

Chaplin's Romance is Over



PAULETTE GODDARD

"... I'm through with Charlie."

ACCORDING to fairly authentic rumour, Paulette Goddard is through with Charlie Chaplin.

Of course, they've never officially admitted their marriage, but now Paulette says: "Charlie has been too busy to bother with me. He's been away for weeks and I have been lonely . . ."

So Paulette has broken away from Charlie's influence. She is said to have signed a contract with David O. Selznick, and is being extensively tested for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in Selznick's long-promised 300,000-dollar production of "Gone With The Wind."

Paulette smashes her romance with Charlie, which began some while before "Modern Times" was made, in these words: "I am so keen to play the part of Scarlett that not even Charlie's displeasure can stop me. He has insisted I should play with him in a new picture he is writing. He has told me dozens of times that the story was ready, only to tear it up later . . . He gets enthusiastic over an idea, then drops it."

ity with a public used to "blue" music, is nevertheless a charming little piece. The only song I regretted was "Coming Round the Mountain," which awakened nostalgic longings for my dear "Minnie the Moocher."

The second virtue of "I'll Take Romance" is the dialogue—neat, a little risqué and very brisk.

Plot Good

THIRDLY, the plot was quite as good as most of these musical pegs—though possibly a little overburdened with kidnapping.

It was all about a man who went to New York to persuade an opera singer to fulfil her contract in Buenos Aires rather than take a better one, offered later, in Paris. He tried the gentle approach to snare the prey, and pretended to be in love with her, ending up in the embarrassing situation of having her love him. An interfering aunt of the singer exposed his romantic deception, however, and then, of course, when he was out of favour, the perverse fellow discovered himself really in love. That was where the kidnapping—which should have been hurried and was not—came in so prominently.

On the whole, "I'll Take Romance" is amusing entertainment and very rich food for music-lovers—even though as a film of major importance, I think, it misses surprisingly badly.

["I'll Take Romance." Columbia. Directed by Edward H. Griffith, starring Grace Moore, Melvyn Douglas. Auckland and Dunedin. April 29.]

And Now, Miss Pons

AFTER Grace Moore's latest, we come to Lily Pons's new picture, "Hitting a New High," and let me say at once that no disparagement is

places. Can you imagine the Moore doing that? Hardly!

Lilyponsian

ON this subject of the Pons unorthodoxy a good story is told. During the production of "Hitting a New High," Lily (dressed in her ostrich feathers) was sitting on top of a grand piano singing an operatic number, when the studio was visited by Pietro Cimini, noted conductor of symphony orchestras and a great upholder of the dignity of grand opera.

He was horrified and disgusted by what met his gaze. "Putting opera into tights is unnecessary and undignified," he protested.

But he could not ruffle the Lilyponsian feathers. "I'm not wearing tights," she replied. "This is sunburn powder!"

The Bird Girl

THAT story, true or not, seems to me to be typical of the spirit in which the films of Lily Pons are made. Nearly every screen play about an opera singer, of course, has the same basic theme—the struggle for recognition and fame—but Miss Pons and her studio (R.K.O. Radio) go out of their way to cover up its triteness. They don't mind sacrificing most of the propriety of opera for the sake of fun and freshness. They don't always succeed, but at least they make the attempt.

For instance, in "Hitting a New High," Lily is just a Parisian cabaret singer with an urge to do something bigger, but Edward Everett Horton, wealthy patron of the arts, won't even listen to such a common type of entertainer. Whereupon Lily makes her attack from another angle. Horton mixes opera-sponsoring with big-game hunting (of a sort), so Lily the singer dons feathers and becomes Oongahunga the Bird Girl. As such she is "discovered" by Horton twittering away to herself in the heart of an African jungle, having been planted there by Press-Agent Jack Oakie. The only language she speaks consists of trills and quavers, which nevertheless sound remarkably like words when you become used to them.

Overjoyed by discovering this rare creature, and realising that a Bird Girl in the hand is worth two in the jungle,



The expression on the faces of Robert Taylor and Eleanor Powell is caused by a horse race. A scene from M.G.M.'s "Broadway Melody of 1938," which is due for release fairly soon.