

FILM MUSIC NOTES

Editors:

GRACE WIDNEY MABEE

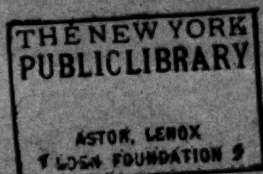
CONSTANCE PURDY

Advisory Chairman

SIGMUND SPAETH

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FOREWORD:

"BUSINESS AS USUAL" is out for the duration and the American musician would not have it otherwise. If MUSIC is unrelated to morale, it does not at the moment deserve to survive. Its survival is a matter of grave importance both for the present and for the future we care to contemplate. The task before us as musicians is nothing less than a complete mobilization of our abilities.

At least eight government agencies with headquarters in Washington include some use of music in their programs designed for the country as a whole. In addition to all these agencies, is the Joint Agency and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation with a sub-committee on music with Dr. Harold Spivake, Chief of the Division of Music, Library of Congress, as chairman and he has set up a program of musical activities within the armed forces. Men are being taught to make films for the army, the navy and the air force and, after the war, they will use this knowledge in making films for the world. Out of the emotion and thought profoundly stirred by this conflict, must come music compositions of a high and lasting order.

The Motion Picture Music Committee is delighted to hear that already out of this world crisis has come a significant recognition to one of our young American composers, Gail Kubik. He has recently been transferred from head consultant of music for the OWI, to Culver City, California, where he will compose inspirational music for the Air Force training films. The music for the OWI film, THE WORLD AT WAR, composed by Mr. Kubik won for him a Guggenheim Fellowship effective after the war. He has won several awards for other compositions, one given by the N. F. M. C.

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NEWS ITEMS.....COMMENTS

The files of FILM MUSIC NOTES for this year (eight issues) from October, 1942, to May, 1943, are available to those desiring them for reference. Valuable information and excellent articles by the best film musicians will be found. Among them are: Constantin Bakaleinikoff (RKO); Nat Finston (MGM); Louis Gruenberg (freelance); Erich Wolfgang Korngold (Warners); Gail Kubik (OWI); Jay Leyda (Artkino); Louis Lipstone (Paramount); Alfred Newman (20th-Fox); Miklos Rozsa (Korda); Dr. Walter Rubasem (Universal); Jack Shaindlin (Fox Movietone); Max Steiner (Warners); Dr. Sigmund Spaeth (Author-Lecturer, President NACC); Charles Wolcott (Disney); and Margery Morrison (Lecturer-Musician). Interesting news items and reviews of the year's finest pictures are also given. Send one dollar for the complete file to FILM MUSIC NOTES, 6162 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, California.

There will be a special JUNE issue of FILM MUSIC NOTES containing most interesting material. This will be sent to all subscribers without charge. Others desiring copies may send ten (10) cents to above address.

Two MGM shorts, PLAN FOR DESTRUCTION and HEAVENLY MUSIC with music by Nathaniel Shilkret, Sam Coslow and Max Terr with Nathaniel Finston, musical director, will be shown to the members of the National Federation of Music Clubs attending the Biennial Business meeting at the Biltmore Hotel, New York City, Saturday afternoon, May 8th.

The importance of motion picture music and musicians will be the subject of a program arranged by the Motion Picture Committee of the National Federation of Music Clubs for the course on motion pictures at New York University School of Education, on Thursday evening, May 13th - "Its Artistic, Educational and Social Aspects." The National Association of American Composers and Conductors, Dr. Sigmund Spaeth, Pres., Professor Philip James, Head of Music Department New York University, and Dr. J. Warren Erb, Head of Orchestra Department New York University, and the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures are cooperating in the arrangements. Dr. Drederic M. Thrasher, Director of the Course, Chairman Mrs. Grace Widney Mabee, Music Chairman. A film showing will precede the discussion.

Robert Russell Bennett, one of America's fine composers, is in Hollywood to write the music for LADY IN THE DARK. He did the music for the stage hit, OKLAHOMA, staged by Rouben Mamoulian for the Theatre Guild.

Hanns Eisler, composer of the music for HANGMEN ALSO DIE (U.A.), was commissioned by the New School for Social Research, through a donation from the Rockefeller Foundation, to make musical and sound experiments by composing scores for sequences selected from existing films and recording his compositions with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. (See review).

Leopold Stokowsky and Werner Janssen are both bidding for the privilege of introducing the musical score of Victor Young's FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS. They have both heard the score rendered by Young's symphony orchestra at Paramount Studios.

Listen to the Sunday radio program of John Charles Thomas and hear the beautiful orchestra arrangements and conducting of the orchestra by Victor Young, along with the songs by Mr. Thomas.

Evolution of music in this country, classical as well as popular, will be the theme of the picture, CARNEGIE HALL, which Boris Morros Productions has added to its schedule at 20th-Fox. The film will tell the story of the Hall from the time of its inception around the turn of the century when Tchaikowsky first appeared as conductor in that famous Hall.

National Association for American Composers and Conductors Shows
a Practical Interest in Film Music

The musical scores of motion pictures have received special attention this year from the National Association for American Composers and Conductors, whose President, Dr. Sigmund Spaeth, is chairman of the Advisory Committee for FILM MUSIC NOTES. Regular reports on the new film scores are sent to the editor of FILM MUSIC NOTES, and New York previews have become a definite part of the N.A.A.C.C. schedule.

The Frank Buck production, *Jacare, Killer of the Amazon*, with a symphonic musical background by Miklos Rozsa, was previewed by a distinguished gathering of musicians at the United Artists' projection room, some of whom also attended the preliminary showing of the Noel Coward film, *In Which We Serve*. A short subject, featuring the Seventh Symphony of Shostakovitch, conducted by Leopold Stokowski, was also shown to members of the Association.

A number of musicians active in the creation and direction of film scores have recently become members of this National Association, whose awards this year will unquestionably include a citation for the outstanding film score of the season.

Dr. Spaeth is also a member of the committee which has just published, through the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, a list of American works recommended for public performance, which includes such motion picture music as the Suites from Louis Gruenberg's *Fight for Life* and Virgil Thomson's *Plow that Broke the Plains*.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is making a minstrel picture, based on Dr. Spaeth's book, *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, and he is also acting in an advisory capacity to Paramount Pictures in connection with the Technicolor film, *DIXIE*, starring Bing Crosby, which will be released in June. Dr. Spaeth's own musical short subjects are still in circulation, including some that have been made available on 16mm. film. Candidates for membership in the National Association for American Composers and Conductors should apply at 15 West 67th Street, New York City.

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A Note on the Seventh Symphony of Shostakovitch
by Sigmund Spaeth

"An interesting experiment has been tried in the filming of a performance of the much discussed 'war symphony' of Soviet Russia's official composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, conducted by Leopold Stokowski at an Army encampment in California. In spite of obvious handicaps of photography and sound recording, the effect is fairly good.

"Only a few passages from the symphony could be included in such a short picture, and the emphasis is on the cumulative Nazi theme of the first movement (strangely reminiscent of the popular song 'Ain't Misbehavin'') and the climactic ending of the Finale. The famous Stokowski hands, face and hair are much in evidence, and he evidently shares the enthusiasm of Toscanini, Koussevitzky and Rodzinski for the work.

"Mrs. Litvinov and Edward G. Robinson are shown making speeches to introduce this historic performance, and it is possible that some spectators would have been glad to sacrifice a bit of these preliminaries for the sake of hearing more of the music. It might also be suggested that the symphony would have had more dramatic effect if some stock shots of the siege of Leningrad had been interpolated, instead of concentrating on the picturization of a rather drab looking orchestra and a conventional audience of American soldiers.

"Opinions as to the merits of the Shostakovich symphony are still divided, in spite of an extraordinary publicity campaign and regardless of its historical significance and the enormous appeal to sentiment and martial enthusiasm. In any case the wide distribution of this short subject by Screen Snapshots should do much to familiarize the American public with the most discussed musical composition of modern days!"

Meremblum's California Junior Symphony Orchestra

Soon to be featured in M.G.M.'s RUSSIA

Article by Naomi Reynolds

Chairman of Radio and Member Preview Committee, N.F.M.C. - N.B.C. Commentator

"After our broadcast several weeks ago, it was our pleasure to take William Steinberg, noted conductor, over to Plummer Park to conduct the Peter Meremblum California Junior Symphony Orchestra. This is a traditional ritual which every conductor visiting the Southland never fails to perform. For this organization is unique and in perhaps the entire history of music there is no record of a youth symphony orchestra comparable to this one.

"Every Saturday they rehearse. To visit them is an inspiring and stimulating event. But this Saturday morning was indeed an unusual one. While we were most attentive to Steinberg's direction we noticed that Albert Coates, of M.G.M. Studios, had arrived. Also, Ida M. Koverman of M.G.M., followed by Gregory Ratoff and several motion picture directors. Steinberg gave an inspired reading of the Russian and Ludmilla Overture by Glinka. Then Albert Coates paced the children through the First Movement of the Tschaikowski Fifth.

"After this ceremony the orchestra got down to real work with Coates directing and Meremblum prompting players all over the place. For musical impressiveness is being invoked for Gregory Ratoff's new M.G.M. feature RUSSIA, not only by appointment of Coates as musical director but also by the fact that since its inception Ratoff has worked constantly with his musical director in setting the music score. This is contrary to the majority of features, or perhaps we should say sound films. For in most cases to date, the composer is called in after the production is finished and allowed from several days to a generous period of three weeks in which to create superb musical background.

"The Meremblum California Junior Symphony will be featured in the production RUSSIA playing the Glinka Overture and portions of Tschaikowsky's Symphony Number Five. Ratoff sat in one of the first violin chairs to catch the young players at-tack. Finally he mounted the podium and first he said, 'I cannot tell you how wonderful you are.' Then he proceeded to give them camera pointers. Naturally they play the symphony from memory. Ratoff told them that when the scenes were to be shot, Robert Taylor would be the orchestra conductor and that they must look up to him as they would to Toscanini. 'Of course,' he said, 'that won't be difficult to do, especially for the girls!'

"Little Jackie Horner, the orchestra's concert pianist for Warner's recently released short subject, joined the orchestra when she was seven. She is now under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

"Last fall the orchestra gave a concert in the large studio at Columbia Square and so many distinguished music patrons were turned away that a repeat performance was given the following week. Many film stars and distinguished musicians of international fame heard these concerts.

"The young orchestra members shared a Christmas concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in Philharmonic Auditorium last winter. It was said that the Meremblum California Junior Symphony Orchestra was the only organization for which the Los Angeles Philharmonic took a back seat!

"Distinguished visitors attend rehearsals each week. The guest book includes the world's greatest artists."

Music in Universal Pictures

A special contribution to FILM MUSIC NOTES is made this month by Roger Jones who recently joined the publicity staff of Universal Pictures. A few words about Mr. Jones himself will be of interest to our readers. At the early ages of seven to fifteen he was a concert pianist. Summer vacations in the Adirondacks brought him into contact with well-known musicians and opera singers. Arrangements to study in France with Ravel were interfered with by family reverses in 1929. He then organized his own band and played with the Adirondacks Glee Club of which Mrs. Roosevelt is a member. He came to California with the Ballet Russe with which he was associated until he took up his present duties.

* * *

"For the first time, a composer of international reputation has been invited to score a Hollywood picture. Alexander Tansman, world famous composer-conductor-pianist, was commissioned by Julien Duvivier and Charles Boyer to write the score for their first cooperative producing efforts for Universal's FOR ALL WE KNOW.

"The picture is unusual. In four episodes, it deals with the mysteries of fate, and the score had to be kept in the same mysterious vein. It has a solid symphonic background, but at the same time changes to many moods to keep one aware of the scenes before him! Moods of mystery, violence, nature in all its manifestations, laughter, tenderness, poetry, circus, carnival - all are employed as a background for drama.

"It is all very new. Two moods superimposed and simultaneously developing. Such as the end of the first episode, when a crime is committed. The crime is also told in music with one section of the orchestra carrying the musical mood of the crime, while the fundamental theme carries on throughout. Some part of the orchestra always keeps one in mind of where he is, while another section is telling the dramatic action. It is a score of musical unity - a theme of mystery - the mystery of fate!"

(Mr. Jones' comments on PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, now in production at Universal, with Nelson Eddy, Susanna Foster and Claude Rains, will be included in the June issue.)

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MOTION PICTURE MUSIC IN THE EAST

By Jack Shaindlin

Eastern Music Director of Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures, March of Time

"The past thirty days have been the heaviest in my five years of music scoring for motion pictures in the east. Within that period I have scored eleven shorts - six for Universal, three for Columbia, and two for the March of Time.

"Universal shorts scored included three of their monthly releases in the series of 'Variety Views' and three of their 'Person Oddities' series. A 28 piece orchestra was used for the scoring which were recorded at Liederkrantz Hall, conceded to be acoustically the finest recording studio in the world.

"Columbia pictures included a two-reel high-budgeted musical starring Allen Jenkins, Jerry Cooper, and six topnotch stage headliners. The working title for this short is SHOW BUSINESS. The recording session for the above took seven hours during which thirty 'playbacks' were made to be taken to the studio where the motion picture is to be filmed. The other Columbia releases were of the 'Community Sing' series, one featuring the Delta Rhythm Boys, the famous colored group who render five songs during which the lyrics are flashed upon the screen and the audience is invited to participate. This is a very popular series and is also the number one choice of the army camps.

"The March of Time releases included 'The New Canada' and the very important April release 'America's Food Crisis.'

"I have estimated that over seventy musical compositions were used during the past four week period. Assisting me were Ernest Fiorito, radio conductor and arranger, Frederick Block, famous Viennese composer, Edgar Schenkman, Professor of Orchestration at the Juilliard Graduate School, New York, and four music copyists."

REVIEWS OF CURRENT PICTURES FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MUSIC INTEREST COMPILED BY THE
MOTION PICTURE COMMITTEES OF HOLLYWOOD AND NEW YORK.

Grace Widney Mabee, Hollywood Chairman, Mme. Adelaide Gescheidt, New York Chairman

SPITFIRE, Goldwyn-English. Dir: Leslie Howard. Musical Director: Muir Mathieson
In a story of achievement, simply told yet tense and thrilling, this picture, of
especial value in its record of aviation after the first World War, takes one into
the swirl of great forces and great events. Just as the water element separates
the flashbacks in "In Which We Serve," so clouds separate the interludes of this
picture; they are the beginning and the end of the story itself. Unique also is
the introduction in which the superimposed map of Europe shows the German cancer
visible throughout the kaleidoscopic sequence of events. A new type of blurred
outlines and imaginative treatment characterizes much of the photography. There
are routine combat flights at the outset but when Crisp begins the story of the
Spitfire there unfolds a series of lovely pictures of British country and home
life - gulls flying above hint glimpses of Mitchell (Leslie Howard) atop a cliff,
the sea below his ship silhouetted against the skyline - all in most unusual per-
spective. The score is splendidly adequate with special dimension for clouds and
flight, one Wotan sequence for the Nazis, characteristic band music for Italy and
Germany, and an "assembly" symphony that should be expanded a bit for our modern
orchestras. For the most part the music comments on events, but occasionally it
helps precipitate them. There is an ingenious touch in the fading into a low back-
ground after the introduction. Mature-Family.

THE MORE THE MERTIER, Columbia. Dir: George Stevens. Musical Dir: M. W. Stoloff
Gay and light as a spring breeze is this refreshing comedy of overcrowded war-time
Washington. The first two-thirds of the picture, especially, are packed with laughs.
Jean Arthur and Charles Coburn do not nibble, but bite vigorously at the plentiful
bait of good, humorous lines and amusing situations. Direction, of course, is ex-
pert and clever, as is also the use of popular melodies in a score well tempered
to the light musical needs of the picture and handled with admirable discretion.
Especially lovely were the violins and song at the very end. Mature-Family.

IT AIN'T HAY, Universal. Dir: Erle C. Kenton. Musical Director: Charles Previn
The nonsense antics of Abbott and Costello please a large percentage of movie goers.
Consequently this burlesque hodge-podge will doubtless spell box-office. The enter-
tainment value of the picture must, therefore, be considered wholly as a matter of
taste. Musical numbers, however, good in themselves and of commercial account, re-
vert to the technique of the theme song days when, without rhyme or reason, people
broke out into song! "Sunshine Serenade" and "Finnegan's Up Again" are fine sepa-
rate numbers. The latter, with its East Side vista and types all bound together
with a strong Jewish-Irish lilt, is original and uproarious in treatment with con-
tagious good spirit. Cecil Kellaway is always worthwhile and Patsy O'Connor "has
what it takes." Family.

COWBOY FROM MANHATTAN, Universal. Dir: Frank Woodruff. Musical Dir: Charles Previn
Good entertainment of a light type, with some nice photography, tuneful singing by
Frances Langford and some moments of good comedy supplied by the expert timing of
Messrs. Errol and Catlett. Family.

THE NEXT OF KIN, Univ-English. Dir: Thorval Dickenson. Musical Dir: Ernest Irving
This is a forceful British propaganda film, preceded by an eloquent foreword from
our own Mr. Hoover of the F.B.I., in which he urges us to take to ourselves its
tragic lessons. The picture cannot be classified as entertainment - it is too
heavy - as English pictures frequently are, and with no relieving interlude to
break the strain on the spectator. However, for the important message it brings,
it is deserving of a place in our rapidly growing gallery of war pictures. Very
little music. Mature-Family.

REVEILLE WITH BEVERLY, Columbia. Dir: Charles Barton. Musical Dir: M. W. Stoloff
Titled after the popular radio program, this is a potpourri of music, dancing and
radio of the type so much liked by the youngsters of our day. As a youthful and
cheerful American musical it offers refreshing, if exceedingly light, entertainment.
Ann Miller's dancing is always a pleasure to see, the music is well recorded, the
various swing bands and the Mills Brothers, good to hear, and the musicians playing
the tap dance and marching song at the close are expertly photographed. Family.

CORREGIDOR, Producers Releasing Corp. Dir: William Nigh. Music Score: Leo Erdody
An all-to-realistic war melodrama showing the terrible events of last year in the
Philippines with a small group of American survivors escaping through beautifully
photographed islands. Mr. Erdody's name, while long familiar to musicians, is a
new one in the field of motion picture music. In this score he brings us high ten-
sion, emotional stress, with all music cued in from violence (hand-to-hand combats,
incessant bombings, etc) and with no particular architectural plan apparently in
mind. Effective derivations of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," with sober motives
containing the germ of unharnessed emotion played furiously through the music, some-
times like tall flickering candles that would go out, then at other times music was
like a heavenly choir that one felt would live on through eternity. Mature-Family.

THEY CAME TO BLOW UP AMERICA, 20th-Fox. Dir: Edward Ludwig. Musical Dir: E. Newman
An exciting spy story with rather an odd idea, in which a member of the F.B.I. ob-
tains admission through a false passport to a German school of saboteurs. Good
direction, editing and acting, and realistic settings help to create a vivid picture
as to how such an establishment functions and its "graduates" despatched to America
to conduct underground warfare against us. The action moves with considerable speed,
with tense moments stimulated by restless rhythms in music and instrumentation well
synchronized with moods of subtle portent. Mature-Family.

ABOVE SUSPICION, M.G.M. Dir: Richard Thorpe. Music Score: Bronislau Kaper
The popularity of the cast, the correctness of the settings in pre-war Southern
Germany, the suspense and interest of the plot, and above all the beauty of the music
of Liszt, Schubert, and of the folk songs in German and English make this better than
average motion picture entertainment. Musical interest centers in the Liszt E Flat
piano concerto, the theme of which gives a menacing note to the otherwise placid
introduction. It highlights the picture and is superbly played in part at the con-
cert. Out of the ordinary is the photography of German and Swiss towns, with the
subtle terror of the Gestapo well indicated in a story of tense interest. The clues
are cleverly worked out and music is the key to most of the situations. Mature-F.

HEAVENLY MUSIC, M.G.M. Short Subject. Music Score by Nat Shilkret and Max Terr.
Lyrics and Music by Sam Coslow.

A delightful musical short in which an elaborate audition and judges tribunal is set
up in the "heavenly" Hall of Music by the great Masters of Music throughout history,
and in which a neophyte from our contemporary age is forced to pass before entering
the Pearly Gates as a musician. It is most amusingly done, with the hosts of former
music geniuses cleverly portrayed. The young maestro of the present is well-chosen
for ingenuous American quality, and Paganini is outstanding in his grasp of the situ-
ation and diabolical gleam! Treatment of themes and contrasting styles is superbly
handled and makes fine entertainment. From the beginning the imagination is cap-
tured; the entrance to the Heavenly Portals where disarming wonder takes the place
of awe is a Hollywood conception of Heaven beautifully presented. The incidental
celestial atmosphere gives a beatific background in shimmering, iridescent high
frequency effects. Three pleasingly tuneful songs are introduced by the neophyte,
Ted Barry: Heavenly Music, Help Yourself to Romance, and Tomorrow at Eight. A step
forward in the making of this type of short, and one which will make the discrimi-
nating in the audience anticipate Mr. Coslow's next of the promised series. Family.

MISSION TO MOSCOW, W.B. Dir: Michael Curtiz. Music by Max Steiner

This is without question one of the finest documentary films ever to be shown in dramatic form. It is sincerely and convincingly performed by a superb cast headed by Walter Huston. It gives the layman a clear view of the events in retrospect which led up to the present conflict. The position of Russia is explained, we are made aware of her aims, the famous trials justified so far as she is concerned, and her place in the post-war world takes definite form. Young people (and possibly the average audience) may find it long and lacking in action, but it is far more than entertainment, and every American over fourteen years of age should see it for his or her own good. Mr. Davies, who will shortly return to the scene of his ambassadorial activities, is eloquent and direct in the simple statement of facts which are his foreword to the picture. Important to the success of this really great picture is Max Steiner's score - one of the best that has come from any studio. It weaves into its pattern some of the old Russian folk songs. "Theme Russe" by Beethoven once used by Glinka in the opera "Life for the Czar" is heard through many scenes. Under the hospital scene, in which Davies is shown the refugees from China, is the new Chinese song, "Work as One." "Hail Columbia" merges interceptibly into the theme at the outset. The theme of "Hail the Chief" is used in scenes with Roosevelt. We hear the grand old Austrian national hymn; we have the marching music of the German children; German and Russian band music for the colossal military pageantry, and it is pleasant to recognize a bit of "Yankee Doodle" as Mr. Davies takes over at the Embassy. However, nothing in the score is really labeled - the music fits the occasion admirably and the orchestration is always interesting. In the final sequence, starting with the national themes in counterpoint and culminating with a beautiful chorale, the present era is epitomized and ends on a note of hope, in the finale "I am My Brother's Keeper," lyrics and music by Max Steiner. Mature-Family.

DESERT VICTORY, 20th-Fox-British. Music Accompaniment: William Allwyn

A thrilling documentary, factual and authentic, which should inspire and instill confidence in all of Britain's allies. It shows us how with equipment and preparation a united nation can plan and wage a brilliant and successful campaign. It is produced by the British Army Film and Photographic Unit under the supervision of Lt.Col. David MacDonald. An exceptionally fine commentary by J. L. Hodson and musical accompaniment (the work of William Allwyn) which never intrudes but always supplies exactly the right background, add greatly to the outstanding value of the picture. M.F.

PRESENTING LILY MARS, M.G.M. Dir: Norman Taurog. Musical Director: Georgie Stoll

Though bearing but a slight resemblance to Booth Tarkington's novel, this picture concerning the small-town stage-struck girl making good in the big city, is thoroughly worthwhile entertainment. Judy Garland has profited well by the training lavishly bestowed on her by her studio. In the earlier scenes she was at her best - the combination of child woman which Lily herself possessed. The cast is expertly chosen, the photography never commonplace and the music delightfully done. The dance sequences were many and excellent. One scene, never to be forgotten, is the one in which Connie Gilchrist and Judy sing the old song from Mme. Sherry - "Every Little Movement, etc." This was done very simply with no striving for art-song effect, and as a result had not only charm but was deeply touching. Van Heflin, on the whole, gave an excellent performance, and the Hungarian sequences seemed unusually fine and spirited, with Marta Eggerth making them authentic by her beautiful voice and singing. Notable, also, in the night club scenes were the adaptations and clever arrangements of the songs. In fact the music throughout is gay and youthful - much of it projected through the medium of Lily's vivid impressions. The Nevin "Narcissus" gives the home atmosphere at the start, as does also the piano background for the Lady Macbeth speech. Somehow it all gives one the lift necessary in these times. F.