

'Up the Down Staircase' Chalking Up Straight A's

Moscow — The last time that a U.S. film about school problems was entered in an international film festival, so much concern was voiced about what it would do to America's image that the sensational "Blackboard Jungle" was quickly withdrawn.

Next month, the official U.S. entry in Moscow's International Film Festival will be another motion picture about American school problems, but no one expects it to be expelled. "Up the Down Staircase," which opens in late June, has already received excellent marks from both educational and religious groups.

Based on the best-selling novel by Bel Kaufman, the film has been cited by the national Catholic film office as a "realistic drama about the problems of

educating the underprivileged in an American big city high school." The film has also received strong support from the American Lutheran Church with a special study-guide treatment in "Lutheran Teacher," monthly publication of the church's Board of Parish Education.

"It's an unusually good movie for a general audience, and it's especially meaningful for a church audience because it deals with motivations in human relationships and occupation," the monthly commented. "One of the bold ironies of life is that commercial movie producers can sometimes do a better job of saying something that strikes the conscience and gives new goals than can a whole set of religious education courses."

The film was selected for use in the Lutheran Church's adult education program "because it raises significant questions about the meaning of service to following, of vocation, of the problems of education in our time, as well as offering much thought for youth and for their teachers in public and church schools."

"Up the Down Staircase" was also selected for viewing at the recent "International Week of Religious and Human Values Cinema" at Valladolid, Spain, and is the only film ever to win the National School Bell Award, awarded jointly by the National Education Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and several other educational organizations. The award annually honors communications media for outstanding coverage of education.

In the film, Sandy Dennis plays an idealistic young English teacher whose first assignment is to a slum-area high school where unruly Negro and

Puerto Rican students present one set of problems and the cold, bureaucratic "system" another. Disillusioned by paperwork, the indifference of her colleagues and her failure to get through to one problem student in particular, the young teacher plans to quit. However, an unexpected success with another student gives her courage to stay on. But in defiance of rigid rules, she returns to her classroom by going up the "down" staircase — thus the film's title.

Commented film critic Moira Walsh in a review for "Extension" magazine: "There is some comedy in the film as it examines the antics of the pupils

Miriam Makeba At Auditorium

Miriam Makeba, the first South African songstress to attain international recognition, will combine the songs of her own heritage with those of Harry Belafonte when she accompanies him on a three-night stand at the Auditorium, July 27, 28 and 29, under Civic Music Association auspices.

Her repertoire, ranging from African songs in Zulu, Swazi, Xosa and other languages and dialects, often features one of the most spectacular vocal effects in contemporary music, her famous Xosa click songs.

The curtain will rise at 8:15 p.m. on all three nights of her performances with Harry Belafonte. Tickets are now available to the general public at the Eastman Theatre box office.



Theater News

Comedy of Errors

by EUPHEMIA WYATT

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS — If I nearly wrote for my title The Boys from Syracuse it's because the Rodgers-Hart musical in 1938 introduced me to the Shakespearean farce just as Shakespeare had revived the Latin comedy of Plautus for the Elizabethans and Plautus himself had made a version of an ancient Greek comedy for the Romans.

I remember noting with interest in 1938 that George Abbott when he rewrote Shakespeare for the musical stage was careful to follow the same sequence of scenes and at one point when the wife launched into some lines of blank verse, Jimmy Savo stuck his head through a curtain and said "Shakespeare!"

To compensate for the music, Gerald Freedman, in Central Park, is providing a gay and tumultuous background of street-vendors, jugglers, tumbler and has even added a huge town clock whose hours are struck by two mechanical men who come to life when moved by the story which is one of mistaken identities doubled by the fact that twin masters have twin slaves.

When the four of them, masters and slaves, meet in Ephesus twenty-three years after the ship wreck which parted them as infants, the complications are intricate. The Ephesian twin is married and his pretty wife even mistakes her unknown brother-in-law for her husband — or so she says. Ming Cho Lee, has designed twin towers which revolve and facilitate a rapid change of scene. Thus the whole entertainment is quick and gay. The cast also averages a high level.

Both twins are good looking: Joseph Bova who is Antipholus of Ephesus taking life more seriously than his brother from Syracuse, David Burney. As for the slaves, John Call and Charles Durning are equally amusing. Ralph Drischell as the old merchant from Syracuse has a long narrative of his family's disruption at the beginning which he delivers with unflagging energy and spirit.

In fact The Comedy of Errors still brings it laughs which is

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Recent Movie Ratings

Movies recently reviewed by the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures are listed below:

Class A, Section IV
(Morally unobjectionable for adults, with reservations)

Persona
Observation: This multi-levelled study of personality by Ingmar Bergman offers unusual difficulties of interpretation. The casual film-goer should be advised that a graphic narration of an erotic experience, while integral to the structure of the film, may prove morally offensive.

Ulysses
Observation: Derived from the modern class of the same title, this film may prove of some interest to students of James Joyce. Most other audiences, however, particularly those not familiar with Joyce, will find the film not only incomprehensible but its verbal treatment of sexual and religious references intolerable; such viewers are to be discouraged from attending it.

The distributor has a contractual agreement with exhibitors that no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the film.

Class B
(Morally objectionable in part for all)

Ride to Hangman's Tree, The
Objection: This western film tends to glamorize a successful "badman."

Family Rosary

Radio Leaders

Friday, June 23 — Chester Power, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Saturday, June 24 — Mass will be offered. A representative of Bldg. 23, Machine Shop, Kodak Park.

Sunday, June 25 — Andrew Trott, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Monday, June 26 — Michael Macaluso, St. Augustine.

Tuesday, June 27 — John C. Riesenberger, Our Lady of Lourdes.

Wednesday, June 28 — Bernard Schmucker, St. Andrew, accompanied by HNS members.

DEADLINE FOR NEWS MONDAY NOON

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Sandy Dennis as a young teacher in charge of a problem class in "Up the Down Staircase."

and the fatuous misapprehensions of the less-competent teachers, and takes a satirical look at the fouled-up bureaucracy of the school system. Most by, though, it is quite serious as it leads us, step by step, through a compassionate and balanced examination of a desperately bad situation existing in our midst. It is a skillfully made and extremely well-cast film which merits our attention."

It was produced by Alan J. Pakula and directed by Robert Mulligan, who also produced and directed "To Kill a Mockingbird." Besides Miss Dennis, the cast is made up of little-known Broadway and TV ac-

tresses, including Patrick Bedford, Eileen Heckart and Ruth White as faculty members. But the more than 50 teenagers who make up Miss Dennis' class are non-professionals who come from the Manhattan slum area where the film was shot.

"A few have appeared in school or settlement-house productions," said producer Pakula who interviewed more than a thousand youth, "but mainly they are kids type-cast for their roles by their everyday lives." One of the major teenager roles and played by Jose Rodriguez, "who was virtually snatched off the cast is made up of little-known Broadway and TV ac-

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