

## TALKING OF TALKIES.

# Schubert Becomes The Film Hero Of The Season

## Two English Films and an American One Turn Composer Into a Romantic Swain

(By Our Film Critic.)

Franz Schubert, probably the most "unromantic" of any composer, has suddenly found himself the greatest film hero of this or any other season. Two films of Schubert's life have been made in England—"Blossom Time," with Richard Tauber, and "The Unfinished Symphony," with Hans Jaray. A third has been made at Hollywood and is called "Love Time." The star is Nils Asther.

Undoubtedly the best of the three films is "Blossom Time," which is, at the moment, enjoying a most successful season in New Zealand. In this version of Schubert's life the composer is shown as having a hopeless passion for the daughter of a dancing teacher. In "The Unfinished Symphony" he is jilted by a count's daughter. In "Love Time" he nearly loses

ing to a writer in an English paper, there is little reason to believe that his life left him any time for romance. He left behind him a great mass of music, the composition of which must have kept him busy from early manhood onward. Yet, according to the film conception of him, his life must have been "one damn thing after another."

The completion of "Blossom Time" beat "The Unfinished Symphony" by a week or two, with the American version still farther behind. And it is a strange coincidence that the American Schubert, Nils Asther, is now at Elstree working on a film in the very studios where "Blossom Time" was made. It has been suggested that he should have remarked "Pardon my Schubert" as he reported for duty. Asther is playing one of the leading roles in "Abdul Hamid," one of B.I.P.'s most ambitious films to date.

But this duplication and triplication of the one theme is somewhat confusing to the picturegoer who believes implicitly in what he sees. Two of the worst examples of this were the conflicting versions of the life of Catherine the Great—the English one made by Alexander Korda and starring Elizabeth Bergner, the Hollywood one made by Josef Von Sternberg and starring Marlene Dietrich.

In the case of the Schubert films, Hollywood definitely comes off third best. "Love Time" is set in a small town Vienna, and little use has been made of the Schubert music. The result is that the story appears terribly thin. Richard Tauber, the "Blossom Time" Schubert, is far nearer the accurate conception of the composer than the more handsome Schuberts of the other two versions.

FROM now on, Paramount's production, "The President Vanishes," is to be filmed behind locked doors, with every member of the cast instructed to be silent if asked the nature of the plot. Walter Wagner, Paramount producer, whose previous policy has been "open doors to all," explains that the change is temporary, and is introduced to protect the film's mystery angle. "The President Vanishes," by an anonymous author, pictures the kidnapping of "the President of the United States," in an effort to hurl the country into a new European war for the enrichment of munitions manufacturers.



**SHE'S BACK.**—Nancy Carroll seems to have been posted as missing from the film ranks lately, but she makes a big come-back in "Transatlantic Merry-Go-Round," the sparkling musical comedy which will have a simultaneous New Zealand premiere at the Regent Theatres in Auckland and Wellington on Friday of this week.

his sweetheart because she turns out to be the daughter of a nobleman. But in this film he is treated more kindly because he gets the girl in the last reel!

If poor Franz Schubert could come back from the grave in which he has lain for more than 70 years, he would be astounded at the pretty picture film scenarists have made of him. Accord-

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