

Portrait of a Puritan

THE BOLD AND THE BRAVE

(R.K.O.-Radio-Superscope) A Cert.

A "SNEAK" preview audience in Wellington which roared with derisive laughter at some of the best scenes in *The Bold and the Brave* illustrates an increasingly cynical attitude among filmgoers (discussed recently by Walter Lassally in *Sight and Sound*) to honest sentiment, gentleness and respect for finer feelings. Picked up by an Italian girl (Nicole Maurey) who has become a prostitute to escape from wartime poverty, a puritanical American sergeant (Don Taylor) is so innocent and "good" that the girl falls in love with him. The scenes between these two in which the fanatical puritan gradually succumbs must have been very difficult to play, and I'm not sure that on Mr. Taylor's side they quite succeed. But they're well written, and beautifully played by Miss Maurey. Personally I found the whole relationship quite moving. The scenes in which Preacher—as his friends call him—tries to fight temptation are the ones the audience found so funny.

Preacher is an interesting study—the sort of fellow we've all met, who is too busy fighting evil to have any Christian charity—and the film continues to explore his character: he leaves the girl in disgust when he finds she has been a prostitute, and rides his moral high horse on into some torrid battle scenes. I think we're meant to believe that he repents in the end. The other characters are Fairchild (Wendell Corey), who can't bring himself to shoot at the enemy, and Dooley (Mickey Rooney), a comic extrovert who dreams of a better future for his family. In a richly comic interlude Dooley wins at craps a fortune, for which he's going to pay dearly; and Fairchild finds in the heat of battle a solution to his unwillingness to kill. All this is no doubt meant to show how in one way or another men grow up under fire. If so, I'm a sceptic. Nevertheless, if the film doesn't always convince it is always interesting. Lewis R. Foster directed.

RED SUNDOWN

(Universal-International) G Cert.

PEOPLE, places and situations we've seen before are handled by Jack Arnold with skill and economy in *Red*



NICOLE MAUREY

BAROMETER

FAIR: "The Bold and the Brave."
FAIR: "Red Sundown."
MAINLY FAIR: "Mambo."
MAINLY FAIR: "Anything Goes."

Sundown, to make a good Western. The villain is a greedy landgrabber with a gunman in his pay, the hero a reformed gunfighter turned sheriff's temporary deputy. Specially effective is a call by the villain's gunman on the settlers he is helping to dispossess. Here, and later as the action leads up to the final well-staged gunfight with the hero, Grant Williams is a fine, cheerfully cold-blooded killer. Rory Calhoun, a bloke I've got to like more than I used to, makes a good hero—a bit of an Alan Ladd but with a little less of that exasperating, grim-lipped air of doom. Others in the cast include Dean Jagger as the sheriff and Robert Middleton as the landgrabber; and, of course, there's a pretty girl—in fact, there are two. In town or out the setting is attractive, and the camera takes in some poetic shots of the open country from which the hero emerges and to which he returns.

MAMBO

(Ponti-De Laurentiis) A Cert.

LOOKING for brilliance which some big names promise, you'll find that *Mambo* is not even, as some other Italo-American productions have been, a very interesting failure. Silvano Mangano, whose beauty I'm always ready to admire, makes little of the girl who leaves Venice to join the Katherine Dunham dancers and, coming back, tries to choose between Vittorio Gassman and Michael Rennie. As neither of these does much to improve on his reputation, the outcome seems likely to be unhappy, and is. Shelley Winters does well enough as manager of the Dunham troupe, and Eduardo Cianelli (memorable in *The Stranger's Hand*) appears briefly; but only the radiant Miss Dunham and her dancers really catch fire. Director of some fine films, Robert Rossen made this one from a script in which several writers had a hand. Later, I gather, it was extensively cut by someone else—which might not have been such a good idea.

ANYTHING GOES

(Paramount-VistaVision) G Cert.

SEVERAL engaging numbers played by some pleasant people are not really enough to make worthwhile entertainment of *Anything Goes*, a new version of a Cole Porter musical originally scripted by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse. Teamed up for a new Broadway show, Bing Crosby and Donald O'Connor set out for Europe, where each engages a leading lady. Who is it to be—Mitzi Gaynor or Renée Jeanmaire? With the voyage home in which to work it out, each falls in love with the other's choice, Mitzi's papa is picked up for tax evasion, and so on. I found Mr. O'Connor as likeable as ever, enjoyed a couple of his shipboard numbers, and thought Miss Gaynor made him an attractive partner. In a quite different and thoroughly French way, Mlle. Jeanmaire is delightful. But taken all round, the story is unexciting and the pace slow.

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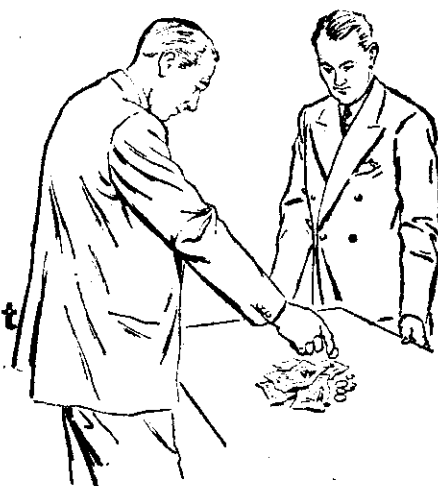


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