

(continued from previous page)

writhe like snakes and the Big Wheel turns 'way up in the middle of the air. All these elements—and the strongly rhythmic noises which accompany them—Alfred Hitchcock has used with an almost nonchalant felicity in *Strangers on a Train*, in my opinion the best movie he has produced in years.

I will concede now—and be done with it—that the story is in most respects fantastically improbable. There were several moments when it was impossible to keep disbelief properly in suspension, but somehow or other—by a trick of camera or twist of dialogue—it was hoisted out of the way just in time on each occasion. The story is absurd, as even one of the characters says, but you can't loosen its grip.

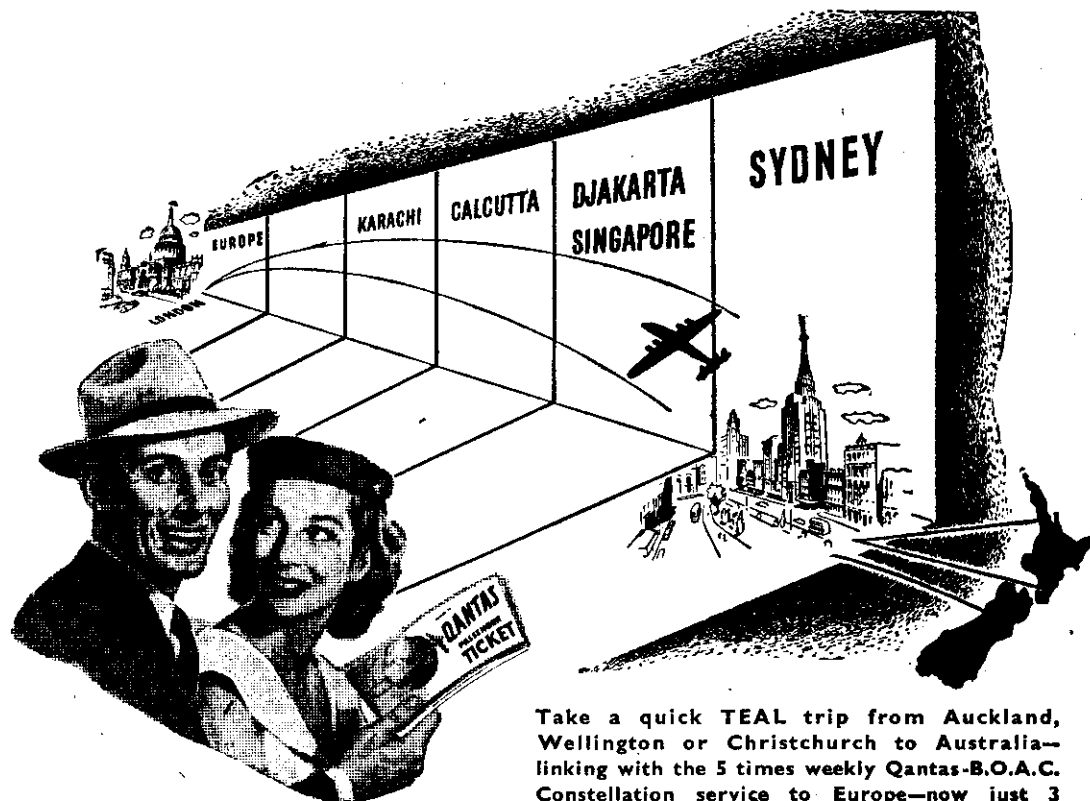
It isn't all set in a fairground, of course. The strangers (Farley Granger, a young tennis star, and Robert Walker, a dangerously unbalanced idler with a psychopathic hatred for his father) meet on a train; and trains—another cinema phenomenon—figure largely in the story. There is, too, a championship singles match which provides half the material for a dazzlingly skilful sequence of inter-cut suspense. But the big set-piece is the climax on a runaway merry-go-round. Here the integration of movement and meaning—the complete blending of sight and sound and sense which should be the aim of all film-makers—comes pretty close to fulfilment. It reminded me a little of *Panique* (which for me stands on a pedestal by itself) and a lot more of the climax to Welles's *Lady From Shanghai*. You may be reminded in another place of Harry Lime's clutching fingers—as you will no doubt remember many other good things from the past. But as the hair rises and falls gently on the back of your neck you will be reminded most frequently and forcibly that in the making of suspenseful thrillers, Alfred Hitchcock (when his eye is in) has few peers.

The acting at all levels is good, with Robert Walker's skilful character-study pre-eminently so; and a substantial quota of credit should go to the director of photography (Robert Burks). The film is properly ticketed as not suitable for children, but though it includes murder and attempted murder I was interested to notice that the most, and worst of the violence was presented indirectly. Only in the last scene does it come momentarily into full focus.

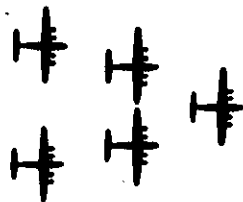
THE LAW AND THE LADY (M.G.M.)

FREDERICK LONSDALE may have believed that he wrote *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* in 1925, but a character named Leonard Spiegelglass wrote a little bit more for this new version of the old comedy. The result is a series of minor abrasions on the original smooth script—and an over-sentimentalised ending. But they are minor abrasions. As a whole the piece (produced and directed by Edwin H. Knopf) sparkles deliciously. The witticisms and epigrams flip delightfully to and fro—I haven't seen Michael Wilding to such good advantage since he played Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband*—and Greer Garson, strikingly brunette, is as pleasant to listen to as to watch.

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