

(continued from previous page)

diamonds in her shoes" (Rita Hayworth), and her dancing partner Danny Maguire (Gene Kelly). And scintillating is the only word for many of the settings.

There were, indeed, several occasions during the 97 minutes of *Cover Girl* when our little man was just about out of his seat with enthusiasm. What induced a mood of more restrained optimism (as Mr. Churchill calls it) was the story. Now I know it is customary to accept the story of musical films as a mere formula; as something to fill in the gaps between the songs and dances. And although this may not be a good custom, you are prepared to put up with it, provided the producer does not try to make the story out to be something it isn't. But when he takes the same old weather-worn backstage theme and attempts to turn it into a vehicle for serious characterisation and emotional subtleties, the going is likely to be so uneven that you may begin to lose interest in the scenery.

That is rather what happens here. "For heaven's sake," remarks one of the characters, "what do you think this is—a vicious circle?" While not so intended, that is an apt comment on this tale of a dancer who graduates from a Brooklyn night-club to the cover of *Vanity* magazine. Though she remains faithful to her one true love, the night-club proprietor, he fears that she is rising beyond his humble grasp when she starts consorting with High Society: so in order to prove that his fears were well founded and give him the chance to suffer soulfully, the film goes to great lengths to produce the inevitable lovers' quarrel which will put the heroine on Broadway and into the clutches of another man (Lee Bowman). It then completes the vicious circle by pulling her out again and restoring her to her soul-mate.

That story is pure pigeon-hole stuff; no amount of dressing up and undressing, no displays of dramatic and emotional fireworks, however capable (and Rita Hayworth is a good actress as well as a good dancer) can hope to disguise the fact. And I think it would have been better not to try. But all this is only to explain why *Cover Girl* gets a sit-down instead of a stand-up clap. It still remains a very bright and very amusing entertainment.

#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Five Bob" (Palmerston North): An M-G-M Miniature.

AN enjoyable fantasy for children is the ZB serial "Round the World with Santa Claus," which starts at 22B on Tuesday, November 21, at 5.45 p.m. Many characters of childhood appear in this story, which opens when the King of the Dwarfs suddenly emerges from the fire into which the twins, Jack and Jill, are gazing. Together they set off for Toyland, where they meet Mother Goose, Tiny Tim, Pinocchio, Punch and Judy, Scrooge, and a host of others. Then they accept an invitation from Santa Claus to accompany him on his 75,000-mile trip round the world. The serial will be heard from 22B each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 5.45 p.m. and from 32B each Tuesday, Friday and Saturday at 5.0 p.m.

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