

The Courier Covers

THE NEW MOVIES

By John Springer

(Editor's Note—Listed as Class A, objectionable in part, by the National Legion of Decency, this week, are the following: "Almost Married"; objection, "Light Treatment of Marriage." "Night Before the Divorce"; objection, "Light Treatment of Marriage." "Lady in Distress"; objection, "Film in its solution does not indicate any commensurate moral value for the crime committed by one of the leading characters.")

Melodrama in Nazi Germany... Fantasy in the New Hampshire of 1840... slapstick on a dude ranch and farce in Watful Vista... Sleep-dyed doings in post-Civil War Memphis. The movies got around this week and entertainingly, too, for the greater part.

"Mister V"—A-1

The British consistently make the best melodramas. The occasion for trotting out that shopworn observation this time is "Mister V," an ingenious and exciting film about a sort of modern Scarlet Pimpernel having himself a time in pre-War Nazi Germany. "Mister V" is the first directorial job for Leslie Howard, but it is a job that would not be discredit to a Carol Reed, or even to an Alfred Hitchcock.

The picture moves it has pace and suspense and excitement. It also artfully blends humor with the melodrama. All of this must be played with just the right touch and therefore Director Leslie Howard is fortunate in that his start is Actor Leslie Howard. Howard plays a figure of true heroic stature and he plays with ease and assurance and just a touch of whimsy Howard the actor and director passes off the many implausibilities so adroitly that one gives them scarcely a second thought.

The supporting cast is able, too, with the performance of Francis E. Sullivan, as the Nazi general ranking easily among the most effective supporting jobs of recent months. The girl, Mary Morris, is adequate although she is hardly flattered by the photography. And the picture is the most engrossing of its type since "Night Train."

"All That Money Can Buy"—A-2

It's rather disconcerting to go into your barn and discover the devil with all manner of beguiling temptations. But that's what happens to Jabez Stone, a young New Hampshire farmer of the year 1840, in "All That Money Can Buy," a screen version of Stephen Vincent Benet's "Devil and Daniel Webster." The legend of the man who sells his soul to the devil has been favored in the theater and literature through the ages. Benet's version is pure Americana—the devil himself being an amiable rustic, who calls himself Mr. Scratch, and insists that he is more American than Daniel Webster. After all, says our Mr. Scratch, wasn't he with the first explorers who came over and did business with the Indians? Wasn't he with the men who introduced slavery to the colonies? Wasn't he in on the witchcraft riots in Salem? And isn't his name still spoken in every church in the country? One can't deny his claim, particularly because, as played by Walter Huston, he's such a persuasive devil. This Mr. Scratch of Huston's is a sly rascal,

who pops up in all manner of strange places, and only occasionally allows his more sinister personality to show through his happy-go-lucky gentility.

One feels that Jabez Stone, really a stupid fellow, is no match for him and deserves just what he has let himself in for. Daniel Webster, on the other hand, in the person of Edward Arnold, is quite a reasonable opponent and his oratory is as convincing to the audience as to the jury of dead criminals which tries Jabez. A lovely jury, too, Benedict Arnold and Captain Kid and Simon Curty, the murderer, among other kindred souls.

As you can see, all of this is material for a provocative and fascinating moving picture—or merely a bewildering one, depending on how you feel about fantasy. William Dieterle, director of many fine movies, has produced as well as directed the picture, and he has expended extraordinary care on it. Faustian fantasy and New England realism are a strange combination, but Dieterle persuades you that they are not at all incongruous and he successfully withstands the temptation to turn the picture into an orgy of camera tricks.

Besides Huston and Arnold, there is also good acting by James Craig, as the unhappy Jabez; by Anne Shirley, his prim and proper wife; John Qualen, who draws a graphic portrait of a miser, Simone Simon, an attractive minion of the devil; and Jane Darwell, playing her customarily indomitable grandmother.

"Lady For A Night"—A-2

Everybody is very mean to Joan Blondell in "Lady for a Night," but she is true blue and comes smiling through and ends up back in a nice gambling den, where she should have stayed in the first place. You see, our Joanie is a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who longs to be in society. So she takes advantage of her ill-gotten means to marry herself into an impoverished socialite family and then learns that society people are really very unpleasant, after all, and not nearly such good company as the denizens of the Mississippi Belle, or whatever Miss Blondell's business enterprise is called.

The story is laid in post-Civil War Memphis and it's dressed up with attractive backgrounds and costuming and well played by an able cast. Miss Blondell wrings some sympathy out of her hackneyed role and she is well supported by John Wayne, Ray Middleton and by three fine stage players—Blanche Yurka, Edith Barrett and Philip Merivale. Carmel Myers, in her few brief scenes, reveals that she is still as attractive as in the palmy days of "Ben Hur."

On the Comedy Side

The movies of the week aren't all concerned with devilish Nazis, devilish in-laws and just plain devils. There is an unusually large number of radio favorites cavorting through the other films. Abbott and Costello, Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Fibber McGee and Molly, the Great Gildersleeve, Mrs. Uppington, the Merry Macs, Frances Langford and Ella Fitzgerald. Abbott and Costello's new one is "Ride 'Em Cowboy" and, although the boys are out of the service and on a dude ranch, their gags are as bewhiskered as ever. They have a knack, however, of making the

most elemental humor turn out to be pretty funny, but it seems to us that they are making too many movies in too short a period. Even the top popular players can wear out their welcome.

At the risk of being considered a sour-puss, we have to confess that it's easier for us to take Bergen and McCarthy, Fibber and Molly, Gildersleeve and Uppington on a half hour radio program than in a full length-feature. But we have no doubt that many people will consider the presence of all of them in one picture to be something akin to bargain day. The title of the movie asks you to "Look Who's Laughing." Don't look at us.

Frances Langford sings in "All American Co-Ed" and that's always good news, but her songs do not seem destined for the Hit Parade, and perennial personality boy Johnny Downs grabs off most of the footage which isn't our idea of much fun.

(John Springer reminisces about a popular picture of the past on Your Movie Memory over WSAY every Monday morning at 10. This week's Movie Memory is the popular melodrama, "They Drive By Night.")

"Intolerance towards Negroes in the United States is perhaps the acme of the racial intolerance of modern nationalism." Carlton J. H. Hayes.

**Service Men**

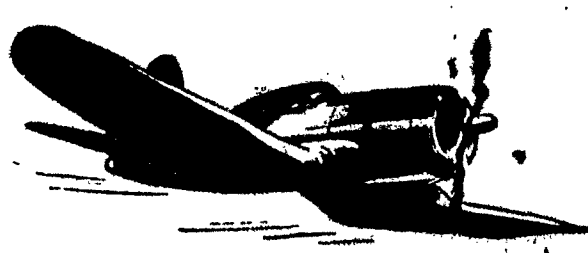
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Movie Guide

NEW FILMS REVIEWED

- Arizona Bound, A-1
- The Bashful Bachelor, A-1
- Courtship of Andy Hardy, A-1
- Small Town Deb, A-1
- What's Cookin', A-1
- Adventures of Marilyn Eden, A-2
- Mystery of Marie Roget, A-2
- To Be or Not To Be, A-2
- Almost Married, B
- Night Before the Divorce, B

AT THE THEATERS

- PALACE**  
Song of the Islands, A-2  
Fads Calling, A-2
- LOEWS ROCHESTER**  
To Be or Not To Be, A-2  
Brooklyn Orchid (Not Classified)
- CENTURY**  
Remember the Day, A-1  
The Body Disappears, A-2

REGENT

- Ride 'Em Cowboy, A-1
- Lady for a Night, A-2

TEMPLE

- Look Who's Laughing, A-1
- All That Money Can Buy, A-2

RIVIERA

- How Green Was My Valley, A-2
- Hayfoot, A-1

DIXIE

- Babes on Broadway, A-1
- Date with the Falcon, A-2

STATE and LIBERTY

- Hellzapoppin, A-2
- Confess or Deny, A-2

MADISON and MONROE

- Hellzapoppin, A-2
- Cadet Girl, A-2