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Film Reviews, by G.M.

# SPEAKING CANDIDLY

## HANGOVER SQUARE

(20th Century-Fox)



I TAKE this opportunity to pay a brief and belated tribute to *Hangover Square* and its unfortunate but gifted hero, George Harvey Bone,

whom I ran to earth last week in a return-season theatre after a chase lasting several months. I would doubt if this thriller is psychiatrically sound, for it is based on the proposition that sudden, discordant sounds could periodically turn a sensitive musician into a homicidal maniac: a pretty fancy, but if there were anything in the idea one would expect the mortality rate to be rather higher than it is, especially in the vicinity of radio stations. The customary suspense expected from this type of thriller is also lacking, because there can't be much suspense when the identity of the murderer and the secret of his psychosis is known almost from the start to everybody, including the sympathetic fellows from Scotland Yard.

In spite of this, however, *Hangover Square* is one of those rather rare thrillers which improve considerably as they go along (I think the improvement sets in to a marked degree about the time Linda Darnell is removed from the cast by strangulation). The climax comes in a literal blaze of glory with George Harvey Bone, surrounded by flames of his own kindling, pounding out the last notes of his ill-fated concerto. It is real music this, specially composed for the film by Bernard Henmann; I only hope someone had the foresight to rescue the score from the flames and record it for broadcasting, for the *Hangover Square* Concerto is at least as worthy of perpetuation as the Warsaw Concerto. And before this musical climax there is another fine sequence: the episode on Guy Fawkes Night. You can feel a shiver go round the audience at this moment — and no wonder, for the director (John Brahm) has treated the macabre incident with an almost poetical imagination.

*Hangover Square* was, I think, the last film of that fine and subtle actor, the late Laird Cregar. His performance as George Harvey Bone is a good one by which to remember him.

## THE UNSEEN

(Paramount)



THIS is another psychological murder mystery. Among the characters are a morose young widower (Joel McCrea); his two troublesome little children (Nona Griffith and Richard Lyon), who have some dread knowledge to conceal; their shy but inquisitive governess (Gail Russell); a neighbouring doctor (Herbert Marshall), who is so unctuously agreeable that members of the audience will be wise to suspect him at once; and various other potentially sinister people

(continued on next page)



## FOREVER...?

NEW ZEALANDERS, thanks to a decision by the Customs authorities, are not likely to have a chance to read Kathleen Winsor's sultry best-seller "Forever Amber," for this novel of high and very low life in Restoration England has been banned in this country. According to many literary experts they will not be missing much. However, thanks to 20th Century-Fox, New Zealanders may still have a chance of seeing an expurgated screen version. Whether this will be any compensation may largely depend on the actress who plays the role of Amber.

According to "Life" magazine, that actress may be a fresh-faced, Irish 19-year-old named Peggy Cummins, who is seen above as herself, and on the left as she might be likely to appear in the film. Of the 40-odd actresses already tested for the role of Amber, Miss Cummins is currently first favourite in a publicity campaign which 20th Century-Fox hopes may rival the 1938 search for a Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind" (the role won finally by Vivien Leigh).

Peggy Cummins has never acted in the U.S. She was born in Wales and brought up in Dublin, and began acting 12 years ago in Dublin's Abbey and Gate Theatres; later she made four films in London and was a big hit in the stage production of "Junior Miss." Five months ago she flew to New York and, so the story goes, spent her first day there replenishing a war-depleted wardrobe with the help of money she won in a poker game on the trans-Atlantic plane trip. Then she took the train for Hollywood, where the movie technicians dressed her up (left) in the red-gold lamé gown worn by Joan Fontaine in "Frenchman's Creek," in order to give her a screen test as Amber.

