

Nightfall at Noon

NIGHT IS MY KINGDOM

(Discina)

AS well portrayed as it is in *Night Is My Kingdom*, blindness needs no plot, no villain, to make a story. I'm a little sorry it has one. Yet the villain himself is well played (by Gerard Oury), and Georges Lacombe has directed the film with restraint. There are few moments of high drama, but the few are in key, and you may find that the film quietly haunts you.

Night Is My Kingdom is the story of a locomotive driver who is blinded in trying to rescue his fireman when a steam pipe bursts. He's at first unaware that he will never see again, and the story is mainly concerned with his difficulties in coming to terms with his blindness. As played by Jean Gabin with tight-lipped control, it's an actor's triumph—contrast, for example, the fine opening sequence, with the man of steel at the controls of his giant locomotive, and his return from hospital to his own room, with a magazine he can't read and a train whistling by outside his window. Other scenes are equally memorable, and there are many details, such as the wonderful use of the hands, one would like to mention. Opposite M. Gabin is Simone Valere as a young, blind teacher at the school for the blind, where much of the action takes place—the relationship which slowly develops between these two is beautifully drawn—and there are a number of other well-filled parts.

THREE STRIPES IN THE SUN

(Columbia)

ON the simplest entertainment level, *Three Stripes in the Sun* is a romantic story of a Japanese girl and an American sergeant in the occupation forces in Japan. As such, with Aldo Ray as the sergeant, and the girl, Yuko, played by an unspoilt Japanese newcomer, Mitsuko Kimura, it's a little better than most. But as you might expect of a film based on a *New Yorker* story—*The Gentle Wothound*, by E. J. Kahn, Jr.—there's more to it than mere romance. Sergeant O'Reilly hated the Japanese when he arrived in Japan, and even a dressing down by his commanding officer after a street brawl didn't cure him of his hatred. It was when he falsely accused one of them of stealing his wallet (he turned out to be a priest) that he began to realise—in an encounter with an orphan who recalled his own childhood—that humanity is what we all have in common.

In a not too profound way, in fact, the film has a look at the relations between

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "*Night Is My Kingdom*."

FAIR: "*Three Stripes in the Sun*."

FAIR: "*For Better, For Worse*."



SUSAN STEPHEN

different nationals and peoples. With or without its "point," this is a not unattractive piece, and a not unpromising start for its director, Richard Murphy. If we can look forward to other films in which other American colonels will say, "Does it ever occur to you that other people may like their own way of life?" well, that will be very nice, too. *Three Stripes in the Sun*, by the way, was mostly shot in Japan, and the story is substantially true.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE

(Associated British-Kenwood Films)

THE pretty girl who came out of *For Better, For Worse* just ahead of me and couldn't help giving a little skip now and then as she walked along with her boy friend (or her husband—these things do happen) had the right and healthy reaction to this film. I'm not sure that I was ever quite young enough to do that sort of thing myself, and if that's so it's my loss. If you chose to be snifty or were in the wrong mood you could call this film just another of those pieces about the trials of young couples who get engaged at the pictures, overcome parental objections, rent a one-room flat and buy furniture on time payments,

have to sell their jalopy, quarrel and make up, and never have enough to live on. I suppose it is one of those pictures, but it's so engagingly played and moves at such a good pace that I was entertained, and for a good part of the time very pleasantly, amused. The young couple are Dirk Bogarde and Susan Stephen, and among many welcome faces about them are Cecil Parker as Susan's father, and Eileen Herlie as her mother, Athene Seyler as the neighbour who always wants to use the phone at the wrong time, Dennis Price as the man upstairs, Thora Hird as the char, and James Hayter as the plumber. Keep those names in mind if you don't like the sound of the story. J. Lee-Thompson directed.

CATARRH

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The River Line

CHARLES MORGAN'S dramatic play *The River Line* will be heard in an NZBS production from ZB stations at 9.35 p.m. on Sunday, September 9. Leading roles in this production by William Austin will be taken by John Bonney and Hilary Bamberger (right), of *The Teahouse of the August Moon* Company, which toured New Zealand recently. John Bonney plays Philip Sturges, an American author who was in the Air Force during the war. He crosses to England to see Commander Julian Wyburton (Roy Leywood) and his wife, formerly Marie Chassaigne (Hilary Bamberger). Philip had met these two



under very different circumstances during a wartime escape with the help of an organisation called The River Line. During his stay with the Wyburtons, Philip learns some strange things about those events, and one of his companions in the adventure. The theme of *The River Line* is moral responsibility.