

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

Aloma of the South Seas

(Paramount)

IF you saw Dorothy Lamour and Jon Hall escaping from Sam Goldwyn's hurricane, if you saw the same Miss Lamour surviving crocodiles and an earthquake in *Her Jungle Love*, and more recently a forest fire and a tidal wave, then you'll be perfectly justified in expecting at least a volcanic eruption in *Aloma of the South Seas*. And you'll get it. Not half you will. Lakes of lava and showers of fiery rocks. All in colour, too.

You'll also get Miss Lamour, in a sarong, so simple and so playfully innocent as Aloma the island maid that it would be a shame to ask her how she came by her plucked eyebrows and her Hollywood manicure. And Jon Hall again, all bronzed about the torso, as Tanoa the island king, who returns from a sojourn in the States with a Harvard accent and a collection of bottle tops and who counts the world where the bottle tops came from well lost the moment he sets eyes on Aloma bathing

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AWAKE, it is the dawn—and all in technicolour, too! Dorothy Lamour demonstrates what the well-dressed island maid should wear, in "Aloma of the South Seas."



in a limpid island pool. There's also—there has to be—a snake in this Paradise of Technicolour: one Rivo, who covets both the maiden and the leadership of the tribe. And Lynne Overman, of course, Miss Lamour's faithful companion

in many a cataclysm of nature. And half the good-looking young women and young men of Hollywood, clad in a rainbow array of sarongs, sinjangs, lavas, and breech-clouts, and all wriggling around in some of the very latest South Seas dance steps. Not to mention some very impressive high priests and medicine men who officiate at various island ceremonies (with hundreds of extras), and an old island woman who provides comedy relief and says such delightful things as "Thou hast been a great pain to me in the neck." And I mustn't forget Miss Lamour's parrot (the monkey must have died, or perhaps they don't have monkeys on this island).

Altogether you'll get what you probably expect (and perhaps deserve). And if you expect it, you'll probably enjoy it. But what interests me is what the forces of nature can have in store for our Dorothy in her next picture. Anything less than the end of the world will be almost anti-climax.

Our Wife

(Columbia)

THE suggestion of collective ownership in the title of this film is a trifle misleading. It might more aptly have been called *Our Husband* since it is Melvyn Douglas who is shared—more or less—by Ruth Hussey and Ellen Drew. I would dismiss it as just another of those infernal triangles, slickly presented and smoothly acted—the Hollywood sausage machine working with its usual automatic efficiency—were it not for one twist in the tale which, if not completely new, is at least sufficiently original to give the impression that this sausage is pork. And fresh pork at that.

To continue the metaphor, one might say that the difference isn't noticeable till one has taken a good big bite. For all his eccentric behaviour as a drunkard who jumps off a liner in the Panama Canal to rescue his hat, and is succoured by an elderly professor (Charles Coburn) and his equally learned daughter (Ruth Hussey), Melvyn Douglas is merely that familiar screen figure, the disillusioned husband whose wife hasn't come up to expectations and who has taken to the bottle and a sea voyage in order to for-

get. And for all her academic degrees, her scientific detachment, and the description of her as "an intellectual zombie whose body is dead and whose mind only is alive," Ruth Hussey is at once recognisable as the woman who will re-awaken Mr. Melvyn's faith in women just as quickly as he himself will arouse her interest in men. Any girl in a screen-play as beautiful as Miss Hussey is obviously destined for something more exciting than test-tubes.

So here we have these two on a boat, falling rapidly in love, and between them hangs the shadow of the wife Mr. Douglas left behind him; and for a long time it is, as I say, despite its wisecracks and frivolity, just the routine eternal triangle. Even when Mr. Douglas, who turns out to be a dance band leader with the soul of an artist, goes back to New York and, under the influence of his new-found love, composes a symphony which is a mixture of Brahms, Beethoven, and boogie-woogie, and which the critics (present company excepted) acclaim as a masterpiece; and when his ex-wife (Ellen Drew) turns up to cash in on his triumph and win him back; and when a battle of feminine wits begins for possession of Mr. Douglas—even then *Our Wife* is just a sausage. It is the ex-wife who puts in the pork—or the spice if your prefer it—by cunningly staging an accident to herself and pretending to be paralysed, confident that the noble Mr. Douglas will not desert her in her extremity. Miss Hussey, as the wife-to-be, has a very strong suspicion that it is all a fraud—but how to prove it? How to get the clever little devil out of bed and convince Mr. Douglas that he is wasting his sympathy?

This part of the picture is really good, with comedy neatly balanced by drama, and Miss Hussey and Miss Drew giving performances that put Melvyn Douglas well in the shade and make even Charles Coburn, as the fatherly professor, look to his laurels. It is so good, in fact, that I think our little friend at the top is quite justified in giving *Our Wife* a handclap.

Itinerary of Friedman

FOLLOWING his two performances in Wellington on Sunday and Tuesday this week, Ignaz Friedman, the visiting Polish pianist, will go to Christchurch and will be heard from 3YA in a studio recital on December 1, and in a public concert on December 3. At Dunedin Ignaz Friedman will play from the 4YA studio on Sunday, December 7, and will give a public concert on December 9, which will also be broadcast. Returning to Wellington, Friedman will give another studio recital on the evening of Sunday, December 14, after which he will go to Auckland and give a public concert in the Town Hall on December 16. His final performance in New Zealand will be his studio concert at 1YA on Friday, December 19.

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