at the moment. This I think was caused by a great many things, one of which was that the right sort of people, when young, were not interested in going into films, but preferred one of the purer arts or industries. I think this is less so now. Also it has always been extremely difficult to get into due to the limited and erratic amount of jobs, which have been closely guarded by the unions. So unless people were extremely persistent they mostly became discouraged. Also I am afraid the wrong sort of people have always been attracted by films, people only interested in the money and so called glamour and these of course keep out the more serious aspirants.

One of the ways to start to remedy this would be to get the unions to give some guaranteed preference when jobs became vacant to young people who have shown they are really interested in films by either studying the cinema or drama at school, university or Polytechnic night classes, or can show that they have some ability along these lines. At the moment one of the easiest ways of getting into the cutting rooms, if you are a young boy, is to live near the studios and know anyone who works there who will help you into the post room. From there you are promoted to the numbering room and then into the cutting rooms without any qualifications at all. Some of these boys turn into excellent technicians, but most of them don't and they tend to keep out brighter boys.

Nearly all the assistants who were in the cutting rooms when I started at Pinewood are producers, directors or editors by now —but I don't think if you looked round today you would find the same situation.

BRYAN FORBES, *actor, writer director; an easy target for the discontents, but whose professional generosity and boundless energy deflects most of the shafts—*

I ENTERED FILMS as an actor. My first 'break' came as a direct result of brilliant perception by that much abused person The Casting Director. I was in a West End flop, which opened and closed in a blizzard —but I was spotted on the first night by Dennis van Thal (now a top agent) who was casting director for Pinewood studios. He got me into *All Over The Town*, and as a result of this I was offered a long-term contract by Rank. The contract was never signed — this was in 1948 — because my triumphal entry coincided with the collapse of the then Rank Empire. The cry went out 'Starlets of the World Unite' but they didn't — and I was out!

Obviously where actors are concerned the older generation cannot keep the young blood at bay — for the simple reason that C Aubrey Smith-types cannot play *Billy Liar*. QED New acting talent will always gain entry in direct ratio with the number

of rôles available at any one time. I think this much — when I started acting in films there weren't that number of rôles going for actors of my type (short, non-public-school) I still cherish (indeed have framed) a letter from Ealing Studios pertinent to a series of tests I did for a part in *The Cruel Sea*. Turning me down after weeks of anguish, they told me, in all seriousness that 'I wasn't Officer material'. Getting into a decent part in films in those days was like getting into Sandhurst. It was hell-you had to synchronise matches and all that stuff-and the Boche was no man's fool.

Parts such as Arthur in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* were simply not possible — there was no climate for them. Because of my background and accent I only played cowards or lower-deck humourists (I was actually encouraged by a director to pick my nose in one film. 'Always good for a laugh, you know'.) I calculate I spent nearly two years in celluloid prisoner of war camps always as a ranker, always killed off early in the film.

If we are talking about getting into films in the technical sense, with an eye to becoming an editor or director, then the answer is entirely different. Beyond any question the older generation, frightened and still fighting on battlefields that have long since become extinct, kept us all out. They didn't want to know. They didn't trust us—they still don't trust us. When I applied for a union ticket to direct my first film I received a letter asking for 'details of my experience'. This after twenty years in the business. I refused to answer it.

I receive on an average ten letters a week from young hopefuls begging me to produce the magic key for them. I don't possess it. I can only give them cold comfort. Although they will deny it until they are blue in the face the unions operate what is in effect a closed shop. I think they are shortsighted and that eventually they will reduce the film industry to the status of a manufacturer of toilet rolls (a state of mind they have already approached on many occasions).

I have been trying to advocate a three-year truce between the employers and *all* the unions whereby, in return for security and an immediate wage increase, the unions would forego all restrictive practices, minimum crew regulations, lunatic demarcation lines and so on. I am convinced that this would not lead to wholesale unemployment as predicted by some. On the contrary, it must mean that more films would be made—and made more cheaply.

There isn't sufficient new blood in the industry. Surely this is obvious. A few of us have made the break through in recent years, but we remain a handful. The whole structure of the industry wants overhauling from top to bottom (like Maud it is rotten to the core). The film is, in my opinion, the most exciting medium of all: it should be unfettered, not hemmed in by stupid, out-dated and entirely suspect methods and regulations. We want a revolution, bloody if necessary. I have already signed on as a donor.

JOHN FRASER, *typical of many young British actors; repertory, the Old Vic, 'The Dam Busters' and then into the top money category with 'The Trials of Oscar Wilde' and 'El Cid'—*

MY WAY IN was directly through television. Casting director Bob Lennard saw me in a serial of *Kidnapped*, for which I had been brought from Rep in Scotland, at the Citizen's Theatre. In England nowadays, actors almost without exception start in the theatre, and are subsequently approached by film people. If it's acting you're interested in, the theatre's the place to start.

In the acting field there is no reaction from the older generation, none whatsoever. Any difficulty I have encountered has been due to personality, not age or experience.

I have aspirations to direct, however, and this barrier remains enormous, mainly of course because of the way films are financed and distributed. Distributors and exhibitors are the flies in the industry's ointment.

We all know about the 'new wave' in the British cinema (and we thank the censor for it). There can never be too much opportunity for 'new blood', and as far as directors are concerned, I think there should be more 'shoe-string' or short films made, to fill out cinema programmes, instead of the quite insupportable supporting programmes we are forced to watch, if, like me, you are mad enough about the cinema and mean enough to want to see the whole programme. (The *money* that is thrown away on terrible second features, which no-one enjoys.)

It's up to exhibitors to bring back a bit of excitement to the cinema, by asking for off-beat or experimental programme filters when they have a big picture that will stand on its own. When the market is there, those small films can be to aspiring directors, writers, camera-men, what, in the theatre, the Reps are to the West End.

KAREL REISZ, *who fathered the British renaissance with 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', suggests there is opportunity but little vitality to the talent—*

I CAME IN via film journalism; work for the British Film Academy and British Film Institute. A 16mm amateur film led to the advertising film section of the Ford Motor Company, which led to a union ticket. Then there were six months of TV commercials before my first professional documentary.

The cinema operates as an industry and the struggle between the talent and the money is an inescapable part of it. Naturally the struggle is hardest when the filmmaker is young, *ie* before he has some kind of power. I don't think talent can be made to flourish by any form of re-organisation. Why and how one country suddenly throws up a Truffaut, a Godard and a Resnais and another does not, can not be explained in terms of the administration of an industry. (And Truffaut, Godard and half a dozen others *are* the French cinema.)

All the same, there is a great deal wrong in the organisation of British films which should be changed. The question is not only what should be done but who should do it. Three groups are involved—the unions, the backers (distributors, producers, the National Film Finance Corporation) and the young film-makers themselves. All share responsibility for the stagnation.

THE UNIONS. What happened in France? The young film-makers begged, borrowed or stole money and made films outside the unions. The success of their films forced the unions to accept defeat and relax rules. The ACTT should not wait until it is defeated in this way. It should *encourage* cheap, break-away films by varying crew requirements far more freely according to the budget and nature of films. Doing this would raise problems. The union would have to distinguish between established producers trying to cash in on this flexibility and genuine experimenters: it would have to judge between them. This is precisely what it should do. It should not be afraid of being accused of discrimination. The union *should* discriminate in favour of fresh talent, to keep things alive and insure the future. As a start, directors should be freed from the obligation of union membership.

THE BACKERS. The main problem here is that experiments are only attempted within a framework which already restricts experiment. Money is normally only available from the industry after presentation of a tight shooting script which can be precisely scheduled and the risks exactly calculated. The rigidness of this system means that the act of shooting is far too pre-determined, particularly for young directors. I realise that some directors work best with complete preparation; but most do not, especially in their early years. The system puts far too high a premium on professionalism too early in most directors' careers, often at too great a cost in freedom. Backers who have been prepared to experiment with new subjects must learn to experiment in the manner of production.

THE YOUNG FILM-MAKERS. Where are they? And where is their *energy*? The question is worth asking because this kind of survey assumes that all the blame for inactivity lies with the system. Part of it surely does, but why have other countries broken through? Why, for instance, is there an interesting group of young film-makers in New York where union and financial limits are more rigid than here?

About six months ago I was offered some money by a TV company to provide opportunities for experimental films by young applicants. I saw about twelve potential film-makers—some of them journalists who had pressed for better things in British films. All professed enthusiasm for the opportunity and promised projects. Of the twelve, five got as far as sending in treatments. Scripts were commissioned from four of them. What happened next?

Nothing. Faced with the prospect of translating hopes into action, energy mysteriously dried up.

Perhaps I contacted the wrong people (though I don't think so). More probably, the whole idea of the scheme was wrong

because it assumed that you can organise adventure from above. The energy has to come from the adventurers, and there does not seem to be very much of it around. Which leads one to reflect on the possibility that in the British cinema the undiscovered young may be as constipated as the established old; as the rest of us, in fact. Could *that* be part of the trouble?

JOHN SCHLESINGER, *whose reputation with a short for British Transport Films ('Terminus') put him overnight in the 'A Kind of Loving' category—*

I GOT INTO films through BBC Television, making films for Tonight and Monitor.

There were difficulties in getting my first film job. Although Sir Michael Balcon expressed interest in two films which I had made at University, they were reluctant to take me on as an assistant at Ealing. Some time later, after I had made a 16 mm documentary film about Hyde Park, the BBC summoned me to a selection Board for a producers' course; but I was turned down as unsuitable. At first I fared no better with the documentary companies. There were no vacancies and I had no union card, and one seemed to negate the other. It was only after I got a job researching a sponsored film about British cheese, which gave me the opportunity to assist the director, that I was able to get union membership.

I finally got a job as a free-lance filmmaker on the Tonight programme. Ironically enough, since the BBC does not recognise the ACTT, the union is only too anxious to enrol employees of the BBC: this is the only sure way of getting into the union.

Since I became a film-maker, I have found great difficulty in the introduction of new talent into the unions. Even when someone shows great aptitude, it seems almost impossible. We have found such a person, who has worked for us on three films in the capacity of a runner, but it has been impossible to get him a union card. The ACTT answer has always been that there are others, who need employment. These 'others' referred to people who were virtually unemployable, but whose interests were being protected.

Until there is a change in the economic system of film making, the gulf between documentary and feature technicians is still very wide, since producers, and indeed directors, are not willing to risk an untried documentary cameraman on a feature film.

I think we must (a) fight for a third category of film—a low budget feature, costing little, and therefore able to take more risks both with those who work on it, and with the type of subject, and (b) try to break down the resistance of the major circuits to the short film, and try to build up the shorts industry, as they have done in Poland. This would enable new directors more easily to get their first chance.

I was very lucky in finding a producer who was prepared to take a risk on me in my first feature film, after having seen some of my TV films. Similarly, after *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, it has been possible for several new directors to get their first break. But this does not go far enough. The tragedy really is that those who control the unions are basically disinterested in the cinema.

DON SHARP *crashed into films ten years ago. Before he directed his first feature he made seven documentaries, worked on three second units, did two children's films, fourteen TV films and four B films. He believes it's the production 'mainstream' that matters—*

I CAME IN FIRST as an actor, and had to go to extraordinary lengths to force my way in: next I became a screenwriter, largely through force of circumstance: then came the easiest step, to directing. I don't mean that I began to direct a feature at once—that took years. In fact the whole process has been slow, as it is with most people in our industry.

There is the occasional brilliant, or lucky, person who seems to arrive from nowhere almost overnight, but he is the exception.

When I came to England as an actor I found it impossible to get anywhere near the film studios. So two friends (one an actor, the other an assistant director in documentaries) and I formed a company to make a film of our own. We had no money to buy stories or hire writers, so we had to do it all ourselves. Full of confidence, we devoted our full time to the project and very soon the little money we had began to disappear at an alarming rate. Eventually we had our script ready —but what a slow laborious task we had found it. Then we tried to raise the money. £8,000 we needed. We might as well have asked for a million. We met more polite disinterested people in the next few months than I care to remember. The National Film Finance Corporation couldn't help us as we had no security, no distribution, no previous experience. Studios didn't even want to read the script. It wasn't a big enough subject for independent producers. It wasn't violent enough for the makers of B features. Hopes were raised several times by big-talking big-promising fringe people we met in the pubs of Wardour-street; Eight months had passed and we were desperate. We had all moved into one flat, and owed months of rent on that. Phone, electricity, gas . . . all were writing threatening letters. We had borrowed from every friend who could afford it. It looked like defeat. Then we ran into Dick Richards who, in those days, was writing the Bright Lights page on the *Sunday Pictorial*. We buttonholed him and told him our tale of woe. He was realistic. 'How do you know it's any good?' he asked. 'Read it' we said. What happened next astounded us. He sat down and read it! He liked it, questioned us further, and said he'd try and help. On the Sunday he ran a big story about us and appealed to business men in the North to 'have a flutter' for half the £8,000. His line was that they would risk it on the stock exchange but get no real fun out of it; here the risk was a little more, but they'd have the fun of participating in the making of a film. Two days later he sent us a note (the 'phone had been cut off) saying a chap named Gregory was on his way down to London to meet us. We borrowed a quid from the hall porter and all went to meet our angel. We talked and talked for six hours, and at the end it was all set. He would come in for £4,000. Armed with this we went to A.B.-Pathe about distribution. 'How do we know you can make a film of sufficient quality?' they asked. We had to agree there was no guarantee. None of us had ever made a film. 'But' we asked 'what if the quality was okay?' They said that in that case they would distribute. So we took a gamble. We proposed that we should start shooting and then show them the first week's rushes. If they liked them, they were then to give us a distribution guarantee covering the other £4,000. Somewhat startled, they agreed. We got a scratch crew and a cast together and went off to Suffolk where the whole film, interiors and exteriors, was to be shot. At the end of the first week we showed the rushes to Pathe. They liked them and said they would fix the distribution deal at once. We made the film and among the credits were — Original story and screenplay by Don Sharp and Frank Worth: Directed by Frank Worth: Produced by Darcy Conyers and Don Sharp. Among the leading actors were Darcy Conyers and Don Sharp — and I also did the production accounts. However we weren't out of the woods because we had finished shooting. Owing to the delays in getting the finance we had run into the bad weather and so we went over schedule and over budget. All, but all, of the money had gone. We went to meet Philip Green to talk to him about doing the music. He liked the subject, liked us, liked what we were trying to do and said he would do the music. Then we told him we couldn't pay him. He blinked a little but said he would do it for nothing if we could find the money for musicians, copying, and so on. We sold our share in the company to raise the money for that. And that was my first film — *Ha'penny Breeze*.

I found myself in hospital and sanatorium with tuberculosis for two years as a result. The film was released and received a favourable press. Some notices were unreservedly enthusiastic, others were critical of naive qualities and amateur moments; but on the whole they applauded the idea and method. I received messages of encouragement from Sir Michael Balcon and John Grierson (neither of whom I had then met) and from James Lawrie. When I eventually came out of hospital I got in touch with them and they invited me to write an original story for Group Three. I did, and stayed with Group Three for two years, writing four films and working as personal assistant to the producer on them. There were snags of course — it took me three attempts before I managed to get my ACTT ticket — but no doubt about it, *Ha'penny Breeze* paid off.

One hears a great deal about barriers — partly, I suppose, because most of us find it easier to criticise and complain than we

do to express our gratitude. Almost everybody trying to break into a new field will tell you that he encounters barriers. What it often means is that the newcomer hasn't been able to get exactly what he wants. In the case of an aspiring film-maker this may be because (a) he has nothing to offer; (b) he has approached the wrong person; (c) the timing of his approach has been wrong, coming at a time when 'they' have committed their available finance to other projects; or (d) he is so far ahead of his time that his ideas are too revolutionary for 'them'. This last group has a smaller membership than it imagines.

On balance, I would say that since I have been in the film industry I have met far more help than barriers. The situation was different, of course, when I was still trying to get in: but then I wasn't just asking for a job, I was asking for money, too.

Let's face it, the film industry is a very small industry whose rewards can be great and whose surface attractions appear to be considerable. Therefore more people wish to work in the industry than the output can accommodate.

One of the main functions of all trade unions in recent years has been to try and safeguard the jobs of those members already employed in a specific industry. Add these two facts together and the answer should be that it is impossible to get into the film industry. But that is not true. It is difficult, yes; but not impossible.

I've worked twice with trainees (at Pathe and at Independent Artists) and quite often with technicians who have only been in the industry a few months. In view of the fact that 'you can't get a ticket till you have a job, and you can't get a job till you have a ticket', how do they get in? It puzzled me for a long time, just as it puzzled me some years ago why ACTT should keep on turning down my application when so many members were willing to sign my form, or back it by writing letters.

Whatever the reason for this seeming contradiction in our behaviour, the fact remains that a certain number of new people are coming into the industry. Whether those who do get in have more talent than those who do not get in is anybody's guess. There is no possible way of knowing. Of these newcomers there is the occasional director from theatre or television, and a few writers turning to direction, but mostly the newcomers start in the lower grades and work up through the years to production manager, cameraman, editor, art director, and so on. Of these a few will eventually direct. It is what happens to these individuals in the years between entry and arrival at the top of their tree that is important. The process is slow, so slow that by the time they do arrive they have been exposed to the brainwashing process of environment, conditions, practices, and traditional methods for so long that they slip into acceptance of the conventional pattern. Their rebellious ideas, their enthusiasm for innovation, their desire to experiment with both content and form—these fine edges have been dulled on blunt films. This I think is one of the big dangers and big tragedies of our industry. You can argue that this spirit should never be dulled, and that it is up to the individual; but to do so is to reckon without human nature. You can quote individuals who have not lost this fine edge, but think for a moment and you will realise they are the exceptions. The brilliant film maker will always carry his excitement with him — and this is present in the top bracket of our films. It is in the mainstream of our industry that the tiredness shows itself, and this mainstream provides 80 percent of our output. The brilliant ones will always get into the industry, force the breaks to come their way, grasp opportunity, experiment, and lead. I do not think that the general health of the industry depends on them: I believe it depends on how far behind them the main body of the industry lags.

Within the present framework what is the most likely training area to explore? Obviously the making of B features.

Let's learn a lesson from Independent Artists. Their B features had a guaranteed price for the circuit release. Over and above this they earned more money on area sales to cinemas overseas. They stockpiled the films and eventually sold them to American television. When the Perry Como Show came off the air two years ago for its summer recess the replacement show was the Kraft Mystery Theatre. This was a collection of the best of the British B features — the greater number of which came from Independent Artists. They collected rave notices, enquiries about further product, and a fair sized cheque.

Somewhere in these facts and ideas is the basis of an idea to 'give opportunities to young film makers'. I know that was the aim of Group Three and that it eventually collapsed. That is why I suggest one man at the head instead of a committee; why I would avoid continuous production; and why I would strictly limit product to B features made in 15 shooting days each.

But who could run it? And what are the qualities he must have? He can't be a tired man. He can't be a man with his own fixed, firm ideas. He must be able to encourage the ideas of others, not impose his own on them. Practical in the techniques of film-making, he must not be paralysed by tradition, nor must he let the newcomers squander money by trying something that cannot possibly work. I have a feeling that any man with the right qualities would not be available at the money such a project could afford. Not, that is, if it were a permanent position. But if he took it for a year, and then someone else took over, and after that a third, the scheme might work.

PETER YATES, *repertory actor to assistant director; directed Cliff Richard in 'Summer Holiday'*—

ALTHOUGH IT took me three years to get an ACTT ticket, I got into films because I wanted to; and, despite your feeling (that it is impossible to break into films), I believe that the most important qualification for entering the industry is simply to want to make films. During the three years while I was waiting for my ticket, I spent some time—amongst other jobs—working in the cutting rooms of De Lane Lea, then a documentary company, and this experience has proved invaluable.

Having obtained a ticket as a third assistant director in 1957, I worked on two feature films as a 3rd, and on several more as a 2nd before Guy Hamilton asked me to work as his first assistant director on *A Touch of Larceny* (in 1959). Having been an assistant director himself (to Carol Reed) Hamilton was naturally sympathetic to his own assistant, and encouraged me in my direction of the crowds in *Larceny* and in second unit direction. Ever since then, he has been a willing source of invaluable advice.

Becoming an assistant director is certainly no guarantee that one will eventually become a director—although it gave me the opportunity of working closely with people like J Lee Thompson, Carl Foreman, Mark Robson and Tony Richardson. Nobody will *offer* an assistant director his own film to direct, despite the record of such ex-assistants as Carol Reed, Robert Aldrich, Guy Hamilton, Joe Mankiewicz and Antonioni. I feel it was really because of my experience in the theatre that I was offered my first film as a director.

Despite my own experience, if asked to advise anyone on how to become a film director I would tell him to try first to become a television director. In television he will get tremendous experience in handling actors, shaping stories, and presenting his work visually. But, even with such television experience, he would be up against the water jump—whatever the leap to director, from writer, lighting-cameraman, editor, TV director, actor or assistant director, it seems that it is always difficult to make.

Many of the established and successful figures in the film business are genuinely interested in promoting and encouraging new talent. Some of them, unfortunately, are hampered by the financial structure of the industry and all the conventions involved. Nevertheless, I have received tremendous encouragement and help from people like Ian Dalrymple.

It is a pity to call it an industry: but if it is an industry, then there is no other industry that so misuses and ignores its young talent, and no industry that makes so little provision for its own future—perhaps Peter Newington's training scheme at the Royal College of Art will help: I hope so. At the same time, there is undoubtedly a lot of exciting new blood around, and a lot of talented new film-makers are making pictures. The major qualification for new film-makers is simply to want—badly enough—to make films. The people who feel strongly enough and have important things to say through films —the real, unsuppressable talent—will find the way through the barriers of accountants and unions and make the pictures.

# THE FACE OF '63

## 6—JAPAN by Donald Richie

In Japan, home of the status quo, two facts remain. In 1963 Japan will again make more films than any other country including India, and, again, all costs and a tidy profit will be received from the Japanese audience itself. This means that, once again, Japan will turn out an assortment of hand-tooled junk and, all bills paid by the end of the first month's showings, companies again need not seek to conform to any foreign standards of excellence for the reason that it is not necessary to send films to other countries in order to pay for them. Economic tremors, however, occur with more frequency than usual these days and —if not in 1963 then perhaps in 1964—the great golden age of making money in films may, as has occurred in other countries, come to a sudden and lurching halt.

For one thing, Japan produced only 375 feature films in 1962 against 535 in 1961. Though it still beats India, Japanese production is falling off. For another, the total number of spectators attending films in 1962 was almost 50 per cent less than in the peak box-office year of 1958. Costs are still covered by attendance of the home audience but obviously this is not going to continue for very long.

The standard of excellence has already fallen. It began, in fact, its swift decline almost ten years ago. In 1954 there were at least 15 first-rate pictures, in 1963 one will hunt to find five. Yet, when Japanese producers seek the reason for this mysterious dwindling of the audience, this fact tends to elude them. Instead, such standard ogres as television and double-entry bookkeeping are indicted. Though these may play their part, the fact remains that a film like *Heaven and Hell*—not first-rate Kurosawa but better than most else around—is a landslide box-office success, earning in its first two weeks' showings more than the combined runs of *Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro*.

Why this should occur when the much better *Throne of Blood* and *The Lower Depths* did little or nothing is an indication of the general low level of films in Japan. Both of these latter films appeared

● *Masaki Kobayashi (above) directs Akira Ishihama in the harakiri sequence from 'Harakiri'. Below, the scene as it appears in the film, which was the Japanese entry at Cannes*

in 1958 and, good as they were, had competition. The new Kurosawa has a clear field. What else would one see?—Toei sword-operas and detective-thrillers? Nikkatsu juvenile delinquents? Shochiku weepy home dramas about good girls in the big world? Daiei's pseudo-sophisticated sex comedies? Toho's wholesome epics on the problems of the very young?—all of which *genres* each company (each to a *genre*) has been churning out for a decade.

If the reason for the fall in attendance is bad films then the reason for bad films lies just here. In tidy Japan, land of the fait accompli, producers have long sought to believe that company profile is most important and that a systematic segmentising of the audience was the best way to avoid stepped-on feet. In the West this would not have worked but the Japanese audience is—or was—fairly docile. Toei patrons saw, literally, only Toei films; boys and girls flocked to Nikkatsu to see Nikkatsu boys and girls. That audience, however, is grown up now, and is weary of its pabum. The new audience sees all of this as old-fashioned, which it is. Allocation of the audience built the Japanese industry into the largest in the world and it is now destroying it.

There have been many attempts to stop the disintegration, among them even the attempt to make better films, and it is here that one may look for hope in 1963. The five major companies are, for the first time in their existence, allowing new directors to make pictures for them. Usually the director had to wait until he became fairly old before he could direct—the climb up the ladder took that long. It was rather like a 'bus queue. Everyone, regardless of qualifications, got on.

Things are now different. Shochiku, landed gentry amongst the companies with Shiro Kido protecting the home, watching over the morals of the young, quite suddenly allowed the absolutely unknown Masahige Narusawa to turn out *The Body*, a deliciously amoral bittersweet comedy about a young lady (played to perfection by Isuzu Yamada's daughter, Michiko Saga) who never quite realises that her sexual intensity is the very thing that scares away the men. This act followed a somewhat sub rosa policy of the company. Several years ago it allowed the now forgotten Nagisa Oshima to make a series of new wave films (in which it turned out that new wave meant young ladies raped in unlikely places) and last year not only distributed Susumu Hani's excellent *A Full Life* but even allowed Ineko Arima to take part as the heroine, which is a bit like Irving Thalberg loaning Norma Shearer to John Cassavetes.

Toei, which has the most tenacious not to say most faithful, audience, comprised as it purposely is of school children and the near illiterate, is letting the forever controversial Tadashi Imai (*Rice, A Story of Pure Love*) make *Bushido Zangiku Monogatari* (English title not yet decided though the Japanese means something like *Cruel Tales of Bushido*). This is a three-generation story beginning with a samurai and ending with a kamikaze pilot, all three parts played by the perennial Kinnosuke Nakamura. Toei thinks it knows which side its butter lies. Kinnosuke and Imai are supposed to both reconcile and counteract each other with the audience—as though Errol Flynn in the palmy '30's had appeared in a lesser Orson Welles film.

Nikkatsu has yet to see the light. Indeed, they do not even know it is dark. For almost ten years now the teenage idol, Yujiro Ishihara, has been their property. He has made himself a fortune and made a good many for Nikkatsu. In addition he is the brother of Shintaro Ishihara, popular novelist and sometime director (the last section of *L'Amour a Vingt Ans*.) There is no doubt that he has seen the light because he is beginning his own independent company. The forsaken Nikkatsu is adjusting itself, it thinks, by finding little boys who look like the young Yujiro. He had buck teeth and these proved endearing so all little Nikkatsu boys tend to look a bit like chipmunks. In the forefront at present and being pushed quite hard is young Koji Wada. Nikkatsu's other asset is Jo (or Joe) Shishido, 'the John Wayne of Japan' and it is on such slender resources that the company intends to weather the flood. Its single decent director (unless one includes Kiriro Urayama, the new 31 year-old whose *Kupola* was so disastrously sent to Cannes last year) is Yasushi Nakahira, much mistreated, made to do films like Yujiro's Japan-Egypt co-production, and consequently difficult to work with. He is the company's sole claim to any kind of respect.

Daiei changes its profile upon need and at present is in some kind of chameleon state. A one-man company with Masaichi Nagata ('Japan's Darryl Zanuck') at the helm, it has caught on to at least one of the international trends and made several 70mm 'epics', among them *Buddha* and *The Great Wall of China*, both of which failed to bust blocks. Its real strength is that Nagata tends to both love and hate artists. It was he who gave the late Mizoguchi anything he wanted, and it was he who was, albeit grudgingly, responsible for the production of *Rashomon*. It was also he who was so disturbed by what he thought were the political implications of *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (his co-production) that he relegated Japan showings to suburban cinemas bottom half of the double bill.

At present the Daiei directors, the better ones at any rate, are having something of a rough time. The talented Yasuzo Masumura takes what scripts the board of directors gives him, so does the really talented Yuzo Kawashima. The older Kimisaburo Yoshimura—disciple of Mizoguchi and a continuation of the line—has to make a film about young love in Hiroshima, and even Kon Ichikawa is affected. Even—because Ichikawa is not only Daiei's best but now one of the best of Japanese directors. He wanted to make *The Sin*, about a member of Japan's little-known





**Yasujiro Ozu** (centre, between character actors Nobuo Nakamura and Eijiro Tono, directing 'Taste of Mackerel') is the finest director of his generation in Japan—perhaps the whole world

**Akira Kurosawa** directs a scene (with Toshiro Mifune, Tatsuya Mihashi, and Kyoko Kagawa) from his new 'Heaven and Hell'. Miss Kagawa — seen abroad in 'The Bad Sleep Well' and 'Okasan' — is also in the director's 'The Lower Depths'

**Fujiko Yamamoto** (with director Kon Ichikawa on the set of 'The Revenge of Yuki-no-Jo') remains Japan's most popular female star. The West has seen her in 'The Golden Demon' and, briefly, in 'Buddha.' Shortly she will be seen in Ichikawa's 'I Am Two Years Old'

**Ayako Wakao** (on the left, with actor Kazuo Hasegawa in female kimono) is one of the most intelligent, as well as talented younger actresses. She is seen here in Ichikawa's 'The Revenge of Yuki-no-Jo', in which Hasegawa, one of Japan's most durable matinee-idols plays a Kabuki female impersonator

**Toshiro Mifune** (right) Japan's most famous international star, has recently turned director and is at present in the Philippines making and starring in 'The Legacy of Five Hundred Thousand' (a scene from which is shown below—Mifune, right)

**Machiko Kyo** (at right, with director Masumura rehearsing a scene from 'A Woman's Life') is one of Japan's most durable actresses. Seen abroad in 'Rashomon', 'Ugetsu', 'Gate of Hell' and 'Street of Shame', she recently played the goddess Kannon in 'Buddha'

pariah class, made it, lost money (among other things the company held against him was his waiting for two weeks on expensive location in order to get just the right kind of sky for the final scene) and was called onto Nagata's carpet. The upshot was that he made *I Am Two Years Old* and *The Revenge of Yuki-no-Jo*. Both were completely different from what Ichikawa has proved he does superlatively well (*Enjo, Kagi, Nobi*) and both were intended as money-makers. Even worse was in store for him—it was he who was to have directed *The Great Wall of China* until he refused so strenuously that he was suspended.

It is an indication of Ichikawa's calibre that *I Am Two Years Old* is delightful and that the Yuki-no-Jo film is the most visually exciting of 1963 so far. Making him handle this tired old melodrama at all is like asking Stanley Kubrick to do *Stella Dallas*. It was last seen as a vehicle for Misora Hibari, Japan's answer to Shirley Temple. Yet Ichikawa, taking full advantage of the fact the hero (played by Kazuo Hasegawa, a real old-timer, and presumed box-office attraction only because of the presumed fanatical loyalty of Japanese film fans) being a Kabuki *onnagatta* is always in female kimono, created one of the most perverse pictures to come from Japan. In addition, he almost stylised the plot out of existence and treated the entire picture as a pretext for special effects of the most inventive kind.

The picture lost money. Daiei had hoped to on one hand rope in nostalgic oldsters and on the other attract the more adventuresome. But Ichikawa's handling alienated the former and the tired story itself, the latter. As usual Daiei fell between two uncomfortable stools and Ichikawa finds himself in the doghouse again. Not accidentally, say some, who call the film *The Revenge of Ichikawa*.

Toho has, of course, Kurosawa—that is, it has distribution rights to his films. It also has Hisamitsu Horikawa (a pupil of Kurosawa) whose new *Black and White* is a very taut and well controlled detective thriller. It also has the vastly underrated Mikio Naruse. As the single company which has learned the producer-system of making films, Toho's level of excellence is highest, perhaps because it avoids the lows which tend to drag down the levels of other companies. Both Shiro Toyoda (*Wild Geese, Grass Whistle*) and Yasuke Chiba (*Downtown*) are in decline and Toho remains the single company which will not go out on a limb with new directors—perhaps a consequence of the producer system.

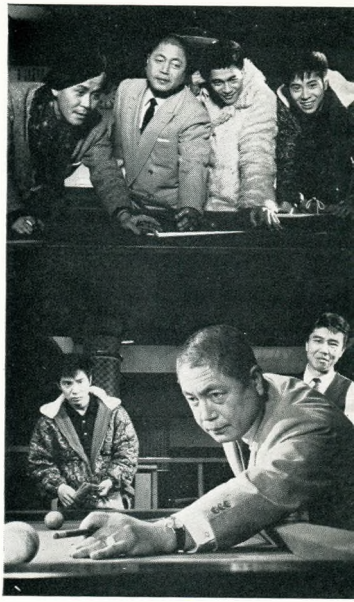
One can—indeed, must—think of Japan's industry in terms of companies rather than, as in the case of some countries, in terms of producers or, in the case of most, of banks, because the five companies continue a monopoly which until very recently has shown no sign of cracking. The five companies own all the studios and all the theatres. Thus it is company policy which determines—much as it was once determined in America. Toei's Okawa is a businessman who will say: 'Don't know much about this film business, know a lot about transportation and baseball though.' Which is to be expected since the company gets its money from private railway lines and spends much of it on expensive baseball teams. Toho's Shimizu is something of a benevolent puppet and under him the producer system has flourished. Daiei's Nagata has grand ideas of himself ('This is a Nagata Production') but walked out of the first pre-screening of *Rashomon*. It is a wonder, actually, that Japanese films are as good as they occasionally are.

One of the reasons, perhaps the main one, is that each company has at least several good directors. Shochiku has one of the finest in the world in Yasujiro Ozu — a man whose films are always alike and always brand new at the same time. His latest *The Taste of Mackerel* (the Japanese *Samo no Aji*, sounds much more felicitous) finds him again in the milieu of the Japanese home as it is, heightened with that awareness of hidden depths which the West is just now discovering in Antonioni. It also has Masaki Kobayashi whose *Ningen no Jokken* has been seen in Europe and whose *Seppuku* (called *Harakiri* in English) is the finest Japanese film of the year.

And then there is Kurosawa. If one ever wonders what it is, as I often do, that keeps the Japanese film from the resolutely second-rate of the Indian, from the pathetic quality of the Philippine, from the inanities of the Chinese film (from *either* China), one could do no better than to look at Kurosawa.

In a land where you join them without even thinking of fighting them, Kurosawa remains the great exception. Independent, individual, he once kept Toho waiting a year in order that he might finish *Seven Samurai* as he wanted. When Shochiku wanted to cut his nearly three-hour version of *The Idiot* he told them to cut it lengthwise. He has never stood for any nonsense, has never avoided trouble, has never compromised. His craftsmanship is impeccable and the moral fervour of his films is created by the same open, even hostile, honesty which characterises his dealings with the companies. Not that he has many any longer because he was among the first major directors who went independent — all of his pictures from *The Bad Sleep Well* on have been his own productions. After fulfilling his Toho contract with *The Hidden Fortress* he formed his own company — and forming one's own company is perhaps the only way to be independent in Japan. An independent director has very little chance indeed.

Yet the big five have had such a monopoly that, even now, an independent company is hard pressed. The independent *Naked Island* (also called *The Island*) was shown only in isolated small cinemas here and there. The company's latest, *The Man* (about a group of fishermen, including a woman, adrift on the high seas), has received the same sparse showings and much less money. Hiroshi Teshigahara's *The Pit-*



**Yasushi Nakahira** (top) rehearses Mikizo Hirata, Daizaburo Hirata, and Mitsuo Hamada in a scene from his new film 'The Bad Virgin'. Above is the finished shot as seen in the film

**Kimisaburo Yoshimura** (with Jiro Tamaya and Wakao Ayakao on the Hiroshima set for 'A Time to Remember') is a disciple of Kenji Mizoguchi and the only director who carries on this particular line. Well-known in Japan, the West is familiar with his work only through the final section of the omnibus 'A Woman's Testament'

## best in London

***Lawrence of Arabia: two years in Lawrence's life, directed by David Lean. With Peter O'Toole and Alec Guinness. Metropole. Reviewed February 1963, page 32.

**Days of Wine and Roses: how alcoholism breaks up a marriage, with Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick. Directed by Blake Edwards. Warner. Reviewed this issue, page 22.

*Boccaccio '70: the Decameron brought up to date by Fellini, Visconti and DeSica. Curzon (subtitled) and Rialto (dubbed). Reviewed April 1963, page 29.

*The Great Escape: based on Paul Brickhill's account of a mass breakout from a POW camp. Directed by John Sturges. Odeon, Leicester-square. Reviewed this issue, page 21.

*Heavens Above!: the church comes under the scrutiny of the Boulting brothers, with Peter Sellers, Cecil Parker, Eric Sykes and Bernard Miles. Columbia. Reviewed this issue, page 22.

*The Longest Day: D-Day seen from the Allied and German viewpoints, directed by Wicki, Annakin and Marton. Leicester-square Theatre. Reviewed December 1962, page 40.

## best at your local

GENERAL RELEASE

***Hud: Penetrating view of the clash between the old and the new way of life on a Texas ranch. Directed by Matin Ritt. ABC release from June 24. Reviewed June 1963 page 26.

**To Kill a Mockingbird: lawyer defends Negro rights in a small town. Directed by Robert Mulligan. With Gregory Peck. Rank release from July 1. Reviewed June 1963, page 27.

**Days of Wine and Roses: (see above). ABC release from July 1.

*Tales of Terror: three-part excursion into the macabre, directed by Roger Corman. With Vincent Price. ABC release from June 17. Reviewed May 1963, page 30.

LIMITED RELEASE:

*Life of Adolf Hitler: documentary on the Nazi rise and fall compiled from the archives by Paul Rotha. Reviewed October 1962, page 34.

*Knife in the Water: fresh approach to the eternal triangle love theme by director Roman Polanski. With Leon Niemczyk. Reviewed February 1963, page 35.

*Winter Light: new work from Ingmar Bergman in which he deals with a priest who has lost his faith. Reviewed June 1963, page 27.

## general releases

MONTH OF ORIGINAL REVIEW IN PARENTHESIS

**June 10**

ABC *Come Fly with Me* (May 1963)/*The Hook* (March 1963)

RANK *The List of Adrian Messenger* (this issue)

INDEPENDENT *Drops of Blood* (this issue)/*Confess Dr Korda*

**June 17**

ABC *Tales of Terror* (May 1963)/*Panic in Year Zero*

RANK *Mouse on the Moon* (June 1963)/*Sons of Thunder* (this issue)

INDEPENDENT *The Yellow Canary* (June 1963)/*The Navy Lark* (reissue, November 1959)

**June 24**

ABC *Hud* (June 1963)/*Tomorrow at Ten*

RANK *The Interns* (*this issue*) / *A Guy Called Caesar* (*this issue*)

**July 1**

ABC *Days of Wine and Roses* (this issue) / *Return to Sender*

RANK *To Kill a Mockingbird* (June 1963)

**July 8**

ABC *It Happened at the World's Fair*/*Swordsman of Siena* (June 1963)

RANK *The War Lover*

**July 15**

ABC *The Small World of Sammy Lee* (June 1963)/*Calculated Risk*

RANK *Diamond Head* (this issue)

**July 22**

ABC *The Story of the Count of Monte Cristo*/*Gay Purree*

## westend premieres

**Cleopatra:** directed by Joseph Mankiewicz. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and Rex Harrison star in the most expensive film yet produced. Dominion, July 31.

**Come Blow Your Horn:** comedy about a high-living bachelor and the Jewish family home, with Frank Sinatra, Lee J Cobb and Tony Bill. Directed by Bud Yorkin. Plaza, August.

**Donovan's Reef:** John Ford takes time out from the west, with an escapist story set on Hawaii. With John Ford, Lee Marvin and Elizabeth Allen. Plaza, mid-July.

**Four Days of Naples:** the battle in which the Neapolitans drove the Germans out of Naples, during the war. Directed by Nanni Loy. Ritz, late June.

**The Great Escape:** prisoner-of-war escape story, directed by John Sturges. With Steve McQueen, Hannes Messemer, Richard Attenborough, Robert Graf, James Coburn and Charles Bronson. Odeon, Leicester-square, June 20.

**PT 109:** President Kennedy's war exploits, with Cliff Robertson. Directed by Leslie Martinson. Warner, July 25.

**Tom Jones:** Tony Richardson's first period film, from the Fielding novel. With Albert Finney, Susannah York, Dame Edith Evans, Diane Cilento and Hugh Griffiths. London Pavilion, June 26.

**The War Lover:** adapted from the John Hersey novel about tensions on war-time operations. Directed by Philip Leacock. With Steve McQueen, Robert Wagner and Shirley Anne Field. Plaza, June 20.

**The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm:** the life of the brothers, incorporating four of their fairy tales. In Cinerama. With Laurence Harvey, Carl Boehm, Russ Tamblyn, Terry-Thomas. Directed by George Pal and Henry Levin. Coliseum, July 11.

## index

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# BALLET RAMBERT

**16th July for two weeks**

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**Sadler's Wells Theatre**

# THE GREAT ESCAPE

## *Richard Whitehall finds Sturges in a genial mood . . .*

**Directed and produced by John Sturges. Screenplay by James Clavell and W R Burnett from the book by Paul Brickhill. Director of photography, Daniel Fapp. Art director, Fernando Carecre. Editor, Ferris Webster. Music, Elmer Bernstein. A Mirisch-Alpa production, distributed by United Artists. American. Panavision. De Luxe colour. Cert. U. 173 mins.**

*Hilts,* STEVE McQUEEN; *Hendley,* JAMES GARNER; *Bartlett,* RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH; *Ramsey,* JAMES DONALD; *Danny Velinski,* CHARLES BRONSON; *Blythe,* DONALD PLEASENCE; *Sedgwick,* JAMES COBURN; *Willie,* JOHN LEYTON; *MacDonald,* GORDON JACKSON; *Ashley-Pitt,* DAVID McCALLUM; *Cavendish,* NIGEL STOCK; *Soren,* WILLIAM RUSSELL; *Ives,* ANGUS LENNIE; and *Von Luger,* HANNES MESSEMER.

Through the early morning mist a heavily guarded military truck convoy speeds across the German countryside toward Stalag Luft III. It is opening day for Germany's maximum security POW camp, where Allied flying officers who refuse to stay caged ('It is the sworn duty of officers to try to escape, to harass the enemy to the best of their advantage', the senior British officer, Ramsey, reminds the Camp Commandant), the escape artists, are being brought together in an escape proof camp ('We're putting all our rotten eggs in one basket', says Von Luger). Within minutes of their arrival seven prisoners are hitting the escape routes.

Based on that gallant and tragic episode in which 250 Allied personnel were to escape and cause chaos in Nazi Germany; in which 76 actually made it, and in which 50 were recaptured and massacred by the Nazis; for which 600 men tunnelled for close on a year, shoring up the passageways with stolen scraps of wood, improvising a ventilation system and even a miniature railway; for which a whole complex system of forging, tailoring uniforms into civilian clothes, of map-making, was organised. The film is a detailed summary of the escape and its aftermath, for it a complete reconstruction of Stalag Luft III was built near Munich, and care was taken to get the details right (the walls of the huts were repainted six times to get the remembered degree of weathered greyness).

Everything has been done for authenticity of detail, and yet the vital element has still eluded the unit. As a comedy with loose dramatic overtones the film does well enough—it's often funny and once or twice exciting—but there's a desperate lack of involvement. For one thing it's far too long, the film is effectively over a good half-hour before 'The End' title comes up on the screen—there is, it is true, a rip-roaring episode of McQueen high-tailing it across the countryside on a high-powered motorcycle in a frantic bid for the Swiss border which is interesting but hardly credible (and it's no real defence to claim that 'it actually happened'—did it?—an incident must carry its own conviction).

Perhaps one's evaluation of the work has been knocked awry by the claims made for it during the production stage; by Sturges' own claim that 'every line breathes courage yet there are no heroics, no flashback cliches to wives and girlfriends', that 'this film is about men, not too brave, not too cowardly, with an abundance of humour'. The cold brilliance of his westerns, the flexibility of his long shot/medium shot technique, the fact that he is a man's director in the same way Cukor is a woman's director, led one to expect a harshly vivid evocation of a man's world (there's nary a woman in sight, which should be a good thing in a Sturges film), but this is Sturges in an unexpectedly genial mood. In opting for the virtues of understatement Sturges has come close to making the definitive 'British' escape story.

It's not just that the soggier cliches are handled soggily—compare, for instance, the handling of that 'See you in Piccadilly' line here with the way Alfred Lynch handled a similar sentiment in Andrew Stone's fresher, more vivid, and much funnier escape story *The Password is Courage* —but that the characterisations are pattern-moulded from a whole decade of POW pictures, right back to *The Wooden Horse,* the characters have their vital characteristics all but pinned across their backs ('The Cooler King', The Scrounger', 'The Tunneller', 'The Forger', 'The Man from Down Under'). Only Hannes Messemer's subtle Commandant has an essential conflict between humanity and duty and is, consequently, by far and away the best performance in the film.

POW life, like prison life, is a repressive system which left a mark on many of its victims for years afterwards. One man, here, goes 'stir crazy' and dies on the barbed wire when, for a moment, the film seemed about to spill over into something fresh and meaningful. But we're immediately whisked back to the stiff-upper-lippedness of the rest, and the opportunity to break with cliche (which is what I had been expecting of this film, remembering *Escape From Fort Bravo*) is thrown away, it adds nothing new to one's sum total of knowledge of what life in a POW camp was like.

*The Great Escape* isn't really a bad film, just a disappointing one; it has all the built-in ingredients for a smash hit, and I shall be surprised if it doesn't end fairly high on the year's roll of box-office successes, for it's really rather an escapist escape movie, if you see what I mean, a real 'family type' entertainment.

# THE UGLY AMERICAN

## *Raymond Durgnat sees Brando lose his fire . . .*

**Produced and directed by George Englund. Screenplay by Stewart Stern from the novel by William J Lederer and Eugene Burdick. Director of photography, Clifford Stine. Editor, Ted J Kent. Music, Frank Skinner. Art directors, Alexander Golitzen and Alfred Sweeney. A Universal-International production, distributed by Rank. American. Technicolor. Cert. U. 120 mins.**

*Harrison Carter MacWhite,* MARLON BRANDO; *Deong,* EIJI OKADA; *Marion MacWhite,* SANDRA CHURCH; *Homer Atkins,* PAT HINGLE; *Grainger,* ARTHUR HILL; *Emma Atkins,* JOCELYN BRANDO; *Prime Minister Kuan Sai,* KUKRIT PRAMOJ; *Joe Bing,* JUDSON PRATT; *Rachani,* REIKO SATO; *Munsang,* GEORGE SHIBATA; *Senator Brenner,* JUDSON LAIRE; *Sears,* PHILIP OBER; *Sawad,* YEE TAK YIP; *Andrei Krupitzyn,* STEFAN SCHNABEL; and *Col Chee,* POCK ROCK AHN.

Hollywood's periodic attempts to tackle political issues of the day have usually provoked the public to 'vote with its feet' by staying out of the movie-houses altogether. Depressions and World Wars have briefly roused public interest—but all too often the films offered have been conceived in goodie-baddie terms too obvious to satisfy people's awareness that politics are not a western, but a much more nuanced, and, in a sense, cynical business. This criticism applies as much to 'enlightened' films like *Juarez* as to *One Minute to Zero* and the anti-Red cycle produced by hysterical nitwits whose films boomeranged so badly abroad as practically to deserve the Stalin Peace Prize.

Leaving aside Preminger's elephantine *Advise and Consent,* perhaps the best recent American film on politics is *Spartacus,* which is cynical enough to ring true. Nowadays TV interviews and newsreels are beginning to give world politics what for the the general public they never had, *convincing* human scale, as well as providing people with the background knowledge and the sense of urgency and complexity necessary for politics to be sufficiently 'emotionalised' for entertainment. There's some reason to hope that 'political' themes will gradually be accepted just as readily in the cinema as any other.

In a general way, *The Ugly American* has

the right idea. Marlon Brando plays 'Mac' MacWhite, American ambassador to a small state in South-East Asia, which is under heavy pressure from the Communists. Misunderstandings with his old wartime ally Deong (Eiji Okada), now a neutralist leader, lead MacWhite into the common American error of branding everyone who doesn't wholeheartedly endorse all American policies as a 'Communist'. In effect he drives his old companion into the arms of the Chinese, civil war breaks out, and only when MacWhite renounces his brash dogmatism is a Communist takeover averted—at the expense of his old friend's life.

The film recalls *The Quiet American* in more than just its title, reversing Mankiewicz's weird anti-neutralist (even anti-British) attitude. One's reaction to both films will inevitably depend on one's political opinions, but there can be little doubt that *The Ugly American* has a far maturer conception of political realities.

It recognises that the struggle between communism and capitalism involves questions other than those of 'freedom vs tyranny'—a sub-plot about a children's hospital raises issues of poverty, famine and disease, those little matters which so regularly escape the attention of anti-Red fanatics.

All the same, we in Britain find it hard to sympathise with MacWhite when he eventually capitulates to the Commie-obsession of a barnstorming Senator, in view of the general feeling in England that McCarthyism in its various forms is a grisly farce to which only Billy Wilder in his most sardonic *Stalag 17* mood could possibly hope to do justice. The politically aware British spectator will surely be left dissatisfied by many things in the film. It takes for granted that American aid and private charity can solve the Asians' problems, it portrays the American puppet-ruler as a charming and really quite enlightened soul, while most of the blame for everything has to be piled onto those obvious nasties the Communists, who, of course, have no ideals at all, whose only motivation is sheer hatred of anything decent, and whose Macchiavellian tactics, so unlike ours, have no sort of justification at all. As a result, most Conservatives here will find the film a long-winded restatement of the obvious, while they and others will find the film too pro-American. The irony is that by current American standards this film is quite daring and controversial, and its last criticism of the apathy of the American public is quite movingly bitter.

Marlon Brando plays thoughtfully, but, it must be admitted, without his usual fire. He catches the mannerisms of the dogmatic American wrestling with the ornery foreignness of foreigners. But his finely barbaric profile (and some megalomaniac postures to match) are rather a handicap in the role, and he often seems baffled by being deprived of his usual mode of explosive inarticulacy. Nor is he helped by the script's insistence on presenting MacWhite's wartime comradship with Deong in the crude terms of American GI buddies (they get drunk, they meet the wife, they talk about girls, and MacWhite wisecracks in almost *Bachelor Party* style while the sensitive Buddhist has little to do but laugh with tolerant admiration of his irrepressible American friend).

Direction and photography are efficient enough but in general the film is stodgy rather than inspired—with the exception of the Prime Minister, endowed with quiet whimsicality by Kukrit Pramoj, who is surely Thailand's answer to Vincent Price, but then again it might not.

Sombre—but never depressing, terrifying—but never scary, *Days of Wine and Roses* is a work of impeccable craftsmanship. To my mind, magnificent. Not perhaps entertainment in the lightest sense, but certainly in an intelligent sense. JOHN CUTTS

## DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES

**Directed by Blake Edwards. Produced by Martin Manulis. Screenplay by J P Miller. Director of photography, Phil Lathrop. Editor, Patrick McCormack. Music, Henry Mancini. Warner-Pathe. American. Cert. X. 116 mins.**

*Joe*, JACK LEMMON; *Kirsten*, LEE REMICK; *Arnuem*, CHARLES BICKFORD; *Jim Hungerford*, JACK KLUGMAN; *Leland*, ALAN HEWITT; *Balleftoy*, TOM PALMER; *Debbie*, DEBBIE MEGOWAN; *Dottie*, MAXINE STUART.

Easily one of the year's most notable films. For one thing, it would be hard to imagine two more accomplished performances than those given here by Jack Lemmin and Lee Remick. For another, Blake Edwards' direction of J P Miller's thoughtful screenplay, adapted from his own American TV original, is a model of balanced handling.

Briefly and bluntly, *Days of Wine and Roses* is the tale of two drunks. He, played by Jack Lemmon, is an ambitious public relations executive. She, played by Lee Remick, is his wife. He starts to tipple as a business means, then as a method of blotting out his growing self-disgust with the way he earns a living. She starts out of sympathy with her husband's plight, then finds it valid as a means in itself.

Keeping these two characters dead centre of its action, the film looks at them and their plight unblinkingly; more, it looks beyond them to a pernicious set of values which leads the couple into self-destruction. For with no belief in anything or anybody, Joe and Kirsten Clay are a stateless couple, looking for the answer to a question they have never spoken; what to do with life? Sex might well have been their answer. Or money. Or social standing. Or love. Instead it comes out of a bottle.

Beginning deceptively as a light, chucklesome comedy about a loving couple with the world at their feet, *Days of Wine and Roses* is that rare thing—a film that follows a situation through to its limits. What begins lightly, ends darkly. One of the couple has found something to build a life upon, but the other is still adrift. Rather than ending, the film just stops. There's a slight suggestion that, given time, everything might come out all right for the couple,

## DIAMOND HEAD

**Directed by Guy Green. Produced by Jerry Bresler. Screenplay by Marguerite Roberts, based on the novel by Peter Gilman. Director of photography, Sam Leavitt. Editor, William Lyon. Music, Johnny Williams. Columbia American. Panavision. Technicolor. Cert. A. 107 mins.**

*Richard Howland*, CHARLTON HESTON; *Sloan Howland*, YVETTE MIMIEUX; *Dr Dean Kahana* GEORGE CHAKIRIS; *Mei Chen*, FRANCE NUYEN; *Paul Kahana*, JAMES DARREN; *Kapiolani Kahana*, ALINE MACMAHON: *Laura Bechett*, ELIZABETH ALLEN; *Judge James Blanding*, VAUGHN TAYLOR; *Yamagata*, RICHARD LOO.

Prejudice settles uneasily amidst the pineapple plantations and beaches of Hawaii in this story of a dominating, bigoted landowner (styled 'King' Howland) who tries to stop his younger sister marrying a Hawaiian youth, while he is himself having an affair with a local girl. But then in his private philosophy it is fine to go to bed with them but not to marry them, although it is certainly not the attitude he reflects in his political speeches. By his attitude he quickly alienates himself from those around him without very much effort. And when his sister eventually returns to survey their empty existence — 'It's a beautiful place, but there're no people in it, nothing but us Howlands' — the destruction is nearly complete. But that is reckoning without the 'hopefully enlightened' ending.

The fault lies mainly in the failure of the scriptwriter to eliminate the contrived and rockheaded approach of a novel the chief claim of which was that it included everything in vogue when written. But in spite of this, Guy Green's direction has given the film a gentle even flow by playing down the more sensational aspects and concentrating on finding a basis of understanding with his characters. ROBIN BEAN

## HEAVENS ABOVE !

**Directed by John Boulting. Produced by Roy Boulting. Screenplay by Frank Harvey and John Boulting from an idea by Malcolm Muggeridge. Director of photography, Max Greene. Editor, Teddy Darvas. Music, Richard Rodney Bennett. Art director, Albert Witherick. A British Lion/Romulus production, distributed by BC-C. British. Cert. A. 118 mins.**

*Rev John Smallwood*, PETER SELLERS; *Archdeacon Aspinall*, CECIL PARKER; *Lady Despard*, ISABEL JEANS; *Harry Smith*, ERIC SYKES; *Simpson*, BERNARD MILES; *The Other Smallwood*, IAN CARMICHAEL; *Rene Smith*, IRENE HANDL; *Winnie Smith*, MIRIAM KARLIN; *Matthew*, BROCK PETERS; *Mrs Smith-Gould*, JOAN MILLER; *Bank Manager*, ERIC BARKER; *Fred Smith*, ROY KINNEAR; *Rev Owen Thomas*, KENNETH GRIFFITH; *Rackerby*, MILES MALLESON; and *Major Fowler*, WILLIAM HARTNELL.

Speaking as an ex-Christian, I must confess to having no sympathy whatsoever for the maudlin plea that satirists shouldn't be allowed to make fun of people's religious convictions. Mocking deep feeling

is precisely what satire is for, and it's particularly healthy when applied to Christians, who so regularly try to impose their own sacred cows on everybody else.

Here, Peter Sellers plays the Reverend John Smallwood, a padre of markedly plebeian origin and ideas. He is despatched by a clerical error to an incumbency pocketed by Lady Despard, who is not only a dyed-in-the-bone snob but dominates the entire town of Orbiston Parva via her shares in Tranquilax, the only three-in-one laxative which beats as it sweeps as it cleans. The new vicar starts off on the wrong foot by giving the post of vicar's warden to a friendly coloured dustman and sitting him next to Mrs Smith-Gould on the parish council. After enthusiastically devouring the dog biscuits when they are accidentally put out with the sherry, he succeeds against all odds in converting Lady Despard to the Christianity of the apostles, in all its catastrophic purity. She renounces her riches and sells all her shares in Traquilax to give free food to the townsfolk—precipitating a slump in shares, protest marches by shopkeepers (and rival denominations), strikes, lockouts and riots.

Smallwood and Lady Despard together seem to represent a sort of nonconformist-capital-L-Liberal decency at bay against everything and everybody of the C of E's notorious Vicar-of-Braying, the shopkeepers, the mercenary upper-middle classes (William Hartnell), the sleek young Tories (Lady Despard's son), the Tory cabinet (surprisingly, there are no digs at Lord Holysham). Since a collection of dirty, skiving gipsies includes such well-known working-class faces as Eric Sykes, Miriam Karlin and Irene Handl, it's hard to miss the implication that these are the wicked workers, who when they aren't living the life of Riley on their lavish unemployment pay and huge child allowances, are forever fornicating, swearing, striking, rioting and battering honest coppers. The Boultings' sympathy for the hard-working innocent hounded by dodgers on every side almost swings the film round to a defence of Smallwood's 'real' religion against the unregenerate world—even the dogs pee on his boots while he's kept waiting on doorsteps.

But the film is also satirising the true Christian's impractical naivety and in so doing makes a declaration of no confidence in human nature whose bitterness (alleviated by its humour) is quite rare in British films. In fact, the film's plot (palely) echoes Buñuel. Smallwood is an anglo-Saxon Nazarin, and with Lady Despard he does an elaborate Viridiana act, taking in the local rag, tag and bobtail, for which his reward is to have the lead stripped off his church roof.

There are so many lavatory jokes (some quite funny) that at one point I mistook the opening chorus of a brass-band fanfare for the sound of a lavatory flushing. Gags are plentiful, if random in aim and erratic in quality—I liked the music's mimicry of *Exodus* as the gipsies troop into the 'promised land' of the vicarage. Peter Sellers, surprisingly, after his melancholy Indian doctor in *The Millionairess*, seems to me to fail to get a real grip on a very loosely written character. His redbrick accent is perfectly studied, but the basic Sellers personality seems too knowing to bestow a real depth on Smallwood's mixture of kindly shrewdness and super-naivety. By contrast, how sharply and smoothly Ian Carmichael sketches the clerical syndrome—the eager, toothy smile bursting out from behind the tightly prim lips, the girlish sway of the head, the unctuous blend of prim glare and puzzled smile. Bernard Miles brings a tinge of real evil to the sanctimoniously feudal old butler, whose wise old saws conceal a countryman's deep-rooted egoism and malice, and Miles Malleson even manages to freshen the inevitable twitching psychologist. Sykes, Karlin and Handl are all on form, though Roy Kinnear should really beware of appearing too often in rôles duller than he deserves.

My main complaint is that the Boultings' film lacks all the theological jabs that made the Fernandel film, *The Red Inn*, so murderous, and restricts its satire to the church as an institution and to naive Christian purity. Christians perpetrate this sort of satire themselves, and after the meaner, sharper jabs of TWTWTW, the Boultings' farcical tone has a slightly old-hat feel. But after the mechanical respect which so many films unthinkingly extend to all Christian pretensions, this film's irreverence is balm in Gilead, and makes a pretty entertaining show. Here's to its sequels—*Carry On, Father* and *Bless You—Jack*.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

## ALL THIS AND MONEY TOO

**Directed by David Swift. Produced by Martin H Poll. Screenplay by David Swift, Tom Waldman and Frank Waldman from the novel *The Grand Duke and Mr Pimm* by Lindsay Hardy. Director of photography, Edmond Sechan. Editors, Tom McAdoo and Cathy Kelber. Music, Michel Legrand. An Oxford-Gold Medal production, distributed by United Artists. American. American title: *Love is a Ball*. Panavision. Technicolor. Cert. A. 112 mins.**

*Davis*, GLENN FORD; *Millie*, HOPE LANGE; *Pimm*, CHARLES BOYER; *Gaspard*, RICARDO MONTALBAN; *Dr Gump*, TELLY SAVALAS; *Mathilda*, RUTH McDEVITT; *Janine*, ULLA JACOBSSON; *Mme Gallou*, GEORGETTE ANYS; *The Milkman*, ROBERT BETTONI; *Mme Fernier*, MONY DALMES; *Priory*, LAURENCE HARDY; *Carla*, JEAN LEMAITRE; *Zoltan*, ANDRE LUGUET; *Freddie*, JEAN PAREDES; and *Stacy*, REDMOND PHILIPPS.

If you can imagine a cross between the semi-languid, semi-hectic *affaires* of *St. Tropez Blues*, and a jovial British crime comedy, you will have a fair impression of *All This and Money Too*. It concerns a cheerful gang of professional matchmakers operating on the French Riviera in a plan to marry off a rich American heiress to the Grand Duke Gaspard Isidro Ducluzeau.

Glenn Ford gives a warm portrayal as a reticent yet sophisticated ex-racing car champ, ex-skipper, clean-living American chauffeur who never seduces his employers on Thursday (it's his day off). And I liked Hope Lange, too, as the heiress who knows what it's all about, but whose sexiness is not only blatant but coyly sensuous when it comes to actual play.

Very much an assembly-line product, with a high plot predictability quotient, this is nevertheless a gay film, underplayed and lightly directed—sometimes so lightly it verges on becoming empty—and by and large rather charming. The pace is uneven, and the film rushes its ending, but it's undemanding entertainment, and given a receptive mood simply enjoyable.

IAN JOHNSON

## THE INTERNS

**Directed by David Swift. Produced by Robert Cohn. Screenplay by Walter Newman and David Swift, from the novel by Richard Frede. Director of photography, Russell Metty. Art director, Don Ament. Edited by Al Clark and Jerome Thoms. Music by Leith Stevens. Columbia, released by EL-C. American. Cert. X. 118 mins.**

*Dr Considine*, MICHAEL CALLAN; *Dr John Otis*, CLIFF ROBERTSON; *Dr Lew Worship*, JAMES MacARTHUR; *Dr Sid Lackland*, NICK ADAMS; *Lisa*, SUZY PARKER; *Mado*, HAYA HARAREET; *Mildred*, ANNE HELM; *Gloria*, STEPHANIE POWERS; *Dr Wohl*, BUDDY EBSEN; *Dr Riccio*, TELLY SAVALAS; *Nurse Flynn*, KATHARINE BARD; *Didi*, KAY STEVENS; *Dr Granchard*, GREGORY MORTON; *Mrs Auer*, ANGELA CLARKE; and *Nurse Dean*, CONNIE GILCHRIST.

A sub-title on *The Interns* could well be 'The Bumper Omnibus of Hospital Stories'; every successful formula since the original Dr Kildare-Dr Gillespie twosome of Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore (and before that for all I know) has been brought into play, wrapped together and packaged under the general title, *The Interns*. Euthanasia, abortion, birth, death, professional misconduct, on a relatively simple, non-controversial, level; the film flips through the lot. In their two hours of screentime the script-writers have worked through enough medical jargon and human interest to last the TV medicos for a whole season.

It is, in short, exactly the type of popular, family entertainment one would expect from a Disney Studios graduate. 'In one brief year they learned the elemental, shocking facts of life and death and sex' reads the blurb on the cover of the paperback of the original novel. I don't know how elemental or shocking were the themes touched upon in Richard Frede's novel, but they're certainly lacking from the film, even though the censor has seen fit to slap an x certificate on it.

The film develops no less than five separate themes as it follows a group of medical school graduates through their first year at a big-city hospital, until they qualify as fully-fledged doctors (at least three of them do; of the other two, one is disbarred after getting involved with a pregnant model, and the other is carted off kicking and screaming after a strenuous year burning the candle at both ends). It's all pretty superficial and fairly unlikely, but the standard ingredients are stirred with a certain skill and played out with a certain charm by the large cast.

In his usual wacky way the censor has seen fit to bar the work to those who'll be most

entertained by it; there's almost nothing that one wouldn't expect to find in 'Emergency—Ward 10'. He's cut a few shots of a new-born baby, apparently, and a shot of a nurse at a party removing her slip so that she can twist in her bra and panties—you'd have to be pretty far gone to find anything erotic or obscene in that. These interns may let off steam at crazy New Year's Eve parties modelled after *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (the influence of that one is beginning to crop up in the most unlikely places) but at heart they're just a bunch of healthy conformists who could pinch-hit for Dr Kildare or Dr Ben Casey at the drop of a scalpel, not one of them questioning that the American system of medicine is the only correct one (which some American doctors are beginning to doubt, in spite of the pressures of the AMA).

The production credits are efficient rather than inspired; Russell Metty, back to black and white after all those glossy coloured comedies—and *Spartacus* of course—is not at his best, but there's a highly expert job of editing. David Swift keeps things moving at a cracking pace, packing each shot with movement, handling his sprawling canvas with enough invention to keep even the most sceptical spectator interested; using a hit-and-run technique on his five parallel actions which looks to have been borrowed from Jean-Luc Godard (another influence met up with in the oddest places), non-experimental but effective. *The Interns*, in short, is an efficient job of filmmaking, and one can't say fairer than that.

RICHARD WHITEHALL

## LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE

**Directed by Cornel Wilde. Produced by Cornel Wilde and Bernard Luber. Original screenplay by Richard Schayer and Jefferson Pascal. Director of photography, Harry Waxman. Editor, Frederick Wilson. Music, Ron Goodwin. Art director, Maurice Carter. An Emblem production for Universal-International, distributed by Rank. American. Panavision. Eastman colour. Cert. A. 117 mins.**

*Lancelot*, CORNEL WILDE; *Guinevere*, JEAN WALLACE; *King Arthur*, BRIAN AHERNE; *Sir Gawaine*, GEORGE BAKER; *Sir Modred*, MICHAEL MEACHAN; *Lady Vivian*, ADRIENNE CORRI; *Merlin*, MARK DIGNAM; and *Sir Lamorak*, ARCHIE DUNCAN.

This is a quite pleasantly rousing epic centring as the title implies more on the courtly love theme than on the Round Table. Not that it's short on swashbuckling; and despite its adult touches a U certificate would have been more appropriate.

Within the framework of a rip-roaring epic, Cornel Wilde has thoughtfully added some agreeable decorations—notably Jean Wallace as Guinevere, sumptuously gowned in gold and silver and affecting an English accent as deliciously fragile as porcelain. This half-undiscovered Hollywood personality remains a gorgeous cocktail of personalities, as ladylike as Ann Todd, as slinky, with her softly waved hair, as Veronica Lake and as sensationally passionate as Simone Signoret. In an after-love scene a detail as sensual as the beads of sweat on her forehead only enhances the beauty of a full-blown romanticism rivalling the best passages of *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*. Cornel Wilde plays Lancelot as the Frenchman he was, but unfortunately more 20th-century flirt than courtly knight-errant. Brian Aherne makes a splendid Arthur, a fierce-faced man, with a smile of radiant gentleness. One's main complaint is that this Lancelot and Guinevere deserved a happy ending. The film has already sent up the magic ingredients of the original myth (a running gag about Merlin having invented soap which everybody thinks is a love-potion), so there's no real reason why it should have respected the traditional ending whereby Guinevere prefers the convent to her knightly lover. In any case, the Arthurean legends are originally Celtic and pagan; later, a French poet, probably a Cistercian monk, added a layer of Christian icing and wrote in hermits who popped up from behind every bush to clap a Christian interpretation onto everything. Even Sir Thomas Malory tends to de-Christianise the myth; he is *for* the Round Table but *against* the Grail. Still, Guinevere's last error detracts relatively little from one's enjoyment of the film as a whole.

The battle scenes are enjoyable, and Malory is responsible for some of the bloodthirsty details that rocked the press-show audience: 'And with a myghty stroke he smote him upon the helme such a buffette that hit went thorow his helme and thorow the coyffe of steele and thorow the braynepanne'; and a colossal stroke of Lancelot's after which Mordred's 'sholdir and arme flew into the felde'. The swashbuckling spirit is nicely maintained by lively visuals, notably a plan view of a running fight on a spiral staircase. The colour is usually keyed to a conventionally elegant scheme of red on grey, often with a jigger of applegreen for liveliness, but bursts out into a hot and brooding coral red and royal blue for the passionate scene in Guinevere's bedchamber.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

## ALL THE GOLD IN THE WORLD

**Written and directed by René Clair. Script collaborators, Jacques Rémy, Jean Marsan. Director of production, Jacques Planté. Director of photography, Pierre Petit. Editors, L Hautecoeur and A Lalande. Music, G van Parys. Art director, Léon Barsacq. A Filmsonor production, distributed by Connoisseur Films. French. English sub-titles. Original title:** *Tout l'Or du Monde*. **Cert. U. 90 mins.**

*Mathieu, Toine* and *Martial Dumont*, BOURVIL; *Victor Hardy*, PHILIPPE NOIRET; *Fred*, CLAUDE RICH; *Jules*, ALFRED ADAM; *Stella*, COLETTE CASTEL; *Rose*, ANNIE FRATELLINI; *Mayor*, ALBERT MICHEL; *Village Policeman*, MAX ELLOY; *Woman Journalist*, FRANCOISE DORLEAC; and *Tony*, MICHEL MODO.

The light touch is something we experience all too rarely in films nowadays, and it takes a master like René Clair to remind us how satisfactory it can be. His latest film, *Tout l'Or du Monde*, has to do with individual liberty, and the basis of the plot is very similar to Kazan's *Wild River*, but where Kazan waxed serious Clair settles for a worldly smile. To digress for a moment into the sphere of total confusion, which is invariably bracing, it has been reported on the one hand that the story of *Tout l'Or du Monde* is based on fact and really happened in France not long ago, and on the other that Clair had had such a subject in mind way back in the early 1930s just after he finished *A nous la Liberté*.

Anyway, the situation is like this: a peasant and his son (played by Bourvil in duplicate) resist the efforts of a tycoon to buy their property. This attitude is seen by all around them as an impediment to progress, because the tycoon is bent on purchasing the entire district, where the air is salubrious, and building it up as a luxury estate. All manner of persuasion is brought to bear, and from the ensuing conflict of wills spring the chuckles and, for those so minded, the food for thought.

Working on the assumption that Clair has been cogitating all this since the early 1930s, one gathers that what held him up so long was a fear that the resultant film might prove a bit static; a fear that turns out to have been well founded. About halfway through, the plot of *Tout l'Or du Monde* very nearly grinds to a standstill, which is a pity, because it is here that Clair is getting in some deft jibes at the publicity game, and these in themselves are extremely funny.

Yet if the progression of the thing is awkward, that light touch I mentioned is a saving grace, all the more welcome in this heavy-handed era, and although Clair is capable of some pretty ordinary set-ups he can also turn on a visual delight or two to keep the eyes well and truly open. I liked very much a descent by helicopter upon Bourvil *fils* who is guarding sheep in the mountains: the disturbed grass blows, the affronted sheep scamper, and the agitated Bourvil runs for cover in a sequence that strikes a perfect balance between humour and sadness.

Early scenes of traffic congestion in Paris are nimble and surefire, as is the alcoholic emotionalism of a funeral feast. And, for Clair at his quietest and neatest, I commend a cleverly sustained shot which has Bourvil on the left hand side of the screen, in a barn, talking to a girl he believes to be just outside the door, while on the right hand side, through the door, we can see her wandering heedlessly away across a field. Where anything sentimental like this encroaches, there are few to match Clair at the knack of keeping things in check. Where others pluck heartstrings, he applies the fingertips with a touch that provokes soft but unmistakable reverberations.

Bourvil has a great time as mulish father and oafish son, although it is stretching things a bit when he has to represent another son as well in a short South American interlude. Philippe Noiret, of *Zazie*

and *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, is the tycoon, Claude Rich his assistant, and Annie Fratellini the romantic interest. All do well, and so does Clair, who is incapable of doing otherwise. This might not be one of his best films, but it has plenty of things in it that less seasoned practitioners of satire might note to their advantage.

GORDON GOW

## ZORRO

**Directed by J R Marchent. Director of photography, Raf Pancheco. Editor, C Nobel. A Eurocine production distributed by Sebricon. Spanish. English dubbed version. Superscope. Eastman colour. Cert. U. 88 mins.**

*Jose Torres* and *Zorro*, FRANK LATIMORE; *Colonel Board*, HOWARD VERNON; *The Governor's Daughter*, MARY ANDERSON; and *the leading guilty soldier*, RALPH MARSCH.

As every babe in arms knows, Zorro is a masked Robin Hood avenging the Californian Mexicans against the injustices of Yankee troops. He conducts his activities in such secrecy that unmasked he is considered by even his pals to be an idle and treacherous flunky. In this Spanish film with a pro-American government, anti-American military moral (wherein I am sure lies a modern political parable) he is saddled with the task of clearing an innocent man of the charge of a murder committed by three Yankees.

There is no shortage of sword fights, not to mention (at no extra cost) a whip and sword duel, and a battle-scene finale. Nevertheless all is kiddy-proof clean, even an amazing sleight-of-hand shot of a sword plummeting into an adversary's chest in close-up. Zorro himself is a likeable character, despite his infantile Zorro costume, with enough gallantry to return dropped swords to opponents, and the leisure to recline whilst duelling.

Good fun, and splendidly photographed too, *Zorro* won me over completely with the pleasing ethnological touch that it is untarnished by a single blonde: all the women are either red-heads or brunettes.

IAN JOHNSON

## LA STEPPA

**Directed by Alberto Lattuada. Produced by Moris Ergas. Screenplay by Tullio Pluelli and Brunello Rondi from a story by Anton Chekov. Director of photography, Enzo Serafin. Music, Guido Turchi. Distributed by Gala. Italian. English sub-titles. Technicolor. Cert. A. 100 mins.**

*Father Christofor*, CHARLES VANEL; *The Countess*, MARINA VLADY; *Jegoruska*, DANIELE SPALLONE; *Jegoruska's mother*, HERMINA PIPINIC; *Kuzmicivo, the uncle*, PAVLE VUISIC; *Pantalei*, MILORAD MAJIC; *Dimon*, MILAN BOSILJCIC; and *Dimov's girl*, CHRISTINA GAJONI.

It doesn't do to be insular, and if I could see virtues in *Sammy Going South* it seems downright improper that I should not find some in *La Steppa* as well. After all, Alberto Lattuada is a director of considerable skill and I have esteemed him fairly highly ever since *Il cappotto*, despite the fact that I have never liked anything of his as well since then. Perhaps you'll remember it. It was the same Gogol story (the one about the overcoat) that served, with variations, for Jack Clayton's directorial debut. The present Lattuada effort is derived from Chekov, which daunts me for a start, but I think the real trouble is that within recent memory we have had a number of very good films about a child's awakening to the tribulations of adult life (*Les 400 Coups*, *L'isola di Arturo*, and in its lesser way *Sammy*), and this melancholy old version of the same idea looks pretty feeble by comparison.

Little Jegoruska must leave his isolated Russian village and travel in adult company across the vast steppe toward the city where education awaits him. His mother bids him farewell in terms guaranteed to strike terror into his fledgling heart, and a priest advises him that 'study casts light on the darkness of ignorance'. Thus, with the look of a kid who would prefer to be ignorant and happy, Jegoruska faces the steppe and its lesson in maturity. 'You press on and on and it's always the same,' says the priest, 'there's no end to it'. And the film is very much like that.

The compensation is that Lattuada, with Jugoslavian locations, a wide screen and colour, has thrown himself into the thing and, despite the tiresomeness of it all, has gleaned the utmost cinematic advantage from a field of grain riffled by a passing breeze, some dogs snapping at the horses, some hearty splashing and fish-spearing in a stream, some brawling, some dancing, and a good old-fashioned thunderstorm.

GORDON GOW

## THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER

**Directed by John Huston. Produced by Edward Lewis. Screenplay by Anthony Veiller from the novel by Philip Macdonald. Director of photography, Joseph Macdonald. Editors, Terry Morse and Hugh Fowler. A Joel production for Universal-International distributed by Rank. American. Cert. A. 97 mins.**

*Anthony Gathryn*, GEORGE C SCOTT; *Lady Jocelyn Bruttenholm*, DANA WYNTER; *The Marquis of Gleneyre*, CLIVE BROOK; *Sir Wilfrid Lucas*, HERBERT MARSHALL; *Raoul Le Borg*, JACQUES ROUX; *Inspector Pike*, BERNARD ARCHARD; *Karaudjian*, MARCEL DALIO; *Mrs Karaudjian*, GLADYS COOPER; *Derek*, TONY HUSTON; *Adrian Messenger*, JOHN MARIVALE and TONY CURTIS, KIRK DOUGLAS, BURT LANCASTER, ROBERT MITCHUM, FRANK SINATRA.

John Huston's career is curiously unequal. The life of Toulouse-Lautrec is viewed through the prism of Pierre La Mure's dim-witted tear-jerker, while *The Misfits* is eked out with bits of arty-craftiness like Marilyn Monroe embracing a tree trunk to show she loves life in all its forms. Often between the idea and the execution there interposes a kind of gangling, almost cynical nonchalance, at other times an almost naive solemnity. One feels John Huston is two people—the thoughtful, basically rather ascetic, middlebrow, and, far more interesting, the rugged extrovert for whom life is keenest during the brawl, the hunt, and the genial drinking-session. In Huston the two often seem to cancel out rather than link up—perhaps after all his best films are those where Bogart, saturnine, craven, vulnerable, establishes the emotional core which somehow seems to me to be lacking in *We Were Strangers* and *Moby Dick*.

After the intellectual rigours of *Freud*, Huston must have enjoyed relaxing with this genial thriller. A writer hands a detective a list of twelve men who died accidentally during the last five years—and before himself dying in a plane crash babbles a few delirious words to the only survivor. With these slender clues Anthony Gethryn, a retired intelligence officer, realises that the accidents are perfect crimes. He fails to prevent further murders but at last the victims are avenged.

In its amiable way this least serious of all Huston's films retains a rather cerebral flavour. Philip Macdonald's novel is a story of detection as well as a thriller, the clues are mainly such literary items as garbled words, puns and retyped manuscripts. Gethryn's super-Sherlockian powers of deduction are treated with the smooth self-parody distinguishing the swordplay in the best swashbucklers—and Huston's.

He's certainly not over-concerned with credulity, whether in the whole gimmick of spot-the-star-in-the-mask or little plot details like detectives standing around discussing a corpse in what is supposed to be a gas-filled room.

But whereas *Beat the Devil* was so relaxed that it lost all its tensions and just fell apart, *Adrian Messenger* is firm, sharp and atmospheric, whether the scene is a seamy dockside murder or the panoply of a hunt in full cry. The bane of English detective films of the *Trent's Last Case* tradition are the stuffy countryhouse settings, the stiff-upper-lip characters, the interminable conversations. Huston takes all these elements and makes them thoroughly filmic, with forceful editing, with Joe Macdonald's photography glistening on the sumptuous furnishings of country mansions half as large as Xanadu, and vivid acting.

Veterans of Hollywood's Cricket XI (Clive Brook, Herbert Marshall, Gladys Cooper) make triumphant come-backs, though American accents creep insistently into the other members of the Bruttenholm (pronounced Broom) family. Gladys Cooper and Marcel Dalio give a deliciously devastating double act as an old-world snob and her parvenu. Otherwise, the director's American's-eye-view of the English aristocracy sounds the note of mingled admiration and caricature already touched in *Beat the Devil*. The result is nearer *The Four Feathers*, 'Satevepost' whisky advertisements, or Simon Raven's boot-licking book on 'The English Gentleman' than any aristocracy that is or ever

was in this fair land. Indeed, Huston's London, with its florid Italian organ-grinder churning out 'A wandering minstrel I', is as gloriously Edwardian as Alec Guinness' moustaches in *Kind Hearts and Coronets*. Huston is so charmed with the spirit and ceremonies of gentlemanly tally-ho that in the final sequence he comes within striking distance of doing for fox-hunting what Hemingway did for the bullfight. In fact Huston's country gentry ideally combine English politeness with American zest and remind us that Huston, like the regretted Jacques Becker, is, unconsciously perhaps, a moralist preoccupied with the question of what causes, manners and attitudes are worthy of the *real* gentleman, nature's. George Scott offers a sharply-etched performance as the razor-sharp 'tec with the melancholy love-life—for me one of the film's best scenes simply shows the sleuth muttering eccentrically to himself while racking his brains over a recalcitrant clue. There is a nicely macabre scene where the murderer's removal of his make-up from his face resembles a slow, gruelling self-dismemberment.

In fact the best tribute one can pay make-up man Bud Westmore is to admit that after the film's coda one felt like inspecting all one's friends' faces and saying 'Wonderful, very convincing, but who are you, *really*?'

RAYMOND DURGNAT

## MURDER AT THE GALLOP

**Directed by George Pollock. Produced by George Brown. Screenplay by James Cavanagh, David Pursall and Jack Seddon from the novel *After the Funeral* by Agatha Christie. Director of photography, Arthur Ibbetson. Editor, Bert Rule. Music, Ron Goodwin. Art director, Frank White. MGM. British. Cert. U. 81 mins.**

*Miss Marple*, MARGARET RUTHERFORD; *Hector Enderby*, ROBERT MORLEY; *Miss Gilchrist*, FLORA ROBSON; *Det Inspector Craddock*, CHARLES TINGWELL.; *Mr Stringer*, STRINGER DAVIS; *Hillman*, DUNCAN LAMONT; *Michael Shane*, JAMES VILLIERS; *George Crossfield*, ROBERT URQUHART; *Rosamund Shane*, KATYA DOUGLAS; and *Sgt Bacon*, GORDON HARRIS.

Miss Marples (Margaret Rutherford) is investigating crime in Milchester where one of the four inheritors of a deceased relative seems liable to kill the others from motives either of fear or greed. Two are gone by the time Miss Marples forces the murderer out into the open, always one jump ahead of the benevolent Det Insp Craddock who prods her on through the film with all the good humour of a compère in a funny show.

We are deep in Christieland, Aga., as a close look at any proper names will immediately suggest, and the unnecessary flourish at dénouement time as well as the over-staginess of any murder circumstances is probably due to this.

As a whodunnit, which should be the film's second aim, there is little interest, the minor characters being only summarily presented as on the one hand plausibly motivated assassins and on the other further murder material, and never properly developed. On the fun side a grudging belly laugh can still be obtained from a truly grotesque predicament involving Margaret Rutherford in a dance of the twist with Stringer Davis, though the comic improbability of such situations as with the same pair riding a bicycle and a tricycle and Margaret Rutherford taking a boot off Charles Enderby's (Robert Morley) swollen foot in the classic tandem fashion has long been exhausted by her, and none of the material is really very fresh. However, this should not deter Rutherford per se addicts who, along with their children, should get a lot of enjoyment from the picture.

BRIAN O'BRIEN

## THE BLACK BUCCANEER

**Directed by Mario Costa. Produced by Ottavio Poggi. Original screenplay by John Byrne and Ottavio Poggi. Director of photography, Carlos Bellero. Editor, Renato Cinquini. Music, Carlo Rustichelli. Art directors, Ernest Kromberg and Amedeo Mellone. Distributed by Grand National. Italian. English dialogue. Totalscope. Eastman colour. Cert. U. 88 mins.**

*Gordon*, RICARDO MONTALBAN; *Romero*, VINCENT PRICE; *Manuela*, GIULIA RUBINI; *Luana*, LIANA ORFEI; *Tortuga*, MARIO FELICIANI; and GIUSTINO DURANO; GISELLA SOFIO; JOSE JASPE.

Buckle your swash, my hearties, we are sailing the Seven Seas yet again. Gordon, the Black Buccaneer of the title, is actually a 'good' pirate—he was once a slave, you see, and is dedicated to ending the slave trade. This profitable traffic is principally run by an odious old man with a patch over one eye (of course) and a distinguishing scar on his forehead (indispensable) called Tortuga. We soon discover that he is in league with Romero, assistant to the Governor of San Salvador. Rascally Romero is plotting to usurp the Governor, marry his delectable daughter and assume control of the island. Gordon learns of this and, thinly disguised as a Cuban planter looking for slaves, arrives on San Salvador. Immediately, you'll be surprised to hear, he falls in love with aforesaid delectable daughter who is cool at first and then, having been told his story, helps him for all she is worth.

Ricardo Montalban as Gordon obviously has a Douglas Fairbanks handbook concealed beneath his bandanna. He scales castle walls, swings on ropes, rescues damsels, dispenses judgment and attacks Tortuga's ship single-handed. What more could you ask for? Brilliant acting? Not here—high-powered histrionics would be as out of place in this film as Lenny Bruce in a convent. There's a richly amusing performance from Vincent Price as the treacherous Romero, always with a supercilious leer on his lips. The colour is occasionally atrocious, enveloping everything in a pale orange haze. But there are compensations for connoisseurs of the bizarre: fetishists will enjoy themselves with Gordon's all-black outfit and sadists will relish the bits of juicy slaughter, of which the most horrifying is the dumping overboard of chained slaves by the cowardly English captain as if they were so many sacks of grain.

DAVID RIDER

## SONS OF THUNDER

**Directed by Duccio Tessari. Produced by Georgio Cristallini. Screenplay by Ennio de Concini. Director of photography, Alfio Contini. Art director, Ottavio Scotti. A Vides (Rome) Les Films Ariane (Paris) production, distributed by United Artists. Franco-Italian. English dialogue. Original title: *I titani*. Technicolor. Cert. U. 98 mins.**

*Cadmus*, PEDRO ARMENDARIZ; *Crios*, GIULIANO GEMMA; *Hermione*, ANTONELLA LUALDI, *Antiope*, JACQUELINE ASSARD; *Hippolito*, GERARD SETY; *Rator*, SERGE NUBRET.

The hero chosen to overthrow Cadmus, king of Thebes, is not a muscleman but an acrobat, Crios (Giuliano Gemma). However, strongmen abound as all of Crios' brothers are Titans and his henchman is a mountainous negro called Rator.

Fortunately the film never takes itself too seriously and as the hero relies on invention rather than a well endowed physique there is room for a lot of technical trickery with people constantly disappearing and re-appearing, as well as a sort of Cooks tour of Hades introducing every mythological character ever brought to the screen. Crios' line of attack is through the king's daughter who, should she fall in love will herald the end of her father's reign, and conveniently cannot be killed as her death would also result in his.

The times that the film falls down most seriously are during the scenes in the magic caverns around Lake Avernus, a pink candy coloured ante room to Hades. Though all things considered, wit in place of muscle makes a nice change and is maintained throughout the film so that even at the end the massed Titans are not enough to stave off the king's army (a thing that Steeve Reeves could do in his sleep) and Crios makes an intelligent appeal to the populace for their support. Though surely not for want of magic—he is simply being democratic.

BRIAN O'BRIEN

## THE GENTLE TERROR

**Directed by Frank Marshall. Produced by Brian Taylor. Screenplay by M M McCormack. Director of photography, Stephen Dade. Editor, John Dunsford. Music, Bill Le Sage. Art director, Peter Russell. United Artists. British. Cert. U. 66 mins.**

*David Rhodes*, TERENCE ALEXANDER; *Nancy*, ANGELA DOUGLAS; *Daphne*, JILL HYEM; *Mr Byrne*, LAIDMAN BROWNE; *Ian Tiding's*, MALCOLM WEBSTER; *Sam*, PATRICK MacALLINNEY; and *Joe*, VICTOR SPINETTI.

Meek office clerk David Rhodes accidentally saves the life of Lou, about to be shot by two gangsters. Lou insists on Rhodes drinking with him in a sleazy pub anachronistically known as 'The Bloody

Milkmaid'. Where properly stewed Lou hands Rhodes £5,000—bank robbery proceeds—as a reward for his courage. Rhodes's sudden affluence arouses the suspicion of his boss, Mr Byrne, who orders an audit of Rhodes's ledgers; a £5,000 deficit is discovered. Rhodes goes into hiding, unintentionally captures the bank raiders and the embezzlement is traced to assistant manager Ian Tidings, whose extravagant living has never aroused any undue curiosity.

As in *The Lamp in Assassin Mews*, also scripted by McCormack, there are sprinklings of astringent, absurd humour to offset a somewhat passé story. These droll moments are incidental, gaining comic impact through being isolated and unsuspected. The late Laidman Browne marching solemnly into the office bearing a gong which, after consulting his watch, he strikes —lunch; the chief gangster's deputy who solicitously removes and flicks his superior's cigarette when the ash becomes excessive; the couple in the park practically fornicating on the path phlegmatically ignored by lunchtime strollers; the two auditors so thrilled by the skill of Rhodes' alleged embezzlement that they go through the books again for sheer pleasure; and there is the very low arm-chair in Byrne's office which allows the interviewee an eye-level view of the desk top. DAVID RIDER

## THE FIFTH BATTALION

**Directed by Zika Mitrovik. Screenplay by Slavko Goldstain. Director of photography, Branko Ivatovic. Music, Rojan Adamic. Art director, Vladimir. Tadej. A Jadran production, distributed by Grand National. Jugoslavian. Dubbed English dialogue. Original title:** *Signali nad gradom.* **Cert. U. 87 mins.**

*Ranko*, ALEKSANDER GAVRIC; *Dinka*, MARIJA TOCINOSKI; *Robert*, MIHA BALOH: *Bojnik*, TONKA LONZA; *Tomo*, IVAN SUBIC; *Fdo*, DRAGAN OCOKOLJIC; *Toso*, BATA ZIVOJINOVIC; and *Veljko*, IVAN PAJIC.

The eastern front during the last war, and Croat partisans await underground leaders arriving at the station to be picked up, as conspicuously as possible it seems, by a taxi. Sure enough the police get wise and one of the leaders is captured and put in hospital after a street battle, whilst the other is left to wander around for the rest of the picture asking everyone and anyone for '. . . the name of a street I do not know' — the passwords. The partisans thereupon dress up as the army and despite the vigilance of shock troops, armoured units and militiamen manage to march straight to the hospital where they rescue their chief and spend about half the film. It's all good fun, but somehow the ss bump into them and they are forced to wipe out whole units and lorry loads of shocked troops before making off to the hills.

This film is dubbed and one must assume that Croat is a fairly long winded language. At any rate the speakers keep their mouths open for syllables on end to say the simplest thing and even then speaking speed is reduced by a half. The scenes in the hospital for instance, are extremely slow even without speech impediments, and the dying romance between the partisan chief and the lady doctor written into the whole sequence, as unnecessary as it is boring, is certainly no help.

In whatever action the partisans are so obviously Good, and the Germans so clearly Evil there is no point in worrying about the outcome, very little in waiting for it. BRIAN O'BRIEN

## SUMMER MAGIC

**Directed by James Nielson. Produced by Walt Disney. Screenplay by Sally Benson from the novel** *Mother Carey's Chickens* **by Kate Douglas Wiggin. Director of photography, William Snyder. Editor, Robert Stafford. Music, Buddy Baker. Songs by Richard M Sherman and Robert B Sherman. Walt Disney. American. Technicolor. Cert. U. 100 mins.**

*Nancy Carey*, HAYLEY MILLS; *Josh Popham*, BURL IVES; *Mrs Carey*, DOROTHY McGUIRE; *Julia*, DEBORAH WALLEY; *Maria Popham*, UNA MERKEL; *Gilly Carey*, EDDIE HODGES; *Digby Popham*, MICHAEL J POLLARD; *Tony Hamilton*, PETER BROWN; *Peter Carey*, JIMMY MATHERS; *Lallie Joy Popham*, WENDY TURNER: *Charles Bryant*, JAMES STACY; *Henry Lord*, HARRY HOLCOMBE; *Mr Perkins*. O Z WHITEHEAD; *His Son*, JAN STINE; *Mary*, HILDA PLOWRIGHT; and *Ellen*, MARCY McGUIRE.

Most critics avoid Disney's glittering tinsel like the plague. Returning to the unsophisticated sentimentality one grew up with and loved as a child can produce cramps of embarrassment. There is something of the same struggle with *Summer Magic*, but repressions apart one has to admit it's an excellent children's film, even if it lies a long way short of Disney at his best.

The plot, faintly reminiscent of E Nesbit's *The Railway Children* but less developed and absorbing, tells of an impoverished widow who yields to her daughter's persuasions to retreat to a small country town deep in the heart of Pollyannaland. *Pollyanna*, yes, but the direction is flatter, the excruciating everlasting cheerfulness driven too hard in its rather barren context, and the net result half-cock *Pollyanna*.

The producers claim the film as a musical without costly production numbers, which it is. The music, in fact, is usually delivered static, a couple of times interspersed with some spare Disney nature footage. Hayley Mills is a breathless and excitable Nancy, though I preferred the more restrained and modulated performance of Deborah Walley who plays Nancy's rival, Julia. It is good to see Dorothy McGuire once more, and the film has some laughs both intentional and unintentional. My favourite was the nature clips cut to Burl Ives' 'The Ugly Bug ball' which as much from the deadpan reception by the magazine show audience as anything else brought tears (of laughter) to my eyes. For whatever reason, it's a long time since any film has done that. IAN JOHNSON

## IT HAPPENED AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

**Directed by Norman Taurog. Produced by Ted Richmond. Original screenplay by Si Rose and Seaman Jacobs. Director of photography, Joseph Ruttenberg. Art directors, George W Davis and Preston Ames. Editor, Frederic Steinkamp. Music, Leith Stevens. Musical numbers staged by Jack Baker. A Ted Richmond production distributed by MGM. American. Panavision. Metrocolor. Cert. U. 104 mins.**

*Mike Edwards*, ELVIS PRESLEY; *Diane Warren*, JOAN O'BRIEN; *Danny Burke*, GARY LOCKWOOD; *Sue-Lin*, VICKY TIU; *Nurse Supervisor*, EDITH ATWATER; *Ling*, KAM TONG; and *Dorothy*, YVONNE CRAIG.

Elvis is the hero of this picture in every sense of the word. Without him it might have been a fairly disastrous experience, with him—for all its high sugar content—the film turns into passably pleasant and acceptable entertainment. The old swivel-hipster has progressively lost his sideburns, his twitching personality, as a more relaxed Elvis, here somewhat reminiscent of the 'Old Groaner' himself, has taken over. He is, I think, going to be as enduring as Crosby—certainly anyone who can survive such fairly catastrophic screen disasters as he's been saddled with has more basic talent than the critics who suffered through *Love Me Tender* and some of its follow-ups were prepared to admit.

Here, for instance, he's handicapped by a script cobbled together to cash in, somewhat belatedly, on last year's World's Fair in Seattle; by Norman Taurog's basic anonymity of style (to put it tactfully); and by the cuteness of little Vicky Tiu, cast as a sort of Chinese-American cupid, a part which might have been twice as effective kept to half the length. On the other hand the writers have given Elvis some good lines and one or two lively situations (most of them coming before Presley and his buddy, a couple of hedge-hopping bush-pilots, arrive at the World's Fair), with ten musical numbers, varying from good to excellent, thrown in for good measure. To top it all there's some really high-class colour photography from Joseph Ruttenberg including a chase through the deserted World's Fair ground at night which, if it doesn't add anything dramatically, is quite ravishing as a succession of beautiful images.

Through a series of predictable contrivances Elvis is left holding the baby (well, a seven year old, to be strictly accurate) while he romances a nurse on the World's Fair first-aid unit. As a plot it lacks the comic smoothness of *Follow that Dream*, by far and away the best of the recent Presley vehicles, but it works out to a gay 'happy ending' musical finale after girl trouble, gangster trouble, child trouble, any complication to spin out the running time. Gary Lockwood is good as Presley's side-

kick, a compulsive gambler (except for one pretty bad drunk bit) but Joan O'Brien is wasted on the nebulous role of the nurse. Even if it's not much of a film it passes an undemanding 100 minutes, but Presley's producers can do better for him than this.

RICHARD WHITEHALL

## THE DEVIL'S CHILDREN

**Directed by James Sheldon. Written and produced by Roland Kibbee. Director of photography, Lionel Lindon. Editor, Edward Haire. 'Virginian' theme by Percy Faith; musical supervision by Stanley Wilson. Art director, George Patrick. A Universal-International production, distributed by Rank. American. Colour by Consolidated. Cert. U. 75 mins.**

*Trampas*, DOUG McCLURE; *Steve*, GARY CLARKE; *The Virginian*, JAMES DRURY; *Tucker McCallum*, CHARLES BICKFORD; *Betsy*, ROBERTA SHORE; *Dan Flood*, BURT BRINCKERHOFF; *Bruce McCallum*, CARL REINDEL; *Sheriff Stan Evans*, RUSSEL THORSON; and *Tabby McCallum*, JOAN FREEMAN.

The Old West is immortal because it never existed. It is a land of myth in which each filmgoing generation locates its own problems and preoccupations. The post-war Old West is a land of troubled teenagers, killers with Oedipus complexes, wives and families torn with pangs of conscience about violence and good citizenship, and the old brave but brutal ruggedness yielding to grey flannel suit decency and conformism. Whether all this denotes a civilising of American lawlessness, or a weakening of American individualism, is another question, but it's a question which crops up in connection with this well above-average 'B' western.

So far as its story goes *Devil's Children* shows a TV influence — *The Virginian* is really a boys' hero and its story, without being very original, introduces a wide variety of characters (including two mothers) with an exemplary tautness. A wildcat teen-age girl (Joan Freeman) gets her unsuspecting boyfriend Dan to accompany her while she fires a neighbour's barn. After her accidental death from a gunshot wound her stern old father (Charles Bickford) vows revenge and is not deterred from his purpose until his wife has died of a heart-attack and his trigger-crazy son is facing trial for murder.

Burt Brinckerhoff's young Dan Flood, though apparently modelled on Anthony Perkins, has a nervous intensity which carries conviction, and indeed the film's two best performances have a ferocity which faintly echoes the tone of the great King Vidor. Wildcat Tabby, gritting a glove between her teeth, grinning savagely as she levels her shotgun and shoots a steer for spite, has just a little of the Ruby Gentry about her, and Carl Reindel displays a fine rattlesnake fervour as her revenge-happy brother. James Sheldon has one of the most important, and unsung, qualities in a director, a fine eye for little physical details: the leathery, wind-chipped face of a veteran sheriff, the fading glow of a lamp on lace curtains during a deathbed scene, the shining sweep of a gun-barrel, the thick lather of sweat on the flanks of an exhausted horse. One very short pan evokes the complex mystique of law in a few simple details: the heavy law-book, the gun cradled in a guards' arms, the star on his breast, the locked door marked 'Jury Room'. It's a pity these qualities are irritated by the normally very simple-minded story.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

## URSUS IN THE VALLEY OF THE LIONS

**Directed by Carlo Bragaglia. Produced by Guiseppe Fatigati. Screenplay by Giuseppi Mangione—Glessandro Continenza. Director of photography, Tino Santoni. Music, Riz Ortolani. Cine Italia Film production, distributed by Golden Era. Italian. Original title, *Ursus nella valle dei leoni*. Dubbed English version. Totalscope. Eastman colour. Cert. U. 82 mins.**

*Ursus*, ED FURY; *Ajak*, ALBERTO LUPO; *Annia*, MARY MARLON; *Diar*, MOIRA ORFEI; and GERARD HERVER; ANDREA SCOTTI and GIACOMO FURIA.

When the cruel Ajak and his barbarian hordes destroy the happy kingdom of Annurio, the baby prince Ursus is saved by a runaway horse. He grows to manhood in the wilderness, with a pride of lions for family, until the tyrant discovers his identity and tries to have him killed. Things look black indeed for our brawny hero and his friends when the tyrant has all who resist his rule chained behind four elephants, to be dragged across heaps of blazing brushwood. But finally Ursus overthrows the tyrant and weds Annia the pretty slave girl.

Ed Fury, the blue-rinse Tarzan, ambles through a nondescript series of adventures looking a little more at ease than the lions, who pause for a good yawn now and again and obviously haven't a clue as to what's going on around them. Neither have the scriptwriters, it seems, for at one moment Lion Man says to the pretty slave 'I learned your language from the caravans that pass but preferred my lions to their evil ways,' while at another point in the plot he enquires 'What is — gold?' as if he were completely clueless about civilised society.

Bragaglia gets my putty Oscar as the laziest living director, on the strength of a potentially affecting scene where a lion cub sniffs around the Prince's cradle and its mother takes the baby into their lair and looks after it. The scene is prepared and then thrown away because Bragaglia and his collaborators can't be bothered even to fake anything. Ursus' relationship with the animals is a lion-taming act thinly disguised, so that his attitude to his foster-parents is hectoring and thoroughly unpleasant. If Korda can handle this sort of thing acceptably in *Jungle Book* and *Elephant Boy* there's no excuse for its being done badly here.

There isn't a great deal of action in the film and what there is is listlessly staged: the quicksand in which the villain's minions dunk the screaming heroine looks exactly like a mass of corn flakes, and in the fights the swords can clearly be seen slipping neatly under the losers' armpits. The villainness, Diar, has a little of the fire lacking in the other members of the cast; but the film is strictly for Saturday morning matinées.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

## CAPTAIN BLOOD

**Directed by Andre Hunnebelle. Produced by Paul Cadeac. Director of photography, Marcel Grignon. Music, Jean Marion. A PAC Sn Pathe Cinema (Paris) DA.DM Cinematografica (Rome) co-production, distributed by E J Fancey. Franco-Italian. English dialogue. Colour. Cert. U. 101 mins.**

*Francois de Capestang*, JEAN MARAIS; *Gisele D'Angoulema*, ELSA MARTINELLI; *Comani*, ARNOLD FOA; *Cogolin*, BOURVIL; *Beatrice*, ANNIE ANDERSON; and *Giuseppa*, PIERRETTE BRUNO.

Captain Blood (Jean Marais), a provincial and of the lesser nobility in Louis XIII's France, seeks audience with the prime minister in Paris with the view to suppressing the organised banditry that is plaguing the kingdom. Received at the Louvre, Blood swiftly realises that the prime minister himself is the master mind when this latter attempts to employ him as a spy. At his proud refusal a fight quickly ensues and Blood sheds his opponents' profusely before swinging through a window and jumping onto his waiting horse: the horse buckles visibly at this juncture. He acquires a valet (Bourvil) along the way, whose comic relief owes much to English language dubbing, and ultimately a wife (Elsa Martinelli) to boot who saved his life such a long time back at the beginning of the picture.

A climb up a castle wall using daggers for gripholds shot against the background of the blue sea far below is relatively exciting and especially kind to the cameraman whose propensity for that colour is marked by an acute inability to avoid it on any occasion.

At one point the prime minister's midget poisoner remarks *à propos* of his fatal talent that 'nature has been cruel to me: I only pay back her cruelty.' And very reasonably too. The cinema was cruel to me that afternoon.

BRIAN O'BRIEN

## A GUY CALLED CAESAR

**Directed by Frank Marshall. Produced by Bill Luckwell and Umesh Mallik. Screenplay by Umesh Mallick. Director of photography, Stephen Wade. Editor, Norman Cohen. Music, Wilfred Burns. Columbia. Distributed by BL-C. British. Cert. U. 62 mins.**

*Tony*, CONRAD PHILLIPS; *Maurice*, GEORGE MOON; *Tex*, PHILLIP O'FLYNN; *Lena*, MAUREEN TOAL; *Harry*, DESMOND PERRY; *Ron*, PETER MAYCOCK; *Dizzy*, ELIZABETH PADGET; and *Bennett*, ROBERT BERNAL.

If you can accept that a big-time gangster from Texas ('My friends call me Tex') via Chicago would try and muscle in on the British underworld with the ineptness of a schoolboy hunting dirty pictures in Soho:

and if, too, you can accept that the same gangster would use lines like: 'You're still sweet on that punk, Huh'; and if, further, you cannot distinguish between an Irish and a Texan accent: you'll probably be able to sit through this film without squirming or sniggering. Regrettably I did both.

George Moon plays a head of a gang of diamond thieves whose daughter is ignorant of his activities. Conrad Phillips plays his aide who falls for the daughter. Phillip O'Flynn plays Tex who joins the gang so as to double-cross them. The central operations room is deep under a gagage, where instructions are given to the gang by Moon, and best wishes are given to all of them by a plaster-of-Paris head of Caesar, the real, never-seen leader of the gang. As there seems to be no hero in the film, and as Conrad Phillips seems to be a gentleman, you might ask yourself if he's as naughty as he seems. There is one moment to cherish: during an extraordinarily badly filmed jewel robbery the scene appears to freeze on what might well have been an illustration from a pictorial history of the silent screen. The storyline, I reckon, is *circa* the same time. TONY MALLERMAN

## PAPA'S DELICATE CONDITION

**Directed by George Marshall. Produced by Jack Rose. Screenplay by Jack Rose, from a book by Corinne Griffith. Director of photography, Loyal Griggs. Editor, Frank Keller. Music, Joseph J Lilley. Paramount. American. Technicolor. Cert. U. 98 mins.**

*Jack 'Papa' Griffith*, JACKIE GLEASON; *Anbolyn Griffith*, GLYNIS JOHNS; *Augusta Griffith*, LAUREL GOODWIN; *Corinne Griffith*, LINDA BRUHL; *Grandpa Anthony Ghio*, CHARLIE RUGGLES; *Hiram Cosgrove*, CHARLES LANE; *Norman*, CLAUDE JOHNSON; *Stanley Henderson III*, PETER BROOKS; *Harvey*, MURRAY HAMILTON; *Keith*, ELISHA COOK JR.

Jackie Gleason plays a good-humoured, well-intentioned heathen whose job on the railway keeps him at a safe distance from a righteous wife and stuck up daughter. Compensation on his visits home is afforded by a younger daughter of about six years old, in league and sympathy with him against the other two in the family, and the stresses of home life are softened by constant alcoholic application. Papa, however, is always in a fix. When he tries to help out the assistant in a drugstore he ends up buying the place—though not entirely unselfishly; it is a sure source of liquor on Sunday mornings. When he tries to buy his favourite daughter a pony and trap he ends up with a whole circus plus twenty-six mortgages and back pay for all the staff. But the family is not awed by his good will, less by his 'delicate condition' that reinforces it, and when they walk out on him, although his wiles and his circus get his father-in-law re-elected as mayor, it is not until he has renounced alcohol for family life that we can leave him to that misery.

The film is set early in this century when church-going and alcohol held more recognisable values, and this provides good excuse to clutter up the screen with all sorts of antique curios and many coloured costumes in an intricacy of detail that gives no thought to the conglomerative agitation of its effect. BRIAN O'BRIEN

## QUEEN OF THE NILE

**Directed by Fernando Cerchio. Produced by Ottavio Poggi. Original screenplay by Poggi-Papp-Byrnes. Director of photography, Massimo Dallamano. Music, Carlo Rustichelli. A Max production, distributed by SF Distributors. Italian. English dialogue. Original title: *Nefertiti, Regina del Nilo*. Supercinescope. Eastman colour. Cert. U. 106 mins.**

*Nefertiti*, JEANNE CRAIN; *Tumos*, EDMUND PURDOM; *Merith*, LIANA ORFEI; *Amenophis IV*, AMEDEO NAZZARI; and *Benakon*, VINCENT PRICE.

No, not Cleopatra, but Nefertiti as played by Jeanne Crain, who it must be conceded does bear a superficial resemblance to the sculpture of the same name. Directed by Fernando Cerchio whose work seems better with each UK import, this is an attractive film pictorially and it even improves as it goes along. Cerchio has achieved a smooth but rythmical style, a by no means simple feat given the devious plot. Not in the Cottafavi class, maybe, but important viewing for budding Italian spectaculophiles.

Edmund Purdom is credible as Tumos, the sculptor who carves the statue of a likeable but not madly over-emotional Jeanne Crain. Truth to tell, neither performance is particularly empathetic, and the director's sympathies seem to have lain with the sad little sculptor's assistant Merith who falls for and sleeps with (aha! there's a twist for a clean-living spectacular) Tumos, only to lose him to the Queen. There is also Vincent Price, at first unrecognisable beneath his priest's robes, but still his cunning old evil self.

A very respectable spectacular this, but more for the politician who likes to mix romance with affairs of high state. Give me musclemen and mythology.

IAN JOHNSON

## THE PRESIDENT

**Directed by Henri Verneuil. Produced by Jacues Bar. Screenplay by Michel Audiard and Verneuil from the novel by Georges Simenon. Director of photography, Louis Page. Music, Maurice Jarre. Distributed by Gala. French/Italian. Original title: *Le President*. Cert. U. 107 mins.**

*Emile Beaufort*, JEAN GABIN; *Francois*, ALFRED ADAM; *Millerom*, RENEE FAURE; *Philippe*, BERNARD BLIER; *Montel*, HENRI CREMIEUX; and *Lauzet-Duchet*, LOUIS SEIGNER.

Veteran Henri Verneuil, aided by some superb conversation and scenes from the original Simenon novel, manages to paint a far less brutal picture of French politics than many of his younger compatriots would if their work could be guaranteed to pass the censor in France. Jean Gabin has one of the most affectionate and magistral rôles of his career as the wily ex-prime minister, who succeeds in influencing events after his retirement by a subtle mixture of blackmail and persuasion. Flashbacks as he dictates his memoirs show him steering through a decision to devalue the franc despite the opposition of practically everybody, from the cabinet to the governor of the national Bank; they also reveal his as a persuasive speaker in the National Assembly, and these scenes, as well as containing some skilfully delivered and incisive speeches, are an object lesson to any director in the handling of big crowds.

The film's pace is slow, and only Gabin's continually changing moods and revelations of character maintain one's interest. But Verneuil certainly does succeed in catching something of the spirit, at once warm and Macchiavellian, of a mild version of de Gaulle. PETER COWIE

## THE DEVIL AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

**Directed by Julien Duvivier. Produced by Ralph Baum. Screenplay by Rene Barjavel, Henri Jeanson. Director of photography, Roger Fellous. Editors, Paul Cayatte and Georges Garvarentz. Music, Jacques Brel. A Filmsonor-Mondex-Locienex (Paris) Cinedia Incel Film (Rome) production, distributed by Compton-Cameo. French. English subtitles. Original title: *Le Diable et les 10 Commandements*. Cert. X. 143 mins**

*Francoie*, FRANCOISE ARNOUL; *Denis*, CHARLES AZNAVOUR; *Didier Marin*, JEAN-CLAUDE BRIALY; *Clarisse*, DANIELLE DARRIEUX; *Pierre*, ALAIN DELON; *Dieu*, FERNANDEL; *Vaillant*, LOUIS DE FUNES; *Phillip Allan*, MEL FERRER; *Micheline*, MICHELINE PRESLE; *Germaine*, MADELINE ROBINSON; *Dancer*, DANY SAVAL; *Jerome*, MICHEL SIMON; *de Concierge*, HENRI TISOT; *Garigny*, LINO VENTURA; *Marcel*, GEORGES WILSON.

France's answer to the spectacle, where more stars can be crammed into more minutes with more variety is in fresh evidence in *The Devil and the Ten Commandments* treated in eight sketches and about two and a half hours. Though whereas in the usual sketch film one can always look forwards or back to a preferred director during a less inspired episode, here exposure throughout is to the virtuosity of one director, Julien Duvivier.

A veteran whose technical ability is more considerable than his imagination, Duvivier's sketches come up in relentless succession, smoothly and interminably, so that although one can rely on the predictability of the situations if by chance they haven't been seen before (the lunatic disposing as God; the unfaithful wife whose spoils find their way to her husband's mistress via a planted left luggage tab) one can also rely on a popular presentation of whichever popular actor one came to see—thou shalt not bear false witness against thy actor's image. And the star line up is a formidable representation for any age and any class.

In keeping with the tone of appeal the devil is disguised as a harmless looking grass snake with a hoarse voice, whose only real success is in the adulterous field.

BRIAN O'BRIEN

# Just good friends

ANIMATION
by David Rider

In 1939 a cartoon appeared called *Puss Gets the Boot*, starring a grey cat and a brown mouse named Tom and Jerry. During the following twenty odd years they fought their way through over one hundred films, collecting half-a-dozen Oscars in the process and winning the undying affection of countless thousands of filmgoers.

These two veterans of Hollywood cartoons were conceived by two veterans of Hollywood cartoons—William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, who were determined 'to make the finest, most entertaining films possible'. They personally supervised all phases of production, working to an average budget of 35,000 to 40,000 dollars and encouraged their artists to indulge in some of the finest bravura animation ever screened. Working to the maxim 'the harder they fall, the harder the audience laughs', they put their proteges through the most hectic paces imaginable. *The Bodyguard* (1944) has a story that is a classic of its kind. Jerry gains a bulldog's protection whose aid he can obtain by whistling when Tom becomes aggressive. With brassy big-band music (Scott Bradley), high-powered sound effects and flamboyant animation this is a typical mid-'forties Tom and Jerry cartoon, reaching a tremendous peak of excitement towards the end as Tom frantically digs his own grave. Two years later in 1946 they collected another Oscar for *The Cat Concerto*, which I consider to be the finest of all Tom and Jerry films. The studio's technique was at its most assured and expressive and they were working with a wonderfully simple story. Tom, a concert pianist, performs Liszt's 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody whilst Jerry, who lives in the piano, makes determined efforts to disrupt the performance. The timing of the impudent gags is brilliant and extraordinarily effective.

By this time the series was seven years old and had settled down to a recognisable pattern. Jerry, a richly resourceful rodent, was indefatigable in his efforts to bring humiliation or disgrace to Tom. Frequently involved in their escapades at this period was a stout Negress, splendidly voiced by Lillian Randolph, who spent much of her time balancing precariously on high stools while Tom literally tied himself in knots trying to catch Jerry. The bulldog (who later developed into Spike and appeared independently) also featured occasionally in an indigenous Eternal Triangle. An unmatched example of this theme occurs in *Solid Serenade* (1946) in which Tom, having tied up the guardian dog, serenades his loved one with a tenderly romantic ballad entitled 'Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?' whilst accompanying himself on, of all things, a double bass. Jerry, awoken by this passionate performance, releases the bulldog and—well, you know what cat-*gut* is used for, so just visualise the entire animal fulfilling the same function.

In the ensuing decade, from 1947 to 1957, the films were generally funny, won more Oscars and remained popular with audiences but they gradually lost the panache and attack which had characterised the mid-'forties. Some films were sadly below par—*Posse Cat*, *Neapolitan Mouse* and *Baby Butch* being three of these. Then, as animation standards and methods changed (due partly to rising costs and a resultant need for economy during production) the two combatants underwent alterations. By 1957 Tom was completely different from the Tom of 15 years earlier, though Jerry remained practically unchanged. Their characters escaped unscathed, although Tom was now more cautious, taxing Jerry's abilities to their utmost limit. In the 'fifties a number of films featured a duckling which I found disturbingly inconsistent with the general pattern of the pair's adventures.

In the late 'fifties there were a number of good films, in particular *Tom's Photo Finish* (1956; Cinemascope) when Hanna and Barbera hit upon what is probably the best of all Tom and Jerry stories. Jerry photographs Tom in the act of a meat theft so that Spike will be blamed. He develops dozens of prints and spreads them around the house where they are most likely to be seen by the master. The fast and furious fun comes from Tom's hysterical efforts to conceal the evidence, which he does by swallowing cakes, destroying newspapers, and so on.

In 1957 the M-G-M cartoon studio was closed. Hanna and Barbera founded their own studio and produced mostly TV cartoons—*Huckleberry Hound*, *The Flintstones*, *Top Cat*. Other members of the studio joined them or went to other units. Tex Avery, a superbly individual director, virtually disappeared from the scene and Dick Lundy ('One of the great directors', says Bill Hanna, as anyone who has seen *Barney's Hungry Cousin* will know) joined Hanna and Barbera. M-G-M, confident at first that they had enough Tom and Jerry cartoons to keep recirculating endlessly, found that they had erred and elected to commission the production of a new series. Hanna and Barbera, now tremendously successful independent producers, were unable to resume the series. The contract eventually went to producer Bill Snyder (ex-M-G-M) and director Gene Deitch (ex-U-P-A and Terrytoons) who signed a one year contract for thirteen films. The films were produced in Europe because Deitch says: 'Here are continuous organised units of great skill. In the unit that produced the Tom and Jerry films we have over 60 people, most of whom have been continuously working together for over 15 years. For such a difficult undertaking as Tom and Jerry I needed a cohesive group with the organisational relationships already worked out. The most important cost advantage is that we need pay only for the films and not carry the tremendous overhead cost of a US studio. We do not own or manage any studios, but make only production contracts'.

Deitch was as much a stranger to the vigorous style of Tom and Jerry cartoons as his artists, his previous experience having been entirely in the contemporary UPA tradition. Pitched straight into the production of cartoons previously made by men who 'probably knew the characters better than they knew their own children', Deitch's team faced almost impossible odds, working to a severe dateline. 'In one case', he says, 'I was only a scene or two ahead of the animators as they were virtually pulling the layouts from my desk as fast as I could draw them!' Adding to this the fact that Deitch had only six old prints as guides and that Joseph Vogel was urging him to make Jerry 'sweet' (a disastrous attitude), it is a miracle that the finished product bore any resemblance to the originals. Deitch told his unit that only results would count. 'No-one would care about the odds against us but would surely compare our pictures with the originals.' Since the 13 films made by Deitch-Snyder, M-G-M's hierarchy has been reshuffled and no-one knows if further films will be required. Deitch says: 'I would be ready to go on if more are ordered, but personally I'm much happier with our current television work which is, to a much greater degree, of our own creation. The reason Metro did them had nothing to do with bringing Tom and Jerry to life. They simply wanted to cash in on their popularity as cheaply as possible. Any qualities that the finished pictures have is strictly the result of personal craftsmanship of the artists'.

If a contract were to be awarded to yet another unit, it is likely that the subsequent films would depart even further from the originals. Deitch realised the difficulty of re-creating two such widely known characters, approaching his task responsibly, with an attention to detail that made his films acceptable to the undiscerning public though the informed observer would immediately notice minor inconsistencies in style. A last word from Bill Hanna who, with a refreshing lack of false modesty, attributes the consistent popularity of Tom and Jerry films to their being 'well conceived, well animated, well directed'. In whatever limbo these two immortals now exist, we may be sure that Jerry will be devising new uses for harps and Tom will be suffering gamely but through it all they will remain, as everyone knows they really are, just good friends.

# Irish revelations

'Wait till I tell my mother about this' said the exiled daughter of the new Eire as she found it necessary to take to earphones to follow a film in the Gaelic language. Not only mother, one suspects, but the worthy founders of The Gaelic League itself would have sighed with patient disappointment at this lapse from grace. The occasion was no mean one: the NFT's showing of George Morrison's *Mise Eire (I am Ireland,* 1959)—a great night for the Irish, a sharp one for the rest of us, giving a deeper twist to our already highly-advanced neurosis of guilt on all matters Irish.

There are a great many things which we are not given to know about the century we live in, and some of them are illuminated in Morrison's immensely informative and dignified history of Ireland between 1896 and 1919. It proved to be by far the most gripping of the compilation films that I saw. To anyone born in England a whole generation after the Troubles, who regards them, if at all, through the sophisticated eyes of Behan and O'Casey, it was a disturbing evening, for this was the heroic line that we have never been allowed to see. The period still evinces, as it always will, O'Casey's tarrible state of chassis, but, after seeing *I am Ireland,* the chassis becomes a great deal less tarrible than before.

Designed for an Irish audience and avowedly educational in intention, the film proceeds under sectional titles ('Awakening', 'Uprising', 'Daybreak') that echo the Russian masters in this particular form of historical cinema.

Time and again one might be watching a documentary of the Risorgimento, while the mortars in the street, the gutted buildings and scarred walls of the 1916 Easter Rising convey a suffering Dublin physically indistinguishable from the Warsaw of 28 years later.

It is a revelation. The facts are presented through edited archive material and press cuttings ('The Queen of England', remarks one leader tartly at the height of the Boer War 'guarded by *the remains* of her Army, has entered Dublin'.) Where no material survives, the narrative is upheld in some imaginative yet very even work of reconstruction. Occasionally, subjectivity is allowed. Statuary is wittily elected as the image of unseeing English autocracy: Justice at Dublin Castle 'with her face to the Viceroy and her back to the people' fastidiously holds the scale with a raised little finger, and a baroque soldier is made to swagger with an absurd arrogance by means of some swift editing.

The figures strut and fret. Lord Aberdeen is praised for a kindly man; Kruger is observed entering a car in Pretoria (a lengthy business). Sir Edward Carson (he of the trials of Oscar Wilde), a tall, sensual figure, makes trouble among the partisans; De Valera looks like an agitated heron. Processional lamentations mourn the martyred dead; black crowds, like those of Italy, file slowly by the Liffey in silence. British tommies grin at the camera, small boys outstare it. Governor succeeds Governor—honourable men, 'safe' men, charlatans. The historical picture is assembled with an impressively restrained anger; the skill with which this has been done has given a perceptive tide to events that must, at the time, have seemed repetitious and confusing beyond all hope. I wish *I Am Ireland* could receive a wider showing in this country, since for many Englishmen it must, surely, amend the very face of history. Morrison plans a trilogy: *Saoirse? (Freedom?)* is already completed. I hope we see it soon.

## clubs

by Michael Ratcliffe

After these Irish revelations, Esther Schub's classic of compilation, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927) was a little disappointing in so far as, side-tracking into the Great War, the chronicle conspicuously lost momentum as it neared the Revolution itself. (Too many confusing Committees, too.) As an evocation of Chehov's Russia, however, it is superb. The timeless acres of high fields broken only by birch woods and white cupolas, the apparently perpetual sunlight, the ordered indolence and the white walls. All these things are fixed for ever, but beneath this surface, another world is laid bare. Generals fidget at their desks, pretend to sign papers; admirals stir uneasily and strike Napoleonic poses; only the peasants return its gaze with a terrible, dead calm. At the Tercentenary of the House of Romanov in 1913, the starched puppets, barely concealing their agitation and obsession with protocol, totter into the light, nodding stiffly, as on a cat-walk. It is a riveting moment, better than anything in Brecht. Schub's retrospective selection of material thus discerns an unmistakable restlessness among the pillars of Tsarist society.

The method of compilation is familiar. Take extract *A* (a provincial governor at elegant and civilised tea with his smiling, crisply-dressed wife and lovable dog); play it against extract *B* (labourers in a hovel village) and you have made a sharp journalistic point. The tea is no longer innocuous; it has become an image of prerogative. As a method this can be both very unfair and brilliantly illuminating; it is never dull. It was particularly well suited to the educational needs of post-Revolutionary Russia, when the cinema was used not merely to celebrate the People's victory, but also to build the image of the new state.

The Pathé documentary, *The Peaceful Years* (1948)—also shown in the 'compilation' season—was highly praised on its first appearance here, but has not worn at all well. An impression of Britain between the wars, it is the kind of piece that television has almost entirely taken over; more serious, it is a prey to the very worst myths, cliches and legends of the BBC 'Scrapbook' *genre.* There is the insulting device of the Common Man narrator commenting on the events in an infuriatingly roguish Cockney ('There was a new chap . . . Stanley Baldwin') and there is the provincial visitor, 'umbly dropping aitches at the Wembley Exhibition ('I don't know how much it did for world trade, but it was very educating . . .'). Patronage and falseness abound.

Yet, startlingly, the film does come to life at one or two moments. Baldwin, Dalai Lama of bathos, declaims at a rally in 1931: 'A national Government . . .' (interminable pause) '. . . is a great *idea*'. Some things are allowed to speak for themselves, and so the Abdication Speech retains its strangulated, terrible power to move, but in the main history has left *The Peaceful Years* far behind.

The gestures and the crowds, the odd remembered moments that recurred throughout the 'compilation' season (material, indeed, being sometimes duplicated and used in more than one way) returned again in Nicole Vedrès *Paris 1900* (1945-6), a famous and elaborate piece of montage on which, among others, Alain Resnais served an invaluable apprenticeship. This impression of the Belle Epoque proved not quite as sparkling as its reputation had suggested, but still provided memorable sights of jolly Monsieur Eiffel, of Renoir, having a cigarette lit as he painted, brush strapped to arm, of Monet in a flat straw hat, Gide and Valéry walking together through the Luxembourg Gardens, and Lucien Guitry, all stops out, as Hamlet and Oedipus.

'Amateur Movie Maker' and 'Amateur Cine World' took over the NFT for five days in May to show the 1962-63 prize-winners of their 'Ten Best' and 'Top Eight' competitions, respectively work on 16mm and 8mm. Perhaps because it was only in its third year, the standard of the 8mm category fell below that of its old-established companion group, both technically and imaginatively. The films were pleasing enough and, in the case of Philip Grosset's *Summer Days,* a sub-Golding essay in schoolboy savagery, rather more than that.

The 'Ten Best' programme produced the astonishingly high number of four scintillating cartoons—*Red Type, The Rejected Rose, Line Doodles* and *Victoria's Rocking-Horse* — all completely different, technically excellent and extremely funny. A wider showing would be more than justified. Philip Grosset figured again, with the

most professional film of the entire series, *Back to Claremont*, a documentary of spastic schoolchildren in Bristol. This I found almost unbearably moving.

And so to satire. Neatly observing that, to a great extent, satire is in the eye of the beholder, John Minchinton has contrived to assemble a corpus of works that includes an astonishing number of my own particular favourites. Whilst a great many desirable works have clearly had to be omitted through unavailability (anything by Preston Sturges, it has now proved), there remains a pretty stunning lot. I am sorry that a holiday prevents my catching up on the season before the British première performance of *Candide* (1960), Norbert Carbonnaux's highly controversial up-dating of Voltaire.

Broadly, the emphasis is both European and contemporary, ranging from the black (*Der Untertan*) to the high-spirited (*I Soliti Ignoti*) and embracing work from Poland, France, East and West Germany, Italy and Britain. For good measure, Jose Ferrer, Frank Tashlin and Billy Wilder are included. (Now a season of *American* satire would be quite something . . .) It would seem, by the way, that the rehabilitation of *One, Two, Three*, following its injudicious critical hammering last year, is swiftly under way — the Hampstead Everyman has also laid aside screen-time for it. I am delighted, too, to see *Wir Wunderkinder* in the programme at the NFT.

Will Tati's disorganised *Mon Oncle* look any better now? What of the (to me) dark horse, *Oh, for a Man!* alias *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (1957) Has *The Little Island* worn well? And *The Man in the White Suit*? Food for agreeable speculation in plenty: if satire be a state of mind rather than a school of thought, the absence of any coherent pattern of attack in this season will not matter a jot.

The current parallel programme—a retrospective of Fellini—is designed to prepare us for *Otto e mezzo*, Fellini's own retrospective on Fellini. The tribute, save for the absence of *La Dolce Vita*, is comprehensive, extending even to *The White Sheik* (1951), a reputedly delightful picture that has never received a commercial showing in this country. Rossellini's diptych *Amore* (1947-48) gets in by virtue of Fellini's screenplay for one of its components, *The Miracle*. The companion section, *La Voce Umana*, based on Cocteau's monologue, will be receiving its first British showing on June 18.

After Fellini, Vidor's retrospective on Vidor. The selection of pictures for the King Vidor season opening in mid-July has been largely guided by the director's own declared preferences among his work. He is lending his own copies of *The Crowd* and *Our Daily Bread*; MGM are being very nice and providing copies of *Hallelujah!*, *The Big Parade* and *H.M. Pulham, Esquire* from the States. Other films will include *The Citadel*, *Northwest Passage* and *War and Peace* and, it is hoped, *Street Scene* and *Ruby Gentry*. Vidor may be in England at the time of season, which will be accompanied by 'The Real Avant-Garde 1918-1926', a French programme still in the melting pot as I write, but hopefully to include Gance's legendary *Napoleon*. The period between the end of August and the London Film Festival is likely to see work by Mizoguchi, Ozu and — a necessary leavening — Asquith. Further, a European exhibition of Eisensteiniana (drawings, designs) at the Victoria and Albert Museum is likely to be complemented by a showing of the complete masterpieces on the South Bank.

Enlightenment in Bayswater. Eyeview Film Group, the enthusiasm and imaginative flair of whose programmes I have long been meaning to commend, follows up its 'First British Festival of Science Fiction Films' (*Krakatit*, *Things to Come*, *Metropolis* and so forth) with a less grandiose season generically entitled 'Oddballs and Weirdies'. If you don't find this an inducement to turn up, I assure you they have produced some real beauties. By the time this article appears, *Dead of Night* and the hypnotic *Les Enfants Terribles* of Cocteau and Jean-Pierre Melville will already have been shown at the Estonian Theatre, but you can still catch up on *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939) with Basil Rathbone as Holmes; an early Ken Hughes (*The Brain Machine*, (1953) coupled with a Ben Hecht comedy, *Her Husband's Affairs* (1948); Jack Webb's *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1954); and Dieterle's Faust story, *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (*All That Money Can Buy*, 1941) in yoke with *The Crime of Dr Crespi* (1934), an extract from which appeared in the recent Stroheim season at the NFT, but which is an extremely rare bird in its complete form.

These Eyeview shows are very much a pioneer affair — simply the enterprise of a few enthusiasts getting together to show films they would defend against all comers. Their choice is entirely idiosynchratic, and in this lies their strength. In the unbalanced metropolis such a group can do much good and give enormous pleasure (in the provinces, too, save that there it remains the first duty of a film society to supplement the deficiencies of the commercial cinema) but even in London their margin of survival is necessarily narrow, and they deserve all the support they can get. They could well be on to something.

# LONDON CLUB SHOWS

## *June 14th to July 15th*

### National Film Theatre

**Jun 14, 6.15** *Der Untertan* (Staudte) **8.30** *I Soliti Ignoti* (Monicelli)
**Jun 15, 3.00** Young Film Makers/**6.15 and 8.30** *Li'l Abner* (Melvin Frank)
**Jun 16, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Eve Wants to Sleep* (Chmielewski)
**Jun 17, 6.30** *October* (Eisenstein)
**Jun 18, 6.15 and 8.30** *Amore* (Rossellini)
**Jun 19, 6.15 and 8.30** *I Soliti Ignoti*
**Jun 20, 6.15 and 8.30** *Wir Wunderkinder* (Hoffmann)
**Jun 21, 6.15** *Amore* (Rossellini) **8.30** *I Vitelloni* (Fellini)
**Jun 22, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Oh, for a Man!* (Tashlin)
**Jun 23, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Candide* (Carbonnaux)
**Jun 24, 6.15 and 8.30** French Avant Garde
**Jun 25, 6.15 and 8.30** *Oh, for a Man!*
**Jun 26, 6.15 and 8.30** *La Strada* (Fellini)
**Jun 27, 6.15 and 8.30** *A Nous La Liberté* (Clair)
**Jun 28, 6.15 and 8.30** *L'Age d'or* (Bunuel) and *Zero de Conduite* (Vigo)
**Jun 29, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *La Strada* (Fellini)
**Jun 30, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *One, Two, Three* (Wilder)
**Jul 1, 6.15 and 8.30** *Blackmail* (Hitchcock)
**Jul 2, 6.15 and 8.30** *Il Bidone* (Fellini)
**Jul 3, 6.15 and 8.30** *Il Bidone* (Fellini)
**Jul 4, 6.15 and 8.30** *The Great Man* (Ferrer)
**Jul 5, 6.15 and 8.30** *Notti di Cabiria* (Fellini)
**Jul 6, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Mon Oncle* (Tati)
**Jul 7, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Notti di Cabiria* (Fellini)
**Jul 8, 6.15 and 8.30** *Westfront* 1918 (Pabst)
**Jul 9, 6.15 and 8.30** *The Man in the White Suit* (Mackendrick)
**Jul 10, 6.15 and 8.30** *The Little Island* (Richard Williams) and *L'Affaire est dans le sac* (Prevert)
**Jul 11, 6.15 and 8.30** *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Pabst)
**Jul 12, 6.15 and 8.30** *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (Hamer)
**Jul 13, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Pabst)
**Jul 14, 4.00, 6.15 and 8.30** *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Pabst)
**Jul 15, 6.15 and 8.30** *Kameradschaft* (Pabst)

### Starlight Cinema (*Mayfair Hotel*)

**Jun 12** *Cold Wind in August* (Singer)
**Jun 19** *Hell to Eternity* (Karlson)
**Jun 26** *Kings Go Forth* (Daves)
**Jul 3** *Gcronimo* (Laven)
**Jul 10** *Kim* (Saville)

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**Jul 3** *The Brain Machine* (Hughes)/*Her Husband's Affairs* (Hecht)
**Jul 17** *Pete Kelly's Blues* (Webb)/*Dragnet* (Webb)

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# THE FACE OF '63

**Kon Ichikawa,** director of 'Kagi', 'Enjo', 'Nobi', here directs the final scene from 'The Sin' a film with another 'daring' subject (the hero is a member of Japan's little-known Pariah class) from the director who specialises in them. On the left is Raizo Ichikawa, one of the most popular period-film stars whose type-casting Ichikawa broke by casting as the Acolyte who burns the golden pavilion in 'Enjo' and, now, as the young 'burakumin' in this picture

**Shinobu Hashimoto** is Japan's best screen-writer, having written 'Rashomon', 'Ikiru', and most other Kurosawa scripts as well as the recent 'Harakiri'

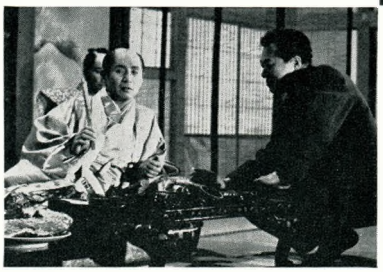
**Yasuzo Masumura** (rehearsing Jiro Tamaya and Wakao Ayako in a bed scene from 'Tadare') is known abroad mainly for 'The Build-Up'. It was he who directed novelist Yukio Mishima in his first (and last) role as screen actor in the 1960 'Afraid to Die'

**Susumu Hani** is Japan's most talented young director. His 'Bad Boys' has been seen abroad and 'A Full Life' was shown last year at the Berlin Festival. Illustrated: Hani directs several of the children used in his new film 'Children Hand in Hand', which promises to be one of the best of 1963

**Hiromichi Horikawa** —left—(directing a scene from 'Black and White') is Kurosawa's only pupil though his films are almost completely unknown in the West. With Keiji Kobayashi (in bed) and Tatsuya Nakadai — the young actor seen in 'Ningen no Joken', 'Yojimbo', 'Sanjuro', and the new 'Heaven and Hell' as well as 'Harakiri'

**Masahige Narusawa** (above right, with actress Michiko Suga) is a pupil of Mizoguchi's whose first film is 'Ratai', shortly to be seen abroad as 'The Body'. Right: a still from this film about a bath-house keeper's daughter who discovers sex

**Mikio Naruse**, along with Kurosawa and Ozu, is one of Japan's finest directors. Here he prepares a scene from 'Horoki' which stars Hideko Takamine (right), perhaps Japan's finest actress



**Tadashi Imai** (right with Masayuki Mori— the husband in 'Rashomon', the potter in 'Ugetsu') is at present finishing the multi-part 'Bushido Zangiku Monogatari'

*fall* was seen in three cinemas and for his *The Woman in the Sand* there will not be many more. Hani's excellent *Bad Boys*, produced by Iwanami, a small educational film company, was bought out by the now bankrupt Shintoho and shown at the bottom of a triple bill in the company's few theatres. His newest, *Children Hand in Hand*, certainly one of the best films of 1963, has been bought by Daiei and will be released on its chain.

Forming one's own company is about the only way to do it. It takes money and only the wealthy can afford it. Among those who can is the teenage idol Yujiro Ishihara whose Ishihara Productions has just begun and this year plans eight films including an Italian-Japanese production called *Pearl Diver*. Another is Toshiro Mifune's Mifune Productions. The actor, internationally known from *Rashomon* on, is at present in the Philippines producing, directing, and starring in *The Legacy of Five Hundred Thousand*. Yet another is the new Japan United Artists (no relation to the American company) comprised of, among others, Kon Ichikawa, Yasujiro Ozu, Tadashi Imai, and Japan's finest cameraman, Kazuo Miyagawa. They intend to use their own money and rent facilities from the major studios.

Actors who have grown weary of contractual obligations and type-casting are also more and more attempting independence.

Most stars haven't very much. Only the very top, Hideko Takamine, for example, can pick and choose among the major companies. The others have iron-bound contracts.

The stars not only want independence. They want more money. A top star such as Hisaya Morishige the comedian makes about three million yen (8,000 dollars) per film while middle to top stars like Frankie Sakai (another comedian) make about two million yen (about 5,000 dollars) — the prices running down to about 15 dollars an appearance and three dollars for an extra. This is not small money in Japan but it is not big either.

Unlike the West, however, the star usually gets his way because the audience is still star-oriented. Anything that Yujiro or Kinnosuke appears in, no matter how bad, has, until now, made money. Mifune's name means attendance, so does Kurosawa's.

If the companies are worried about falling attendance they should notice what foreign films make money in Japan. There is *Mondo Cane*, of course, and *How the West was Won*, but there is also *L'Avventura*, the re-issue of *Alexander Nevsky*. This year the first Japan release of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *The Trial*. Toei may churn out the sword operas and Nikkatsu the gang thrillers but the biggest money-maker this year will be Kurosawa's *Heaven and Hell*.

Still, with the golden-age of money-making coming to an end perhaps the golden age of the Japanese film will make a reappearance and the excellence of the half decade 1953-58 be repeated. All of the talent, all of the genius is here—but is obstructed by the machine which makes films, the Japanese film industry. Maybe at last Japan this year will overcome a major obstacle—that of being the country which makes more films than any other.

● *Francine and Colette Berge are real-life sisters. They play sisters in Nico Papatakis' shattering French film 'Les Abysses' ('The Depths'), left. Above: director Papatakis. This is his first film. He is better known for an existentialist nightclub in Paris*

# Peter Baker at CANNES

festival

Almost everybody who's nobody seems to head for Cannes; and they make so much noise staking their claim to a section of the world of film that the resulting pandemonium I would not wish on my worst enemy. (Come to think of it, my worst enemy would enjoy it). Making a rough calculation this year's jamboree was attended by thirty-three producers, seven directors, four stars, forty-four starlets, a flock of critics, a swarm of gossip writers, and a plague of film salesmen. In competition there were a mere twenty-six features; but down the road as a side line to the Casino the television men were busy screening some half-dozen television films a day. In the centre of town the film salesmen were living it up with another half dozen daily trade shows, and if that were not enough the French critics staged their second 'petit festival' of works by new young directors.

It was not that anyone could reasonably object to being in a cinema most of the day. Surely that is one of the key requisites of festival-going. The stark problem was that one could never be quite sure of being in the right cinema at the right time; and possibly because I am more of a nobody than anybody, I have returned with a sneaking feeling that I have seen all the wrong films.

Certainly it is hard to believe that a festival that likes to believe it is the best in the world can collect so much of the routine and rank second-rate in a little more than a fortnight.

So it is no surprise at Cannes to find Steve Reeves throwing a champagne party to announce he is quitting Italy to film in America, while Gregory Peck, who in my opinion has given the best performance of his career in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, could stroll along the Croisette, a mere face in the crowd. Alfred Hitchcock gave everyone else a lesson in how to give a press conference; but few wanted to learn. Nicholas Luard, for instance (he runs the Establishment club and publishes *Private Eye* magazine) announced plans to produce *The Christine Keeler Story* (I gather that Miss Keeler had some sort of relationship with Britain's establishment) and, inadequately briefed, was like a lamb at the slaughter or, to put a less kindly interpretation on his performance, a child unable to fly its kite.

I suspect that the reason why many people go to Cannes is to enjoy a burst of summer sunshine after a long winter; and to enjoy it on an expense account. Others go to wave the flag. The Americans blotted out a beautiful seascape for ten days with an aircraft carrier and a couple of destroyers just offshore. Others go to buy and sell films (I was flattered by one British distributor who asked me confidentially for my list of best films so he would know the ones *not* to buy). Beautiful boys and handsome girls also go to buy and sell, themselves; sitting pathetically, hopefully, at the expensive bars, wanting to be discovered, not quite sure if they would recognise 'discovery' if it came.

I find *la dolce vita* of Cannes at festival time a sad, destructive force, far related from the strength and dignity of art. The French are talking of advancing the festival in future to February (away with summer sun, away with the fair weather friends), even of moving it to Paris (who ever heard of a Cannes film festival in Paris?). Certainly something must be done, as it is at present it is bursting at the seams. By all means let it be a trade fair. Hand the swish hotels, the Casino, the perfumed beaches over to the men who buy and sell other people's talent; they've virtually strangled what was born nobly in the 'thirties and nurtured carefully in the late 'forties.

Ten years ago I regarded Cannes as the annual focal point for anyone devoted to the best in world cinema. Since then a score of other festivals have come into being, some of them I thought better than Cannes. Maybe I was sour. For two years I stopped going to Cannes, handed the chore to colleague John Francis Lane. This year I knew I was not sour. The Cannes I knew, wanted, needed, is no more. Except for those two years I have attended every festival at Cannes since 1946, so my judgment is based on experience. It has lost the tree for the wood; and we have lost the film for the cans.

The best films in competition were *To Kill A Mockingbird, This Sporting Life, Lord of the Flies, Les Abysses, Il Gattopardo (The Leopard), I Fidanzati*. One or two others were 'interesting', the rest rank routine that a major festival should have thrown out. Out of competition in the palais de festival we had Hitchcock's *The Birds* by way of aperitif (some three hundred special effects under a master technician's control, and about three *ideas*) and Fellini's *Eight-and-a-Half* for a digestif (for a digestif very repetitive Fellini; the title I felt afterwards related to the running

● *Marina Vlady and Ugo Tognazzi in 'L'Ape Regina', directed by Marco Ferreri (he made 'Il Cochecito'), a comedy about the problems of a middle-aged man when he marries*

time and not the master's feature output).

In past years Cannes, and other festivals, have come under fire from the International Federation of Film Producer Associations for loading the festival with films from the home country. A result of the federation's 'no more than two from any one country' rule, is that festivals have tried to find other ways to bolster national prestige. Sometimes it is a retrospective season out of competition, or a big attendance during the festival by the country's top stars and film-makers. The French are more sophisticated. I cannot believe it is coincidence that several of the films from the smaller participating countries are 'French made'. The sole African entry, from Gabon, *La Cage*, was directed by Robert Darene (with Marina Vlady and Jean Servais in the cast). Theme: Modernism versus superstition. Verdict: No one wins, least of all the director. Henry Colpi went to Rumania to direct *Codine*. Theme: Small boy befriends big man in pre-war Rumanian slums. Verdict: Some people take a long time to make friends. Armand Gatti went to Cuba to direct *El Otro Cristobal (The Other Cristobal)*, with French and Cuban cast. Theme: Memories of the early days of revolution. Verdict: Not worth remembering.

The official French entries were, except for *Les Abysses*, not worth remembering either. Marcel Bluwal's *Carambolage* (a kind of French *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*) so raised the wrath of the French critics that they signed a document of protest and displayed it on the festival palais wall. Jean Gabriel Albicocco went to Paraguay to make *Un Rat d'Amerique*. He could have done as well in Hollywood. Pretentious, completely lacking in response to its environment, the film is worse than his first, *The Girl With the Golden Eyes*.

With *Les Abysses* director Nico Papatakis has made a film that Simon de Beauvoir describes as 'One of the most beautiful films I've ever seen' and Jean Genet as 'a tornado'. Jean-Paul Sartre rashly claims it as the cinema's first tragedy and Andre Breton as 'a peak'. I will settle for describing it as a wholly original work that fascinates by its magnification of accurate perceptions of human nature. The subject is the decline of a bourgeoise household brought about by two maidservants, sisters, who are against the 'system' but cannot break away from it. I am inclined to find the work satirical rather than tragic. In its simplicity, in its devastating indictment of middle class morals, it cuts as deep as Buñuel. At last a French film that is *nouvelle* without being *vague*.

It is extraordinary that Papatakis (who runs an existentialist haunt in Paris) should have never made a film before. His closest association with cinema has been to help the French release of *Shadows*.

Cannes would have been worth the visit this year if only to see the Italian collection. Visconti's *Il Gattopardo*. Fellini's *Otto e Mezzo* (out of competition). Ermanno Olmis' second feature, *I Fidanzati*, and Marco Ferreri's *L'Ape Regina*. It is easy to write that I found none of the films satisfying; but more difficult, faced as one obviously is with compelling talent, integrity and originality, to explain why.

Visconti's version of the Lampedusa novel, shown in the Italian version, is a long, languid piece of romantic agony, akin to his *Senso* more than *Rocco* in style, yet with its passionate belief in the right of the Italian revolution, akin to its theme. What faults the film is not the script, which is faithful to the book (too much so perhaps); or the acting, which for the most part is excellent (Lancaster, as the Leopard, with Cardinale and Delon), but Visconti's failure to control a virtual flood of period detail. He fails to select his material, and focus on the important dramatic incidents is lost in a kind of perpetual 'longshot'. In Cannes it was cut from 225 minutes to 190 and for British release I am told it will be down to 160; but this kind of pace-making does not help. I also found the photography excessively low-key and at times lacking definition.

Fellini's latest parable (a film director with a backer searching desperately for a subject he wants to film, the most unlikely story of the decade to my mind) is as brilliant as any Fellini film, and as derivative from his earlier works as the others. Like Bergman, you have to admire his skill, but I long for both personalities to progress (or even to regress). What is so maddening about Fellini and his like is that they just stay there, like the Rock of Ages, which some critics try to shift and others hide behind. Neither approach changes the texture of the rock.

Olmi and Ferreri are at least in the state of emotional and intellectual flux. Olmi is progressing. His *I Fidanzati (The Fiancees)* is concerned with a young worker from the north going to represent his firm in Sicily, leaving behind his fiancée and his family. It is the absence, the new surroundings that give him a new set of values and strengthen his family ties and affection for his future wife. A simple enough plot. A plot that could be sentimental and trite. But Olmi (as in *Il Posto*) displays a close affinity to his characters. Unlike Fellini and Visconti (and other directors), he does not 'manipulate' his characters; they are a part of him. Simple things in living are re-

● *The Soviet entry, 'The Optimistic Tragedy', was like Potemkin on ice. A young girl commissar tries to convert a shipload of matelots to communism, at the time of the Revolution*

vealed anew, not piously, but accurately, lovingly. I am sure Olmi could make a three hour film about housework and hold an audience enthralled by it. To me he is the greatest of the 'smaller' directors.

By contrast, Ferrari is regressing. The director of that wonderful satire, *Il Cochecito* (in Spain) has produced with *L'Ape Regina* a film that lacks the edge for satire or the pace for farce; it is neither high comedy nor low. Entertaining, certainly; but this tale of a middle-aged man who weds too late to find child-giving easy relies too much on the comedy of manners formulae to be international in its appeal. Perhaps I was expecting too much. Certainly I could list a hundred less funny comedies; which is, I regret, a negative way of liking *L'Ape Regina* without praising it.

Of the rest, the Japanese was interesting. Masaki Kobayashi's *Seppuku (Harakiri)* tells the harrowing story of a young man compromised by tradition into taking his own life. I confess that after a good dinner the sight of the hapless youth trying time and time again to take his life ceremonially with only a sharpened piece of bamboo cane all but made me vomit. I do not think the film is sadistic (in the true sense of the word); but, although I admire its technical qualities, I did not find this aspect of Japanese tradition of sufficient universal value to justify making the subject at all. Are we supposed to admire harakiri, are we supposed to adopt it into our own tradition, are we intended to mourn a relic of Japan's past? The more questions I asked myself the more I fought against the cynical answer: The violence is all staged for the box-office.

After Fons Rademakers promising *The Knife*, his new film *Als Twee Druppels Water* (Alike as Two Drops of Water)—Holland—was singularly disappointing.

The Poles showed a new Has film, *Jak Byc Koehana (The Art of Being Loved)* a romantic melodrama of an actress who remembers her struggle for love under Nazi occupation. After Cybulski's performance as her ham-fisted lover, I was at a loss to understand why she so disliked being raped by such an elegant Nazi officer and virile soldier. There's no accounting for women.

The Russian's had an oddity, Samsonov's *Optimistchaskaya Traguedia (Optimistic Tragedy)*. Filmed in black and white in 70mm (with a three screen Cinerama version) it is a sentimental tale of a girl commissar who, at the time of the revolution, converts a battleship's crew to communism. The stereo soundtrack uses the auditorium speaker for a kind of a Voice of God giving the message at suitable moments in the narrative. A kind of *Potemkin* on ice.

Britain had its best festival pair for many years with Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* and Peter Brook's *Lord of the Flies*. Anderson's film is well known; and Brook's I hope will open commercially soon. The frightening tale of schoolboys stranded on a desert island and, unable to sustain a democratic existence, turning to savagery, is extraordinarily well told, although it suffers from the many pitfalls of an all-child cast, most of whom were later dubbed anyway.

The United States showed that monstrous piece of ham *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (and as I like ham I confess to finding it amusing, but too long); and the film for which Gregory Peck justly won an Oscar this year, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*.

The Jury awards: Best film—*Il Gattopardo* (Italy). Best acting performances: male—Richard Harris (*This Sporting Life*); female — Marina Vlady (*L'Ape Regina*). Special jury prizes to *Harakiri* (Japan); *One Day . . . A Cat* (Czechoslovakia); and *The Optimistic Tragedy* (Russia).

How can one take a jury seriously that not only makes joint awards when there were few films deserving any award, but then makes an award 'for the best film on a revolutionary theme' in order to please the Russians who had the only film with a revolutionary theme—and a bad one at that?

Outside of the festival there was a short season of films by young directors, staged by a group of French critics. It included some of the latest work by the New York outsiders, some of the warmer, more human films from the youngsters in Argentina, and first works from as far apart as Japan and Sweden. The idea is a good one; but few of the visiting critics and delegates had time to see the films shown. It is surely more logical for such a festival to be moved by itself elsewhere, to Las Palmas, for instance, where a festival of 'opera prima' has already been established.

Many of the films in the commercial market had been seen at other festivals in recent months; others were rank routine and not worth the investigating. I did manage to catch *The Balcony* in which Shelley Winters gives a splendid performance. This adaption of Jean Genet's play works well and, in being somewhat toned down for the screen, the impact of Genet's ideas come over with greater force than in the somewhat flashy production we saw in London at the Arts Theatre not so long ago. I hope the film will not run into censorship troubles in Britain. It deserves an airing.

I would also note an Italian film by Vito Pandolfi from a script by D M Turoldo, *Gli Ultimi (The Last)*, a simple, poetic piece of filming, about a poor country boy who suffers by being ashamed of his poverty and whose dreams (his little flock of three sheep become a thousand in slumberland) are ill compensation for his inability to adjust. Pasolini has championed the picture, so too Zavattini, and now me. I hope it has an airing at another festival during the year. Someone should give it an award.

The festival ended with a splendid piece of anti-establishment cloak-and-dagger. A number of French writers organised a furtive screening of a film banned by the authorities ever since it was made. It is the most obscene thing imaginable. No, it is not about sex; but it is about violence, at its most hideous. The film has been made collectively by many French technicians. It is called *October in Paris*. It deals with the peaceful demonstration of Algerians living in Paris (French citizens, like the Jamaicans are British citizens), demonstrating for Algerian independence and for a decent human existence for themselves. The demonstration ended with 250 deaths; many bodies being thrown in the Seine by the French police. The film is not sensational. In fact, it is a bit of a bore as a film. But face by face makes its indictment of the growing fascism in France. We see the squalor of the slums where the French Algerian is forced to live. We see the newsreels and uncensored amateur pictures of Police action during the demonstration. And we are quietly ashamed that we live off the fat of the land and do so little to practise the democracy in which we believe. As fast as the Police seize prints of *October in Paris*, new copies are secretly made. They are now being sent overseas for the world to see. It is a bitter lesson to us all. What would you *do*, what I wonder would I *do*, if racial hatred reached such an extreme in Britain?

Cannes, for me, ended on a sober note. *October in Paris* made me feel afraid of my own weakness. And it made me realise how far from the real issues of life our so-called 'realist' films can be.

●*The youngest of the schoolboys stranded on an island, is one of the last to be initiated into the 'tribe' in Peter Brook's 'Lord of the Flies', a frightening story of savagery winning over democracy*

Forty years ago Austrian born Josef von Sternberg was hailed as the leader of the American 'new wave' when he crashed the commercial barriers and made a documentary, 'The Salvation Hunters'. Chaplin called it a masterpiece of human realism. Today, Sternberg's last masterpiece, 'The Saga of Anatahan' — "I believe it is my best work"—lays rotting on the shelves, unshown. In between he became known as the man who made Dietrich ('The Blue Angel', 'Morocco', 'Blonde Venus', 'Shanghai Express', 'The Scarlet Empress' and 'The Devil is a Woman'). *films and filming* recorded a von Sternberg dialogue on his life and times. This is an edited version of it:

**VON STERNBERG**

# A Taste for Celluloid

The Sternberg problem is a problem of taste, not of ability. He portrays endless vice, corruption, the helpless and fatal pursuit of pleasure—but he does not portray it as a realist, or as a moralist. Evil, to him, is romantic

RICHARD GRIFFITH, curator of the Museum of Modern Art film library, New York

It seems that if one can make a picture (The Salvation Hunters) so dreary, so dull, and so depressing that it defeats criticism, then one will be hailed as a genius

PAUL ROTHA, in 'The Film Till Now'

His movies have become increasingly precious examples of photographic craftsmanship, remote from reality and very close to museum pieces in character

LEWIS JACOBS, in 'The Rise of the American Film'

**Patterns of light and shade—**

THE MOTION picture camera has been manipulated since the very beginning by having a viewpoint—close up, moving, standing still, sideways. It expresses a definite pictorial viewpoint. The sound of the voice, however, is realistic, without manipulations. *Morocco* was my third sound film. I recognised this in my first sound film before I made *The Blue Angel*. This was *Thunderbolt* where I used sound as a counterpoint and not as a vehicle for dialogue. The realistic sound of the voice and the unrealistic behaviour of the camera presents a schizophrenic problem. Until the day, which I am sure will come, when a man uses sound with the same skill as he uses the camera, we will not have what I consider the perfect sound film. At recent festivals I have seen films which indicate that steps are being taken in that direction. If we use the soundtrack merely as a vehicle for dialogue there can be no international film.

**New shapes—**

When the wide screen arrived I thought it was invented to show a duck shoot without panning. The greatest rival the large screen has is the small screen. An artist is not conditioned by the size of the screen, and to make films in order to fit a vast screen area is merely a gimmick.

**The films I did make—**

I was in Hamburg last year and I was invited to speak to an audience. In that audience was a man by the name of Paul Rotha, who is very famous as a historian and he had given me his book (*The Film Till Now*) with an inscription dedicated to me. I did not know what to say, so I read from his book what he had said about me. There were some devastating statements about me and I explained to the audience that if there was anyone who had a good opinion of me he should perhaps reconsider it.

My work has been written about at great length; but it has not been written about correctly. I made the first documentary film, *Salvation Hunters* (1925), my first film, a pure bleak film which revolved around a machine, a dredger in a harbour. I also made *An American Tragedy* which had no baroque at all (I don't know what baroque is anyway). Then I filmed Dostoievsky's *Crime and Punishment*; I don't know what classification that fits in, certainly not baroque.

I did make several films with Marlene Dietrich—*Blue Angel*, *Morocco*, and a picture of a train, not a picture of Marlene, *Shanghai Express*. After that came several more; but after my second film with Marlene I did not want to make any more films with her. I was finished. But Miss Dietrich said to me, 'You want to show the world you're a great director and that I am a bad actress. Isn't that want you want to do? You want me to go to another director'. Unfortunately, being a gentleman, I continued. It is interesting to note, since I am accused of this baroque tendency, that in my entire directorial life, which dates back almost forty years, I have made only eighteen films which today is what a director makes in one year!

**The films I don't make—**

As I get older I become more demanding of my own work. I have been busy with many things and I have not applied myself to making films. On average I would say I turn down about six or seven films a year which are offered to me. I am not a rich man. I am a poor man. I believe I know at least something about my ability to make a film and I believe, perhaps incorrectly, that I have a duty to this knowledge and unless I can find a perfect vehicle I will not direct another film.

Another thing has interrupted my desire

● *One of the films that created a legend: Marlene Dietrich in von Sternberg's 'The Scarlet Empress' (1934)*

to make films. We live in a very disturbed world. I like, if I make a film, not to disturb it more.

I read a lot of literature, but I do not believe that is right for the screen. *The Blue Angel* was not based on the novel, it was merely stimulated by the novel. The motion picture is a unique art form and writers should write exclusively for it.

So, while I am not working in the cinema I take my car apart, play chess, study the evolution of the mail system in early China, and I also study anthropology and psychiatry . . . and somehow or other the time passes.

### On broth-making—

There is a wonderful Russian saying—'A chicken cannot discuss his own broth'. Maybe my leg or my arm is in that soup, it is gone from me, it is not for me to discuss it.

In every film of mine there are many things I like. I tried my best to assemble my material in order to create a favourable atmosphere for a happy accident. If the accident occurs and it surprises me I am very happy about it. Where there is something I have deliberately done and have not succeeded in creating that happy accident, I am indifferent to it.

### Unseen pictures—

I have seen some extraordinary films that never seem to reach the public cinema or travel around the world. I saw a film on a little riot in Washington Square in New York City (some people wanted to play music and the police wanted to chase them away) and this was an extraordinary document. I don't know where it played and the chances are it will never play anywhere because the public demands the American film that is successful at the box-office.

I also saw a wonderful film that had to do with a double insanity of a mother and daughter. The film was made in Canada. It was an extraordinary thing; but is it possible to see it anywhere?

I went to Japan and worked there a long time to make a film with the Japanese, *The Saga of Anatahan*. I believe it is my best work, but nobody wants to see it.

It is not that I am unwilling to count myself among the good film makers, it is not always the good films that we see.

### All kinds of critics—

When you make a film you can antagonise an awful lot of people. I remember when I made my first film I had a preview audience walk out on the film; and the members of my cast walked past me as though I was a mangey dog. But some of them

● *Bruce Guerin, George K Arthur and Georgia Hale in von Sternberg's first film, 'Salvation Hunters' (1925)*

●*The pre-Dietrich era, when von Sternberg was known as 'Mary Pickford's director'. Here he is introduced by Douglas Fairbanks to Walter Johnson*

became stars later. A film somehow involves loneliness: I am neither influenced by the audience nor the critics. I made films to please myself. I have no other purpose. If a critic is kind enough to like my work I am sure it was not intended. I am sure that if some of my works had great popularity it was due to my absence of good taste rather than my ability to make good pictures.

An American and a Briton were standing side by side in one of the more important battles where the British lost the engagement. I believe it was at Singapore, and the American turned to the Briton and said 'We British certainly took a bad beating'. I am not a critic. The function of a critic is not so much to destroy work but to point out in what respect the work should have been better. It is unavoidable for a critic to make an enemy of a film director when he attacks his work. The critic chose his own profession, so he has to stew in it.

### If I were a censor—

If I were a censor you would see very few films. Because I would censor bad taste. Yet I would allow a film that has been censored frequently, *Viridiana*, by Bunuel.

I consider things of good taste, things that are well done, homogeneous in their content and things that are not harmful to other people. That is the standard by which I would determine good taste. I think *Lolita* was a picture wholly in bad taste. Yet *Sundays and Cybele* (*Les Dimanches de Ville d'Avray*), which had a similar theme, was in very good taste.

There are standards of good taste; and a censor must be superior to the product that he censors.

### Moral rearmers—

There is no other viewpoint except the human viewpoint.

I am very careful about suggesting some ways of making mankind better. I have no great affection for the reformer.

This is a wonderful world and we are wonderful people. The human being has in him the history of millions of years. I would suggest that we leave him alone.

### Stars—

There are no fifth rate stars. It all depends if the director does something with the actor or actress. I am more inclined to think there are fifth rate directors. An actor is powerless without the work of the director. He is there to fulfil the desire of the director. But, of course, there are great personalities and these personalities will break through whatever a director does, or does not, do.

### The young ones—

There are very many fine films being made today. There is good film-making in America and Russia, Japan, France, Britain . . . almost everywhere you look. It would be arrogant for me to pick any of it out. The cinema is certainly not losing ground.

But I deplore the tendency to lose the audience. I think that too many films are made under the impression that the theatre is a hospital.

I look at a film the same way that a surgeon looks at an operation. If the patient lives, I like it. If the patient dies, I can still admire the surgeon's skill. I can detect all the elements of a film automatically. I am not fooled by the actor, by the story, by the direction or by the photography, because I have spent all these years in films I have learnt to analyse every second on the screen.

### That re-make—

I did not see the remake of *The Blue Angel*; yet I was glad it was made. Nobody knew until this film was made what a director does!

There are many serious students of the cinema, people who want to study the craft of the cinema, yet I have never heard of any student asking to see the two pictures together so he can see the difference between one director and another. Edward Dmytryk is a friend of mine. He ran my film every morning before going on the stage. It was a mistake: he should not have done that. The remake would have been a better film if he had not seen my film.

### Festivals—

I would not move one step if I did not think film festivals were important. I think it is a wonderful thing to exchange ideas among makers of films. I consider it of great cultural importance. I don't mind if occasionally there is a pretty woman about.

● *Von Sternberg last filmed in Hollywood in 1953, when he directed Janet Leigh in 'Jet Pilot'*

*Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood and Alfred Hitchcock*

# The Lady Vanishes

**ALAN STANBROOK**

**Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller, 'The Birds', has its world premiere last month. Over the years his style has matured: but it was first fully defined in 'The Lady Vanishes' which established him as one of the world's great directors**

**Year of production.** 1938; Gainsborough Pictures; Director, Alfred Hitchcock; Producer, Edward Black; Screenplay, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat based on the novel *The Wheel Spins* by Ethel Lina White; Continuity, Alma Reville; Photography, Jack Cox; Editor, R E Dearing; Settings, Vetchinsky; Musical director, Louis Levy; British Board of Film Censors 'A' Certificate; Running Time, 96 minutes. **Cast:** *Iris Henderson*, Margaret Lockwood; *Gilbert*, Michael Redgrave; *Dr Hartz*, Paul Lukas; *Miss Froy*, Dame May Whitty; *Mr Todhunter*, Cecil Parker; *Mrs Todhunter*, Linden Travers; *Baroness*, Mary Clare; *Caldicott*, Naunton Wayne; *Charters*, Basil Radford; *Hotel Manager*, Emile Boreo; *Blanche*, Googie Withers; *Julie*, Sally Stewart; *Signor Doppo*, Philip Leaver; *Signora Doppo*, Zelma Vas Dias; *The Nun*, Catherine Lacey; *Mme Kummer*, Josephine Wilson; *The Officer*, Charles Oliver; *Anna*, Kathleen Tremaine.

**Plot Outline:** In a Ruritanian Central European Republic, an avalanche has blocked the railway and the train passengers are stranded at an inn. Unprepared for such a large number of guests, the innkeeper is unable to provide them with adequate food and accommodation and they have, grudgingly, to accept the discomfort. Even more discommoded, however, is a rich heiress, Iris Henderson, who has been vacationing at the inn. She protests at the noises created by Gilbert, one of the train passengers, who is recording the vanishing folk music of Central Europe in the room above. A love-hate relationship rapidly develops between them.

The following morning the line is cleared and the party is able to proceed. Iris is travelling back to England to get married but as she is about to board the train she is struck on the head by a falling window box and knocked unconscious. Recovering in the compartment, Iris is befriended by an old English lady who suggests a cup of tea in the dining car to revive her. She introduces herself but a train whistle eclipses her voice and so she writes her name, Miss Froy, in the smut of the window pane. She asks the waiter to brew a special brand of herbal tea which she takes from her handbag, and politely requests the sugar bowl from a pair of Englishmen who are reconstructing the field in the last Test Match with the cubes. Iris and Miss Froy return to their compartment and, as they pass, another Englishman and his female travelling companion pull down the window sashes to indicate their desire for privacy. Miss Froy tells Iris that she will order dinner and advises her to get some sleep. When Iris awakes Miss Froy has gone, so she makes enquiries of the other passengers and is told that there has been no English lady there. She goes to the dining car but the waiter insists that she took tea alone and produces the bill to prove it.

In the corridor Iris meets Dr Hartz, a famous brain surgeon, and tells him of her predicament. Hartz sums up the situation and suggests that she is suffering from hallucinations induced by the blow on the head. Unconvinced, Iris questions the other passengers but they all deny having seen Miss Froy. The two Englishmen, Charters and Caldicott, fear that any untoward event might result in further delay and their inability to return to England in time for the Test Match so they resolve to keep mum. The other Englishman, Mr Todhunter, is travelling with his mistress and does not want to prejudice his legal career by making his name public. So he, too, has reasons for saying nothing. In despair and confusion Iris turns to Gilbert who agrees to help her, and their search for Miss Froy is given a fillip when Todhunter's mistress admits to having seen Miss Froy.

At the next stop Dr Hartz picks up a heavily bandaged patient on whom he is to operate in Switzerland. When Iris returns to her compartment she discovers a lady dressed in Miss Froy's clothes, but it is not Miss Froy. She announces that she is Mme Kummer and has occupied the seat throughout the journey. The other occupants corroborate this, explaining that, as they had said, there had been no *English* lady present. Iris is still unconvinced and takes Gilbert to the dining car to show him the name written on the window pane. But it is rubbed out as the train passes through a tunnel. Just when Gilbert is becoming sceptical, he catches a glimpse of the packet of herbal tea as the waiter throws the rubbish out of the window. They search the train and in the luggage compartment discover the apparatus of a Vanishing Lady performer, who is travelling in Iris' compartment, and also Miss Froy's pince-nez spectacles. Persuaded that Miss Froy has been abducted, they hurry back to inform Dr Hartz, but are surprised to find that his patient is being guarded by a nun in high-heeled shoes. Iris surmises that the patient is in fact Miss Froy, who has been substituted for Mme Kummer, and demands to see the patient's face. Dr Hartz admits as much, announcing that he plans to perform an unsuccessful operation on her. To silence Iris and Gilbert, he instructs the nun to drug their drinks and then locks them in.

In a race against sleep, Gilbert opens the carriage door and passes on the outside to the next compartment. He is confronted by the nun, who informs him that she has not drugged them after all, because she cannot tolerate the callous murder of Miss Froy. Together, they release the latter from her bandages and once more substitute Mme Kummer, whom they overpower. The doctor, however, discovers the deception through the colour of a lock of hair, which they have inadvertently failed to swathe in bandages. He arranges for the uncoupling of the carriage and its diversion to a branch line. They are boarded by an armed soldier, who demands the delivery of Miss Froy. Gilbert clubs him and seizes his gun. While he passes to the engine to force the driver to return to the main line, Charters and Caldicott hold at bay a group of besieging soldiers, led by Dr Hartz. Todhunter favours surrender but, when he

waves the white flag, he is shot down.

Miss Froy reveals that she is a spy and entrusts Gilbert with some secret information, coded in the form of a tune. She resolves to make a separate escape so that the secret has two chances of reaching England. Gilbert manages to steer the train back onto the main line and the party escapes. Back in England Iris takes one look at her prospective husband and decides to elope with Gilbert. They report to the Foreign Office to deliver their message but Gilbert has forgotten the tune. Suddenly they hear it being played on the piano in the adjacent room and enter to find that Miss Froy has escaped after all. England's safety is preserved.

**Biographical:**

ALFRED HITCHCOCK: 'The master of suspense' was born in London on August 13 1900 to an Essex shop keeper. As his parents were Catholics, he was educated by the Jesuit Fathers at St Ignatius College, where he showed no special academic aptitude, except in geography. He trained to be an engineer but abandoned his studies and took a clerking job at fifteen shillings a week in an advertising agency. From there he joined the W T Henley Telegraph Company and, thanks to an actor who sometimes worked for the company, obtained a job as film titler for the silent films of the Famous Players Company at Islington. When the director of *Always Tell Your Wife* fell ill during production, Hitchcock was called in to finish the film and in 1922 he gained his first screen credit as director of *Number 13*. His first critical success was the Ivor Novello vehicle of 1926, *The Lodger*, and he consolidated this with his direction of the first English talking picture, *Blackmail*, three years later. Hitchcock's imaginative co-ordination of sound and visual effects established his reputation as the foremost British director and throughout the 'thirties he made an outstanding series of thrillers, principally for British International Pictures and Gaumont British. These include *Murder, The Man Who Knew Too Much, The Thirty Nine Steps, The Secret Agent, Sabotage* and *The Lady Vanishes*, which won the New York critics' award in 1938. He married Alma Reville, who was initially a script girl and then a scenario writer.

The success of his films in America led to a contract from David O Selznick for whom he made *Rebecca* in 1940. This gained the Academy Award as best film of the year. Since then Hitchcock has worked exclusively for American companies and enhanced his reputation with, amongst others, *Foreign Correspondent, Shadow of a Doubt, Spellbound, Notorious, Rope, Under Capricorn, Strangers on a Train, Rear Window, The Trouble With Harry*, a remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much, The Wrong Man, Vertigo, North By Northwest* and *Psycho*. His latest film, shot in secrecy, is *The Birds*.

Hitchcock's work consists almost entirely of thrillers, and the popularity of the *genre* has made him one of the few directors known to the general public. He is in fact a star director, in the unique position of being able to attract audiences by his name alone. This enviable status has been earned by the consistency of his readily identifiable style. His films are characterised by a fast visual narrative, wit and a penchant for staging climaxes against incongruous locations—the roof of the British Museum, Mount Rushmore and the Albert Hall for example. Hitchcock is also enamoured of the gimmick and loves to pose himself a challenge to his technical dexterity. He has twice limited the action to a single set (in *Lifeboat* and *Rear Window*), and explored the possibilities of the ten minute take in *Rope* and 3-D in *Dial M For Murder*. The latter, however, has been shown in this country only in a flat version. The director's professional signature is the personal appearance he makes in each of his films. These can range from the cameo performance in *Blackmail* as an irate tube traveller to the mere glimpse in *Dial M For Murder* in a framed photograph. They too have helped to make his name a household word.

SIDNEY GILLIAT: Gilliat, whose name is perennially linked with that of Frank Launder as director, screenwriter and producer, was born in Edgeley, Cheshire on February 15 1908. His father was once the editor of the *Evening Standard* and Walter Mycroft, who had been the newspaper's film critic, accepted Sidney at the age of nineteen as his assistant in the British International Studios. He was appointed story reader and later English literary research expert on the film of Thomas Hardy's *Under The Greenwood Tree*. He progressed to gag-man for director Walter Forde, then moved to Gainsborough Pictures as reader and film writer in 1930. His screenplay credits include *A Yank At Oxford, The Lady Vanishes, Night Train to Munich* and *Kipps*. With Frank Launder he co-directed and wrote *Millions Like Us* in 1943 and made *Waterloo Road* the following year as a solo production. In 1945 he and Launder formed their own independent company, amongst whose successes have been *The Rake's Progress, I See A Dark Stranger, Green For Danger, London Belongs To Me, The Happiest Days of Your Life, State Secret* and *The Belles of St Trinians*. Sidney Gilliat recently directed Peter Sellers in *Only Two Can Play*.

FRANK LAUNDER: Sidney Gilliat's professional partner, who is married to actress Bernadette O'Farrell, was born in Hitchin, Herts. He was first employed as a civil servant at Brighton, simultaneously working by night with the Brighton Repertory Company. He became rapidly convinced that he had no future as an actor and turned his attention to writing. His first play, *There Was No Signpost*, caught the eye of John Maxwell of British International Pictures, who offered him a job in the scenario department at Elstree. He later moved to Gaumont British to prepare scripts for Alfred Hitchcock and Jack Hulbert. Since the late 'thirties his career has been almost exclusively associated with Sidney Gilliat.

MICHAEL REDGRAVE: The son of Roy and Margaret Redgrave, he was born on March 20 1908, and educated at Cambridge where he gained first class honours. He obtained a walk-on part at the Stratford Festival of 1921 and then, for several years, wrote theatre reviews and published anthologies of poetry. He became a Modern Language teacher at Cranleigh and his successful productions for the school dramatic society convinced him that the theatre was his *metier*. Accordingly he resigned his post in 1934 and made his professional début at the Playhouse Repertory Theatre, Liverpool. After two years with the Liverpool Repertory Company he joined the Old Vic in *Love's Labour's Lost* in September 1936.

During the war he served with the Royal Navy and then returned to the stage. He made his first New York appearance in 1948 in *Macbeth* and subsequently toured Holland in a one man performance of Shakespeare. Several of his plays were performed at the Playhouse Liverpool and he is also the author of a book, *The Actor's Ways and Means*. In addition to his theatrical career Redgrave has a long screen record including *The Lady Vanishes, The Stars Look Down, Kipps, The Way To The Stars, Mourning Becomes Electra, The Browning Version, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Dam Busters* and a cameo rôle in Orson Welles' *Confidential Report*. He recently played the Borstal governor in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* under the direction of Tony Richardson.

MARGARET LOCKWOOD: Margaret Lockwood (real name Margaret Day) was born in Karachi on September 15 1916, the daughter of a railway engineer. She attended the Sydenham High School for Girls and then the Kensington Secretarial College. Her studies at the Italia Conti School led to her début in 'Cavalcade', but she was not an immediate success and returned to study at RADA. Leontine Sagan chose her to play in 'Hannele' and her career was established:

her first film was *Lorna Doone* in 1934. She became one of the most popular British stars of the 'forties, appearing notably in *Hungry Hill*, *The Wicked Lady* and *The Man In Grey*. In 1949 she returned to the stage in 'Private Lives' and 'Peter Pan' and has since made infrequent screen appearances (*Trent's Last Case*, *Laughing Anne*, *Cast A Dark Shadow*). By her marriage to Rupert de Leon, whom she divorced in 1950, she has a daughter, Julia, who is now an actress in her own right. Margaret Lockwood's autobiography, *Lucky Star*, was published in 1955.

BASIL RADFORD: As with Launder and Gilliat, the name of Basil Radford is immediately coupled with Naunton Wayne. Radford was born at Chester on 25 June 1897 and died of a heart attack on 20 October 1952. He was educated at St Peter's School, York, with a view to entering the Church but after active service in the First World War he studied at RADA. His first London appearance was in 'Collusion' at the Ambassador's Theatre in 1924. From 1927-31 he toured New Zealand and America in 'The Ghost Train'. He played for two years with the British Guild Players at Vancouver, then returned to England to appear in 'The Love Pirate', 'Night Must Fall' and 'Spring Tide'. He met Naunton Wayne characteristically at a cricket match when Radford's eleven from the Duchess Theatre challenged Wayne, who was currently appearing at the Strand. A happy partnership was formed, which was perpetuated in the films *A Girl Must Live*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Night Train To Munich*, *A Girl In A Million*, *Quartet* and *It's Not Cricket*. Radford also appeared notably in *Passport To Pimlico*, *Whisky Galore*, *Chance of a Lifetime* and *The Galloping Major*. He was married to Shirley Deuchars in 1926 and left one son, George.

NAUNTON WAYNE: Wayne, who was born in Glamorgan on June 22, 1901, was educated at Clifton College. As a boy he was always attracted by acting and especially concert party work. It was in this *genre* that he made his debut at the age of nineteen and for ten years he toured with concert parties all over the world. At twenty-eight he made his first London appearance at the Victoria Palace and subsequently played at the Palladium, Coliseum and Holborn Empire. His first screen rôle was in *The First Mrs Fraser* in 1933. Naunton Wayne is married with two children.

PAUL LUKAS: This distinguished European actor, who plays the principal spy in *The Lady Vanishes*, was born in Budapest on May 26 1891. He attended college and dramatic academy in Budapest and made his début in 1916 in Molgar's 'Liliom' at the Vig Theatre. He entered the Hungarian cinema a year later and after nine years went to America in 1928. His first big success was in Cukor's *Little Women* and in 1943 he gained an Academy Award for his performance in *Watch On The Rhine*. In 1948 he left Hollywood for Broadway and achieved a personal triumph in the long running 'Call Me Madam'. Of recent years he has again appeared in films, playing in *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* and *Tender Is The Night*. He has been married since 1927 to Daisy Benes.

**The Critics:**

*The Lady Vanishes* was Hitchcock's penultimate English film. He followed it with an adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*, but this was undertaken largely to strengthen his position with David O Selznick as prospective director of the same author's *Rebecca*. Effectively, then, his English career closed with *The Lady Vanishes* and it is in many respects the epitome of this period of his work.

The apparent limitation of Hitchcock's material has resulted in a curiously ambivalent critical attitude towards his work. His technical mastery has long been acknowledged and admired but critics have been perplexed by the contrast between his English and American work. Established English critics prefer the often naive but direct and unpretentious British films of the 'thirties to the more glossy and complex American productions. To them his best American films are those like *Foreign Correspondent*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Strangers on a Train* and *North By Northwest* which approximate most closely to the ethos of the earlier works.

In France, however, a different attitude is maintained. His early films are seen as commendable apprentice pieces but inferior to his more recent films. This divided viewpoint stems principally from rival theories about the director's intentions. To the British Hitchcock is an entertainer, no more and no less; to the French he is a moralist and a Catholic one to boot. Hence films like *I Confess* and *The Wrong Man*, which received a tepid critical reception in Britain, are regarded as parables, meriting the same serious consideration as the works of Robert Bresson. Hitchcock's most highly regarded films in France are precisely those which disappointed English critics most: *Notorious*, *The Wrong Man*, *Vertigo* and especially *Under Capricorn*, rated as the director's worst film in this country and as his masterpiece in France. It is significant that the themes of love, redemption, the transference of guilt and moral values are uppermost in each of these films and symptomatic that *Psycho*, which satisfies as a thriller and as an allegory, met with critical acclaim in both countries.

Dissent over Hitchcock concerns his style

● *Iris (Margaret Lockwood), has an uncomfortable first meeting with Gilbert (Michael Redgrave). A love-hate relationship develops between them*

● *Gilbert's discovery of a 'nun' (Catherine Lacey), interrupts the reunion between Miss Froy (Dame May Whitty) and Iris*

● *Todhunter (Cecil Parker) is anxious to avoid being involved with Miss Froy's disappearance, in case the papers find out he is travelling with a mistress (Linden Travers)*

● *Paul Lukas as Dr Hartz (heart surgeon/master spy) offers Iris and Gilbert a drink, which he believes is drugged*

● *The Baroness (Mary Clare) and Dr Hartz supervise an armed attack on the English party*

as well as his content. English film criticism has been weaned on *Film Form* and *The Film Sense* and in Hitchcock's films of the 'thirties the most potent contribution to success was the editing. In America, however, he has become increasingly absorbed by the potentialities of camera movement and the case of *Rope* is perhaps the symbol of the change. This has made his work more interesting to the school of criticism that emerged from *Cahiers du Cinema*, which regards F W Murnau as the father of modern cinema and the tracking shot as more expressive than the cut. And what is Hitchcock's own opinion?

With a characteristic sense of humour he tells English critics that he prefers his English films and French critics his American films.

Few Hitchcock films have had such a unanimously enthusiastic press as *The Lady Vanishes*. Even Claude Chabrol, a staunch defender of his transatlantic work, admits: '*C'est un excellent film anglais, un excellent film d'Hitchcock*'. C A Lejeune, writing in *The Observer* of October 9, 1938, declared: 'Hitchcock has done it again. This master of screen melodrama has reached the point when every new film of his can be regarded as a blind date for connoisseurs of mystery fiction—something we can go to as safely as we would ask for a new Ellery Queen, a new Margery Allingham, or a new H C Bailey from the library.

'*The Lady Vanishes* is possibly the best, almost certainly the most successful of all his pictures. Adapted rather cunningly from Ethel Lina White's first rate thriller, *The Wheel Spins*, it tells the story of a drab middle-aged music teacher who suddenly disappears from a trans-continental express under curious circumstances . . . The device has been used before in mystery tales but it is still effective. Hitchcock plays up to the full the chill and panic of the situation—the girl's doubts, her growing obstinacy, the increasing tension of the atmosphere. Like W S Van Dyke, he has his fun, too, and nobody who sees the picture will forget the grim couple of English sportsmen determined, at all hazards, to get home for the last day of the Test Match.'

On the same day, Sydney W Carroll, *The Sunday Times* film correspondent, wrote: 'Alfred Hitchcock is the Prince of English thrill-makers. His latest exploit, *The Lady Vanishes*, is to my mind easily the best constructed, the most ingenious and the most entertaining. Based upon a popular novel, *The Wheel Spins*, it concerns in effect a mysterious old lady whose disappearance forms the central incident in a string of adventures that never for an instant bore or fatigue but keep one guessing till the finish.

'The cast is excellent in every detail, including that magnificent young English actor Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood, Paul Lukas, Naunton Wayne, Basil Radford, Cecil Parker and Mary Clare. As for Dame May Whitty, who is the vanishing lady of the picture, her characterisation is delightful throughout with not one flaw in the playing. *The Lady Vanishes* is the finest British thriller I can remember and one of the most vigorous I have ever seen.'

The following Saturday, October 15, William Whitebait in *The New Statesman* said: 'Max Beerbohm is said to "like his niche" and it is clear that Mr Hitchcock likes his. For a long time he has confined himself to suspense and comedy thrillers, but they get better and better, and his latest, *The Lady Vanishes*, is perhaps the best of all—a capital sample of his highly individual style. He has exploited to the full his particular sense of the sinister and the bizarre and built up the tension by a masterly use of detail—the heavy panting, for example, of a powerful locomotive brought to a standstill on a side line.' Whitebait had reservations, though, about the dialogue given the hero and heroine, maintaining that 'the English should leave amorous wisecracking to the nation which invented and alone understands that art.' But he praised the acting of Lockwood and Redgrave and concluded, 'To complete our pleasure, the film contains a number of lines rendered almost embarrassingly topical by the events of the past few weeks.'

**Revaluation:** *The Lady Vanishes* is, in Michael Redgrave's phrase, 'quintessential Hitchcock' and enjoys the reputation of being his most accomplished British production. If personal preference leans towards the extravagance of *The Thirty Nine Steps*, there is no gainsaying that Hitch's vanishing lady act is a formidable display of *legerdemain*. It is certainly his most homogeneous and completely successful film of the pre-war years. The preoccupation with spies and international intrigue, which Hitchcock so assiduously borrowed from Fritz Lang, has always been his most fruitful field and the result is a cunningly fashioned and superior entertainment.

The plot is, of course, fantastic, involving a nun in high heels, a mysterious doctor, a dear old lady who proves to be an arch spy and a gun battle in a besieged railway coach 'somewhere in Europe'. This deliberate repudiation of realism in favour of *Boys' Own Paper* heroics is entirely typical of the director at his best. It recalls the world of *The Spiders*, *The Spy* and the *Mabuse* films and shares with them a naïve innocence which seems largely to have deserted their directors in recent years. The Hitchcock of *Psycho* and the Lang of *While The City Sleeps* are more sophisticated, more knowing, but one sometimes longs for the pristine vigour of those early gems.

Characteristic, too, of *The Lady Vanishes* are the two Englishmen whose life revolves around the Test Match score. As imperturbably played by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne they constitute a great part of the film's humour. And the film is extraordinarily funny, thanks to a witty script by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat. Everything, and especially everything British, is fuel for their barbed satire. Stranded in a decrepit, Central European inn, Charters and Caldicott insist on donning dinner jackets before eating their bread and cheese. Compelled to share a room with the maid, they attribute her lascivious winks to the workings of 'a rather primitive form of humour'. Charters primly bars the maid's view of Caldicott's exposed chest, only to be caught a second later without his trousers.

The Test Match mystique provides a constant source of ironic mirth as does the rivalry between dark blue and light blue. The Army Officer, who holds the passengers at gun point, assures them that they will be unharmed because he went to Oxford; Redgrave clubs him from behind with

● *Caldicott (Naunton Wayne) and Gilbert turn engine-drivers, to escape the ambush troops*

*see for yourself . . .*

● **This is the twenty-fourth in a unique series. You can actually see the films discussed by the experts. If you want to see *The Lady Vanishes* you can borrow a print from: National Film Archive, 81 Dean-street, London W1. Write for details today, mentioning *films and filming***

the admission, 'but I went to Cambridge'. Adding especial irony to the work, bearing in mind its production date, is the portrait of a pacifist, whose morality is depicted as self-interested and who dies ignobly with a bullet in the chest. This is satirically contrasted with Basil Radford's look of faint outrage when shot in the hand. Launder and Gilliat's contribution has in fact been underestimated. The dialogue has a sharp, acid tone and frequently contains innuendos of remarkable audacity for 1938. Thus: 'My father said "never desert a lady in trouble"—he even carried it as far as marrying mother'.

There is nothing novel, of course, in the film's architecture, which is built upon the oldest and most solid foundation—a varied assortment of companions, united by a common danger. It has provided the groundwork of many a subsequent film, such as Ford's *Stagecoach* and Clair's *Ten Little Niggers*. But the exposition is effected with admirable economy by the device of making the characters register at the inn, and the authors always have a surprise in hand when the course seems too predictable.

Hitchcock's direction is at all times smoothly brilliant. Pace is sustained throughout and repeated cut-in shots of the train rounding a bend, of speeding rails and telegraph wires add impetus to the narrative. When detail would impede the action, Hitchcock summarily curtails it and indicates a cross channel voyage by a simple dissolve from a steamer to a shot of Victoria station. But when he wishes to emphasise a point he carefully isolates it in close up. He once wrote: 'The point is to draw the audience right inside the situation instead of leaving them to watch it from outside, from a distance. And you can do this only by breaking the action up into details and cutting from one to the other, so that each detail is forced in turn on the attention of the audience and reveals its psychological meaning.' Thus in *The Lady Vanishes* we see the label of Harriman's Herbal Tea momentarily adhering to the window before the train's speed whisks it off, and a close up of sinister hands silhouetted against a wall as they strangle an innocent ballad singer, followed by a close-up of the uncollected coin tossed down by Miss Froy from her window.

Part of the fun for contemporary Hitchcock admirers lies in the recognition of old tricks, which the director has successfully revived in his later productions. No less than John Ford, Hitchcock is self-eclectic in the best sense. The supposedly drugged glasses are placed judiciously in the camera mouth to give a foreshortened emphasis in much the same way as the poisoned coffee cup of *Notorious* or the open razor of *Spellbound*. Similarly Miss Froy's little gasp following a gun shot proves to be a red herring, prompted by an entirely different cause: one recalls the same hoax in reverse from *North By Northwest* when a United Nations official gasps at the sight of a photograph and promptly pitches forward with a knife in his back. Again the shock cut to a fiendishly grinning, life size poster of the Vanishing Lady showman has much the same force as the shrieking entry of Mrs Bates in *Psycho*.

If Hitchcock's direction has faults they lie principally in the opening scenes with their paste board evocation of an Alpine setting. The first shot is particularly unpromising with its model railway station, puppet figures and dinky car. All Hitchcock's elaborate camera movement cannot disguise the artifice. Nor is the assassination of the ballad singer satisfactorily explained. These early scenes, in which the director lacks the budget for the locations they demand, are clearly of little interest to him and, like Renoir in *La Bête Humaine*, he cannot wait 'to play trains'.

Hitchcock has recently admitted to a nostalgia for the swifter narrative pace of silent films. Certainly his own style has remained essentially visual, with suitable aids from the sound track, like the train whistle which prevents the heroine hearing Miss Froy's name. Its corollary, the etching of the name on the window pane, links sound and visual into an organic unity. Hitchcock has never been much given to optical trickery and when he dabbles in it the effects are sometimes grotesque, like the Dali dream of *Spellbound*. Here he limits such excesses to a multiple image of waving hands at the station to indicate Iris' giddiness following the blow on the head. His strength lies in other directions—the innocuous pan to the right around the train compartment which aptly assumes a sinister quality when repeated in the opposite direction after Miss Froy's disappearance, or the tiny, revealing detail, like Todhunter's care to close the window when his mistress raises her voice.

A master of the cinematic confidence trick, Hitchcock will fill the frame with the form of a woman dressed in Miss Froy's tweeds only to reveal that it is not Miss Froy as she turns her head. He will adjust the focal length of the lens to bring Dr Hartz's profile into prominence as Iris drinks the doctored whisky or satirise English prudery by making Charters and Caldicott gallantly face the wall as the maid disrobes. Hitchcock has a finely developed sense of fun of the Billy Bunter variety. It is infantile but everyone has a spiffing time. Nothing could be more amusing, for example, than the spectacle of Redgrave earnestly jotting down the creaking clog dance of two aged inn servants or the sound of a nun launching into a Cockney diatribe in reply to Paul Lukas' eloquent Ruritanian. *The Lady Vanishes* is not for your supercilious man of the world, but it is as good a Hitchcock as any on which to cut your teeth.

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*Vivienne, London, 1963*

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# RAM GOPAL FILM PRODUCER/ACTOR

# Mock monks by Peter Cowie

A large cluster of character actors have been at work on *Crooks in Cloisters* at ABPC Elstree recently. They are Ronald Fraser, star of *The Pot Carriers*, Barbara Windsor, the female lead in *Sparrers' Can't Sing*, Bernard Cribbens, Gregoire Aslan, Davy Kaye, Melvyn Hayes and Wilfred (Steptoe, Snr.) Brambell. The film tells the story of a successful London gang that buys a monastery on an island off the Cornish coast when the pace becomes too hot in town. In order to keep up appearances, they dress as monks and run the monastery along traditional lines.

*Crooks in Cloisters* is being directed in Cinemascope and colour by 30 year-old Jeremy Summers, whose first picture was *The Punch and Judy Man*. Summers wrote and directed fifteen documentaries for ABC Television. 'TV's a great crammer', he says, 'in six months you can get more experience of actual film-making than in many years in the cinema'. He likes his latest film: 'The script is so good that the actors fall naturally into their characters, and it is very much a group picture—no any one real star'.

Although scriptwriter Mike Watts regards it as very similar to his previous film ('It's a religious *Pot Carriers*' he laughs), Ronald Fraser thinks the comparison should not be drawn too far. 'It's much more of a comedy—in fact it's an out-and-out romp'. There is a faintly serious side to the film. 'In the end,' says Fraser, 'we all get caught and give our money to the Church'. He loves Watts's writing, 'His characters are all so fruity and rich'.

Gregoire Aslan is one of the world's most experienced character actors. He has just returned from a spell in Hollywood, and was over in Paris some weeks ago helping to dub Dassin's *He Who Must Die* into English. 'It is the great joy of my life to have made that film' he recalls. *He Who Must Die* is to be re-released in its English version. In *Crooks in Cloisters* he plays the gang's diamond expert. Aslan is one of the few people who actually appeared—as part of an orchestra—in Orson Welles' unfinished documentary on Brazil, *It's All True*. He is to star with Brigitte Bardot and Anthony Perkins in *The Ravishing Idiot*, to be directed by Edouard Molinaro on locations in Britain.

Another film with a Gallic flavour, *French Dressing*, starring Marisa Mell, is to be shot by Ken Russell this summer. It will be produced by Ken Harper, and James Booth and Roy Kinnear will also star.

*The Winston Affair*, with an army background, is to be Guy Hamilton's next assignment as a director. It is a 20th Century Fox production and will be made partly here and partly in India. The screenplay is by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse, and among those starring will be Robert Mitchum, Trevor Howard and France Nuyen.

Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole are starring as Becket and Henry II in the Peter Glenville production of Anouilh's play *Becket*, now being filmed at Shepperton. Other stars include Felix Aylmer, Sir Donald Wolfit, Pamela Brown, Martita Hunt, Gino Cervi and Paola Stoppa. Production designer is John Bryan; Geoffrey Unsworth is lighting cameraman.

## *Britain*

*Once Upon a Summer*, taken from Edna O'Brien's novel 'The Lonely Girl', is a Woodfall production now on location in Ireland. Peter Finch and Rita Tushingham play the writer and his beloved country girl, and Lynn Redgrave, 20 year-old younger daughter of Sir Michael Redgrave, has the major supporting role. Oscar Lewenstein is producing with Tony Richardson as executive producer. Desmond Davis directs his first film, and Manny Wynn gets his first job as leading lighting cameraman after assisting on many other Woodfall productions. *Once Upon a Summer* will be released through United Artists.

The new David Deutsch company, Domino Productions, is responsible for the new Clive Donner film, *Nothing but the Best*, starring Alan Bates, Denholm Elliott, Harry Andrews, and Millicent Martin. This ironic comedy about an ambitious clerk is being made on location around Cambridge and at ABPC Elstree from a screenplay by Frederic Raphael, the well-known novelist and literary critic.

Ian Hendry, Alfred Burke and Alan Badel are starring in the Ben Arbeid production of *Children of the Damned*, now being made at MGM Borehamwood.

Towards the end of this year, Alain Resnais will be coming to London to shoot part of his next film, *The Adventures of Harry Dixon*.

With many new productions getting under way on location and in the studios, the future of British cinema seems to be much brighter now than it was a few months ago—especially as some of the recent domestic productions like *Sparrers Can't Sing* have been so successful at the box-office.

John Kohn and Jud Kinberg who have bought the screenrights to *The Collector*, John Fowles' first novel, plan to film the book this autumn at Shepperton studios. Stanley Mann will write the screenplay, and the film will be released by Columbia. *The Collector* is a psychological thriller which will be virtually, in Kinberg's words, 'A two-handed picture' resting very heavily on its two leading players, a young man and a girl.

# WORLD Production GUIDE

## BRITAIN

**CLIVE DONNER: Nothing but the Best,** *ironic comedy about an ambitious clerk with Alan Bates, Denholm Elliott and Millicent Martin Produced by David Deutsch for Anglo-Amalgamated.*

**PETER GLENVILLE: Becket,** *adaptation of the Anouilh play with Richard Burton as Becket and Peter O'Toole as Henry II. Co-starring Donald Wolfit and Paola Stoppa. Produced by Hal Wallis for Paramount.*

**NATHAN JURAN: Siege of the Saxons,** *with Shirley Anne Field. Produced by Jud Kinberg for Columbia.*

**TONY LEADER: Children of the Damned,** *sequel to* Village of the Damned *with Ian Hendry and Alan Badel. Produced by Ben Arbeid for MGM.*

**JEREMY SUMMERS: Crooks in Cloisters,** *comedy about gang hiding out in a monastery, with Ronald Fraser and Barbara Windsor. Produced by Gordon L T Scott for ABPC.*

## USA

**MICHAEL ANDERSON: Monsieur Cognac,** *comedy with Tony Curtis and Christine Kaufmann. Produced by Harold Hecht for UA.*

**DELMER DAVES: Youngblood Hawke,** *with James Franciscus, Suzanne Pleshette and Mildred Dunnock. Produced by Daves for Warner Bros.*

**HENRY KOSTER: Take Her, She's Mine,** *comedy with James Stewart and Sandra Dee, Produced by Koster for 20th-Fox.*

**JOSE QUINTERO: Fool Killer,** *psychological study with Anthony Perkins, Salome Jens and Eddie Albert Jr. Produced by Ely Landau (who produced* Long Day's Journey Into Night*).*

**DORE SCHARY: Act One,** *adaptation of the Moss Hart book, with George Hamilton and Jason Robards Jr. Produced by Schary for Warner Bros.*

**PETER TEWKSBURY: Sunday in New York,** *romantic comedy with Jane Fonda, Cliff Robertson and Jo Morrow. Produced by Everett Freeman for MGM-Seven Arts.*

## FRANCE

**ANDRE CAYATTE: La Vie Conjugale,** *two views of marriage as seen by husband and wife, with Jacques Charrier and Marie-José Nat.*

**ROGER VADIM: Château en Suede,** *shooting in Lapland, with Jean-Claude Brialy and Francoise Hardy.*

## ITALY

**MARIANO CAIANO: Il Vendicatore D'Oriente,** *with Gordon Scott and Ombretta Colli. A FIA Gladiator Film production.*

**VITTORIO SALA: L'Intrigo,** *with Rossano Brazzi, Georgia Moll, Shirley Jones, George Sanders and Micheline Presle. A Brazzi-Barclay-Hujutin production.*





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