

Film Record—by Gordon Mirama

OVERCAST WITH STARS



Eleanor Powell, one of the galaxy, was photographed dancing on glass to provide this unusual camera angle.

*"Broadway
Melody of 1938"
Contains More Talent
Than It's Able to Handle*

BROADWAY Melody of 1938," M-G-M.'s latest excuse to spend a lot of money, has a great big cast and absolutely no pride. It pinches ideas from past pictures with no more conscience than a film critic scanning his colleagues' writings for an opening sentence. (That one about "absolutely no pride" I owe to Otis Ferguson, of "The New Republic").

Quite apart from a nostalgic yearning for all the "Broadway Melodies" of the past—which is reflected in the music, the theme, and the general structure—there are several blatant instances of "borrowing" in the new edition. I use this word in preference to "stealing" as being both more polite and more correct, since I fully recognise that no one has a better right than M-G-M to rehash ideas which originally appeared in M-G-M pictures.

He Sneezes Now

JUST two instances: Robert Wildhack, who made the humble snore seem a glorious work of art in "Broadway Melody of 1936," is here called on to try his hand and nose at sneez-

ing. It is not so glorious. And when I saw the horse race, in which Buddy Ebsen's mount refuses to win until urged on by a microphone-magnified voice singing "The Barber of Seville," I was reminded that almost exactly the same thing had been done—and done better—by the Marx Brothers, in "A Day at the Races."

These are M-G-M ideas, and the studio is surely entitled to dig 'em up again if it wants to. Yet I presume that it owes at least a moral debt to RKO for commandeering the technique of the last Astaire-Rogers picture for the "Dance in the Rain" sequence of the new Broadway Melody.

Horse And Girl

REGARDING the theme of "Broadway Melody of 1938," I am certainly not going to give myself a headache searching for the copyright. Presumably it belongs to the person who first discovered the human interest inherent in the story of the local boy or girl who made good. Possibly that

was Dick Whittington. In the present case, the local girl is Eleanor Powell, and Broadway is her goal. Whereas Dick Whittington had a cat, she has a horse, which she loves almost as much as she loves Robert Taylor. And when you remember how much Robert Taylor gets himself loved, that horse can certainly consider itself lucky!

Sugar-Daddies

WELL, anyway, when Eleanor's horse is taken to New York to be sold, Eleanor loves him so much she goes along, too, hoping to raise enough money with tap-dancing to buy him back. And then Robert Taylor, who is a song-writer and show-producer, notices Eleanor (and her tap-dancing) and becomes what I believe is known as her "sugar-daddy"—only, let me hasten to make clear, the sugar remains in the canister, and the association is purely platonic. And Robert gives Eleanor a part in his new show, and then Binnie Barnes, who is the