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very extensively used for purposes of information and morale, the audience increased to over 20 million.

In fact the existence of an organised documentary film movement proved a real national asset in wartime. The Ministry of Information, both through its own unit, the Crown Film Unit, and through the many independent documentary companies, mobilised a complete service of films covering every branch of wartime activity. Many of these films were exported to Britain's Allies as reports on the way she was tackling her problems, and as part of a general plan of information. It was during World War II, too, that the documentary film, which had till then, with a few exceptions, operated within a two to three reel length, developed a full-length feature style in such films as *Western Approaches*, *Silent Village*, *Desert Victory*, *Tunisian Victory*, and so on.

In Britain herself they marked an important stage in documentary film-making, since they were successfully circulated on commercial terms in the public cinemas, and proved to be just as "box office" as the fictional films from Hollywood; and as a result they strongly influenced the technique and story approach of the British feature film makers. Thus there began a growing interchange of ideas and personnel between the documentary and feature groups, which still continues to-day.

ALL TWO U.S. FILM PLOTS IN ONE

AS her contribution to meeting the shortage of American films in Britain, the *Sunday Times* critic, Dilys Powell, has written a story which "embodies all the current American plots, all two of them: the one about the composer and the one about psychiatry." It is called *Christmas Day in the Workhouse*:

The film opens with a shot of rooftops; it is Old Vienna, and the camera swings over the belfries and the beer-gardens, past the sound of old waltzes and old drinking-parties, to the back-street where little ten-year-old Clancy is sitting in the gutter, playing on the mouth-organ which he has bought instead of a banana split.

His mother calls him in: "Ach!" she grumbles, "der child after der moosic always running is!" But the Irish cop on the beat remembers Clancy père. "Do you be lettin' the brotheen alone, an' 'tis in Carnegie Hall he'll be playin' one day, an' him the image of his Da!"

Little Clancy scampers off with his playmate, little Elsa, to the Old Vienna fun-fair, where Schubert is taking Beethoven's niece in a gondola through the Grotto of Love. Little Elsa offers a

hamburger to a tame seagull, which bites her instead, setting up a dangerous conflict in her mind.

The passage of years is indicated by shots of agitated calendars. Clancy is now piano-player in a Viennese saloon; he is trying over the first phrase of a song he is writing, but he can't get the second. "Guy's kinda crazy about music," says the barman to a customer (shot of glass of beer sliding down counter). At this moment Liszt, who has been knocking off a rhapsody, comes in accompanied by Elsa, just back from finishing school in Paris (shot of Eiffel Tower). Clancy hardly recognises her. "Gee," he says, "you used to have freckles!" "And a band round my teeth!" says Elsa, with a glittering smile. While champagne is being served Clancy plays a song he has managed to finish: "Watching for the bluebird in your eyes." Liszt is greatly struck by this, and suggests taking the composer to a reception being held by the Princess Katzenjammer.

At the reception Liszt bangs out a couple of rhapsodies (close-up of somebody else's hands), then drops into variations on "Watching for the bluebird in your eyes." One or two keys break off the piano, but he goes on just the same; there is frantic applause, under cover of which Elsa, excited by

the spectacle of a guest eating gull's eggs, pursues a waiter into the pantry and shoots him dead. . . .

Clancy is famous (general huggemugger of trains rounding curves, opera houses, clapping hands, posters, more trains); he is the rage of Paris (can-can dancers) and London (pearlies). But he still can't get the second phrase of that song. Elsa, too, is worried by her schizophrenia. One day Liszt brings up the old marine trouble by composing a rhapsody in C, which she mistakes for a sea rhapsody (trick shot of seagull reflected in piano-lid). "I don't want any part of it," she screams, taking aim with the old equaliser. She misses, and the maestro bundles her off to a psychiatrist, who soon puts her right about seagulls.

Elsa (for she is a sweet girl really) has rejected the suggestion that Clancy should wait for her. Breaking away from the psychiatrist, she climbs a cliff overlooking the sea; "I'm no good for you, Clancy," she cries, and jumps off. In the voice of the wind, the waves, and the seagulls Clancy hears the second phrase of his song: "It's Christmas Day in the workhouse," he writes, "But it's paradise with you." And now everybody is singing it; a massed orchestra in Carnegie Hall is playing it, Liszt has turned it into another rhapsody, and in Buckingham Palace, where Queen Victoria is being married, it heralds the bride's descent of the grand staircase. And the film fades out on a shot of Elsa flying into the sunrise between two seagulls.



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