

# A Girl Called Marjorie

## INTERRUPTED MELODY

(M.G.M.-CinemaScope)

MUSICAL biography doesn't generally appeal to me much as screen entertainment and, a not very eager victim in the first place, I was surprised more than somewhat to find myself enjoying *Interrupted Melody*. It's the story of Marjorie Lawrence, the Australian opera singer who was badly paralysed by polio, but with the help and devotion of her doctor-husband, made a comeback at the Met. A series of good scenes cut to a smart pace, excellent dialogue and a most engaging performance by Eleanor Parker as Miss Lawrence quite won me over early in the film, and thus favourably predisposed I accepted the inevitable opera scenes, which, so far as I can tell, were well done. As the young doctor, Glenn Ford, restrained and sympathetic, also makes an excellent impression.

The conflict between careers and love both before and after doctor and prima donna marry is well handled—the scene in which Dr. King tells Miss Lawrence they should part is particularly good, and Miss Parker plays the impetuous, affectionate wife in a refreshingly un-



ELEANOR PARKER

selfconscious way. The later scenes, after the polio attack, are a greater test for everyone concerned. In having a true story to tell, the director (Curtis Bernhardt) is, of course, half way to winning his audience. Even so, he uses consider-

### BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "Without Pity."  
FAIR: "Interrupted Melody."  
MAINLY FAIR: "The Bottom of the Bottle."  
MAINLY FAIR: "To Hell and Back."

able restraint and, though I wasn't quite comfortable at times, I don't think the film ever really gets out of hand.

### WITHOUT PITY

(Lux Films)

FOR those who greatly admire (as I do) the Italian "neo-realists" and deplore the trend of much recent Italian production, it's good to know that worthwhile Italian films have still to be seen in this country. *Without Pity* is not a masterpiece as measured against, say, *Bicycle Thieves* or *Paisa*; but its style, world, characters and compassion compare with theirs. On a train heading for Leghorn a girl who has left home, and for the usual reasons can't return, saves a Negro soldier's life. They meet again and his devotion is the life blood of a touching, desperate love as the story moves through army camps and prisons, brothels and black market in early post-war Leghorn. A gloomy subject, you may say, and I shan't pretend it's cheerful; but you'll find its people and their feelings unusually real. Carla del Poggio is the girl and John Kitzmiller (who was in *To Live in Peace*) the soldier, and among other players Pierre Claude makes a fine, sinister, yet not

unsympathetic study of a racketeer. This film, which Alberto Lattuada directed, has been starkly and effectively photographed (by Aldo Tonti, who shot *The Miracle*) in and around Leghorn, and its impact is heightened by Nino Rota's expressive score. Don't miss it if it comes your way.

### THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE

(20th Century-Fox-CinemaScope)

THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE has all the makings of fine entertainment: a script by Sydney Boehm from a novel by Georges Simenon, direction by Henry Hathaway, and a cast that includes Joseph Cotten, Van Johnson, Ruth Roman and Jack Carson. Its interesting story asks the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Throughout there are good scenes, but as a whole it fails to catch fire. A fast-moving, visually exciting opening sets the scene: in his garage a wealthy rancher (Mr. Cotten) finds his brother (Mr. Johnson) who has escaped from prison and wants to reach his wife and children in Mexico, across a flooded river. The film is less satisfactory in its later, wholly worthy attempt to give depth to the characters of the rancher and his wife (Miss Roman) by exploring in dialogue their relations with one another and the rancher's with his brother. It may be that script or direction are at fault. Anyway, these passages are slow and give the feeling that the principals are

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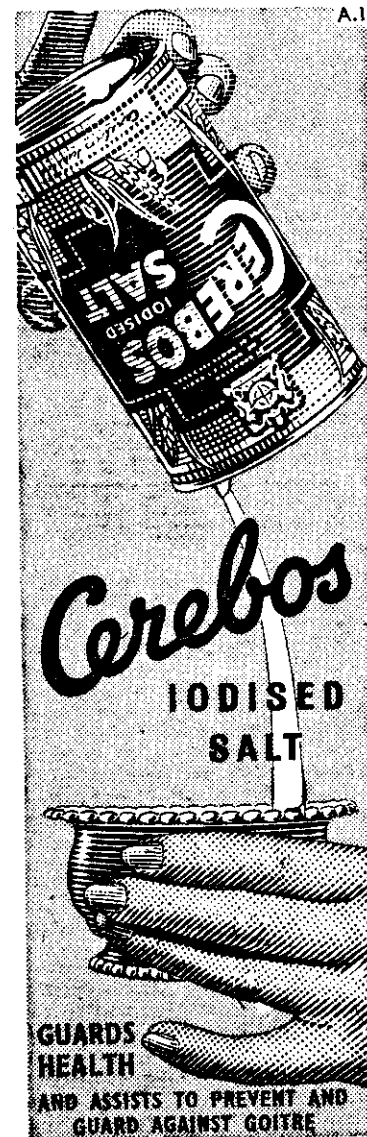
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