

kind of film introduces a species of confusion which is more serious. It tends to blur the frontiers between good and evil. Mr. Widmark, who rifles Miss Peters's handbag in the ordinary way of business and thereby gets possession of a priceless piece of microfilm, seemed to me rather a poor type for a hero, though that is what he eventually proves to be. I don't mean to suggest that a criminal can't be patriotic when it comes to the point—Miss Ritter, though she plays the part of a common informer, dies quite convincingly for her country. But I would have felt a little cheerier if the defeat of treason had not been dependent on such an unholy alliance.

—Jno.

TONIGHT WE SING

(20th Century-Fox)

ONE or two moments of good music with Isaac Stern playing the violin, Ezio Pinza singing excerpts from *Boris Godounov*, and Tamara Toumanova dancing the *Swan Lake* ballet, are about all this gaudy film biography of the American impresario Sol Hurok has to offer. David Wayne, who appeared recently as the shabby tramp in an episode of *O. Henry's Full House*, seems slightly ill-at-ease in the role of Hurok. Speaking in a thick accent meant to reveal his Russian origins, he shrugs and pleads his way through his long part with an ingratiating air of modesty and idealism which fails to come off very successfully, largely because of his inability to think himself into the temperament of his man (Hurok is still living) at more than the shallowest level. Indeed, the singers and other artists who appear with him, acting the parts of such famous clients of Hurok as Chaliapin, Pavlova and Eugene Ysaye, seem to be better actors than Wayne himself. Ezio Pinza is particularly good, bringing tons of swagger and vitality to his interpretation of the egotistical Russian basso, Chaliapin.

The film has a turn-of-the-century flavour of gas lights and prancing four-in-hands, as it shows Hurok's first arrival in New York with Chaliapin, his early failure, and then his meeting with Ysaye (played by Isaac Stern) on an Atlantic liner. He becomes friendly with the ship's tailor and steals Ysaye's evening dress on the night of a shipboard concert, then strikes up an acquaintance with the violinist by offering to "lend" it to him for the performance. Ysaye is so impressed by Hurok's desire to bring music to the people by providing low-priced informal concerts for the thousands of American workers who, as he puts it, are spiritually dying for lack of any cultural stimulus, that he agrees to let Hurok manage him for a concert at the New York Hippodrome. From then on nothing can stop Hurok, though his success as an impresario does involve him in a domestic crisis with his wife (played by Anne Bancroft).

Isaac Stern plays (with his accompanist Alexander Zakin) Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* and a Concerto by Wieniawski, and Pinza also sings extracts from Gounod's *Faust*. Tamara Toumanova is good as Pavlova, and the film also features on its sound-track the voice of the late Jan Peerce. But as a picture of what goes on behind the scenes of the concert business in America, *Tonight We Sing* is largely unconvincing.

—P.J.W.

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