

HIGH AND WIDE

TRAPEZE

(United Artists-Susan Productions)

G Cert.
FILMLESS for a fortnight with my family in the mountains, I went without tea and saw *Trapeze* between a railway journey and an annual, now near-ritualistic visit to the speedway with my two boys. It was going to be worth it for a new Carol Reed film. Eager expectancy—a conditioned mind—and the high price just might have affected my judgment. Anyway, I gaped and swallowed at the sequence preceding the titles, knew I was on to something good, but came out a bit disappointed.

Shot in CinemaScope in a Paris circus with Sir Carol again teamed with the photographer Robert Krasker, *Trapeze* is nevertheless an American film, made for Burt Lancaster's own company, with Mr. Lancaster as its big star. He's a good one, too—a trapeze artist maimed in that wonderful opening sequence while trying to do a triple somersault. Will he teach young Tino Orsini (Tony Curtis) the triple? He won't, but does after an



BURT LANCASTER, GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA

(continued from previous page)

the latest of John Brophy's writings. This honest fantasia on human wish-fulfillments is as flimsy as Petronella's transparency, her morning gown. Heretics many fancy they find some not too distant looking at Monaco and a marriage, but Mr. Brophy does not quite buy that one. Not quite. He gives us instead a trivia rather less significant than *The Merry Widow*, and as interesting a

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NO NUDES IS GOOD NUDES

PROUD man, dressed in a little brief authority
(As Shakespeare says), displeases the majority.
But Shakespeare hasn't seen my Auntie Queenie
When she's dressed in her little brief Bikini.

—R.G.P.

BAROMETER

FAIR, WITH FINE PATCHES: "*Trapeze*."
FAIR: "*The Naked Street*."
OVERCAST: "*Oasis*."

old friend (Katy Jurado) has backed Tino's persistence. While they train, Lola (Gina Lollobrigida) angles for a chance to join the act and ends by tying both in knots. As players Mr. Curtis is quite adequate, and Miss Lollobrigida, who has never really impressed me before, surprisingly catches fire as a woman who's ambitious, two-faced, but apparently genuinely passionate: women can be like that.

Well to well-enough played as it is, though, this story is only so-so. The high-flyers are the thing, and with a very mobile camera's dazzling shots cut to a suspenseful pattern it gets you not once but time after time. Then, a background to the flyers and part of their pattern, there's the circus: colourful, glittering, noisy, with its underlying tensions and jealousies showing through. All this is well done, and the streets, cafes and odd corners of the big city are as good as ever.

What's wrong, I suspect, is not even so much the story, for a good director can get away with an awful lot. Carol Reed is more than a good director—as a well-known pianist once said of his feeling for Mozart, I'm a bit "dotty" about him myself. But he's a director who thinks with a pair of scissors in his hand, and with CinemaScope I'm sure that isn't so easy. For a CinemaScope film *Trapeze* has a wide range of shots and plenty of pace and movement, but never for long the wonderful rhythm that makes even a part-failure of Sir

piece of clinical voyeurism as I have seen in some years. The jacket drawing is Peake's lovely head of a girl which is (I think) in Mr. Brophy's possession. It shows the author has a taste not noticeably shown in the story.

In *Pianissimo* the daughter of a great (yessir) musician is seduced by a young musician who is homosexually involved with her father. There is some living-in-sin, a tumble in a begonia bed, a misunderstood mother and a miscarriage. Miss Faber, who put this fandango together, is said to be twenty-one. This is the most credible part of *Pianissimo*, which goes for the most part at fortissimo in the dodecaphonic way.

The Cardi Comes Home is amateurish in a way that suggests a good health in Margot James. This slow-moving and casually disorganised record of a quiet life in a quiet county has passages which hint that Miss James, who has yet to find her feet, may some day be capable of a worthwhile minor work.

—K.S.

Carol, like *The Man Between*, still an exciting memory after several years. Unconditioned I might have thought this a pretty good film, and up to a point it is. But—let me be honest about it—it isn't the film I went to see.

THE NAKED STREET

(United Artists-World Films) A Cert.

A FAIRLY modest "entertainment," *The Naked Street* manages to combine suspense and excitement with an interest in scene and character. Always vigorous and convincing, Anthony Quinn again plays well as the gangster who in his odd way wants to be a good mother's son and sister's brother. One lovingly brotherly act is to arrange the release of a condemned murderer, his sister's lover, so that her child will have a father. All the same, it adds up. This is only the start of the story, however, and you'll find in the end that crime doesn't pay; but don't let the expected outcome put you off. Among familiar types is a reporter who risks his neck to uncover the truth. More interesting is the gangster's dear old mother, very nicely played by Else Neft, and as the girl's lover Farley Granger gives a sound performance. Maxwell Shane directed, and the piece is well photographed by Floyd Crosby.

OASIS

(Roxy-Criterion)

G Cert.

IF you're tempted by big names to see *Oasis*, you won't, I'm afraid, see in any sense a very big film. A story of dirty work in the desert, it has, as they say, its moments; but in this dubbed and re-edited version, at any rate, the dialogue is banal and the story conventional. Since Pierre Brasseur, Michèle Morgan and Cornell Borchers are such good players, and Yves Allegret is an interesting director, it's all very wasteful of talent. Among its moments, by the way, is a brief sequence of exciting aerial photography.

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BY LAURENCE THOMPSON

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