

A Bow to the Old Master

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

(Paramount-Filwite Productions) Y Cert.

[DON'T think I have ever reviewed an Alfred Hitchcock film—it's the luck of the draw—so let me say right away that I feel something like affection for the old master. It's the thing nowadays to say he has gone to seed a bit. Perhaps it's true, and perhaps if I had seen his earlier version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* I would agree that it was better than this one. But I didn't, and while I think the new one could have been a little tighter, I enjoyed it immensely almost throughout and found the best of it delightful—intelligent, amusing, suspenseful (of course) and stylish.

On holiday in North Africa are the McKennas, Dr Ben and his wife Jo—better known to addicts as James Stewart and Doris Day—and their son Hank. When a young Frenchman they meet (Daniel Gelin) tells Ben about an assassination plot Ben becomes what the title of the film calls him, and to keep him quiet Hank is kidnapped and held hostage. The McKennas are a fond couple—some warm and amusing scenes have made this clear—and Hank's their only child. The search for him becomes the thing, with the outcome of the assassination plot to be encountered somewhere along the way. We've been promised this in one of those scenes played under the credit titles; and in spite of an overdone shot or two (too much of the choir, perhaps?), when the time comes Mr Hitch-



ALFRED HITCHCOCK

cock delivers the goods. The cymbals crash, the assassin fires in the crowded Albert Hall, Miss Day screams—it gets you all right.

You won't need to be told that Mr Stewart makes an engaging hero and that M. Gelin—here, for a change, a little sinister—is an actor worth going out of the way to see. For Doris Day fans I suppose the songs will be the draw, and especially the song, the haunting "Whatever Will Be," woven into the plot. But she can act, and as Jo McKenna she's a natural and likeable wife and mother,

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "The Man Who Knew Too Much."
FAIR: "The Eddy Duchin Story."
FAIR TO FINE: "The Return of Don Camillo."

and most impressive in the scene when she learns that Hank has been kidnapped. Deserving mention also as villains more or less—or more and less—are Bernard Miles and Brenda de Banzie. Briefly, then, this is a film whose faults are easily overlooked, and which should be widely enjoyed.

THE EDDY DUCHIN STORY

(Columbia)

Y Cert.

THAT old line about truth being stranger than fiction might explain some of the odd scenes in *The Eddy Duchin Story*. I have the feeling that it tries to hide nothing—which is commendable. But you can be both honest and selective, and this two-hour film takes in too much detail, especially in some of the later scenes—when the hero, for instance, who has been told he's going to die tries to tell his son. Partly for this reason the first part of the film is by far the best. It's also more closely knit, it has authentic atmosphere, and it includes a fine, warm performance by Kim Novak as Mrs Duchin. Miss Novak has a beautifully expressive face, and though I'm still not sure she has great range, she does extend it a little with each film. If she's not spoilt by her quick success she may one day do something we'll never forget. Of interest also is the promising debut of Victoria Shaw—better known in these parts as Jeanette Elphick—as the second Mrs Duchin.

Eddy Duchin, as you probably know, was a well-known popular pianist. In this

piece he's played very capably by Tyrone Power. Some of the 20-year-old melodies strike a responsive chord, though Mr Duchin's style, as recreated by Carmen Cavallaro, doesn't excite me. With these reservations, I found this film interesting and up to a point enjoyable. George Sidney directed.

THE RETURN OF DON CAMILLO

(Rizzoli-Francinex)

G Cert.

SPARE-TIME film reviewers sometimes don't come as fresh to their job as they'd like to, and I think I should confess that I saw the Don Camillo sequel in a jaded and not very perceptive mood. For that reason Barometer reflects an inclination to be generous about my doubts. Sequels—it has been said before—are not often as good as the films they follow, and I think that's probably true of this one. My main objection to *The Little World of Don Camillo* as filmed was that while the village episodes were realistic and sincere, the war between priest and Communist mayor strongly suggested farce. Again there's this division, though the comedy may have less of farce in it than before—which is a good thing. It comes to this, I suppose, that if you like this sort of comedy—which I don't really wholeheartedly—you'll enjoy this film very much. Fermandel and Gino Cervi are as good as ever as the priest and the mayor, forever at loggerheads but brothers under their ideological skins—as I remarked when I reviewed the earlier film; and, as in the earlier piece, the director, Julien Duvivier, has captured the village, the countryside, the people in a warmly imaginative way. That was for me, in fact, again the most satisfying part of the film.

PLAY WITH NEW VOICES

AN international flavour invaded the Auckland Recording Studios recently when the radio play *Last Train Home* was in the making. Producer Earle Rowell had capitalised on the presence in Auckland of a J. C. Williamson stage company to bring new and well-trained voices to the microphone. When *The Listener* called to see the play in production, Patrick Horgan, from Ireland, was just finishing one "cut" as Diana Perryman (Australia) was about to begin work on another. Also in the offing were Diana ten Hove (Burma and England), the Australians John Meillon and Jessica Noad, John D'Arcy (England and Australia), and the New Zealanders Ernest Blair, Tony Thompson, Eddie Hegan, Ted Brayshaw, Charles Sinclair and May Lovatt. *Last Train Home* is a melodrama of about an hour and a half's duration, which will be broadcast by the YA stations at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, March 18. It was written by Frank Baker and was earlier broadcast to home listeners by the BBC. The setting is a country railway station where an assorted group of passengers await the arrival of a train delayed in a severe storm. One of the passengers (John Meillon) is recognised as a wanted murderer. At pistol point he forces the others to judge him on his past actions. The situation appears to be an impasse until a nun (Jessica Noad), whose wartime experiences give her a fellow-feeling for the man, persuades him to throw the pistol away. At length, the problems of another passenger, a woman unhappily married (Diana Perryman), eclipse those of the murderer, and the climax of the play revolves around the fate of these two.

Patrick Horgan, who plays the part of an Air Force conscript and one of the passengers in this production, comes from London, where he was busily winning a reputation as a television actor. A good looking and versatile young man, his early ambition was to be a doctor, and he trained for four years at Saint Mary's Hospital. Then he changed to music studies before going on the stage at the Maddermarket in Norwich. Before joining Roger Livesay and Ursula Jeans on their current tour of Australia and New Zealand with *The Reluctant Debutante*, Patrick Horgan played small parts in films and leading roles in television.

John Meillon is an actor from Sydney whose career on the stage and in radio began while he was still a boy. At 14 he played the title role in *The Winslow Boy*, and he has had a wealth of acting experience since. In 1953 he took part in the stage production of *Death of a Salesman* in Sydney, later playing in the radio production with the Hollywood star Melvyn Douglas. In *Doctor Paul* he

EARLE ROWELL (left) with some of the cast of "Last Train Home": l. to r., John D'Arcy, Jessica Noad, John Meillon, Diana Perryman, Patrick Horgan

played Johnnie Cabot, and in *Career Girl*, Danny Hyde. He has also had parts in *Broadway Theatre* and *Superman*.

Jessica Noad has visited New Zealand before. A year ago she understudied Googie Withers and played a small part in *Simon and Laura*; and eight years before that she was here with Whitehall Productions' *Dangerous Corner* and *O Mistress Mine*. On her present visit she is understudying Ursula Jeans. Jessica started acting in radio plays while still a child, but has since concentrated on stage work.

John D'Arcy came to Australia from England with Morris Moschevitch away

back in the twenties, taking parts in the Edgar Wallace stage thrillers *The Ringer* and *The Terror*. Later he joined Leon Gordon and made his first visit to New Zealand with a part in *White Cargo*. In 1937 he returned to England, acting for a time at Drury Lane. He was in the cast of *The Sun Never Sets*, which starred Paul Robeson, Leslie Banks, Todd Duncan and Adelaide Hall, and also made a film with Will Hay. In 1939 he returned to Australia and served during the war with the R.A.A.F. He last visited New Zealand with the *South Pacific* show, in which he played Captain Bracket. He is understudying Roger Livesey on his present visit.

