

It Goes Round—But Not Merrily!

["Manhattan Merry-Go-Round." Republic. Directed by Charles E. Reisner. Starring Phil Regan, Leo Carillo. Already released.]



SCRATCHED!

IT'S hard not to feel sorry for a scenario writer these days when a producer calls upon him to dig up a story for a musical film. The poor chap must know he's beaten from the start. The best he can expect from the critics (the honest ones) is that they'll say something like this: "The story is a suitable thread to tie the variety turns together."

So I'm not going to be unduly hard on the scenarist responsible for "Manhattan-Merry-Go Round." His chief characters are a racketeer who buys a gramophone recording company, a girl (Ann Dvorak) who loves a crooner and wants to see him succeed (what strange ambitions some girls do have!), and the crooner himself. There's also an actress who pretends to be a temperamental opera singer—only she's really not supposed to be pretending—and who estranges the crooner from the heroine. And so on, and so on.

Beyond a Joke

"MANHATTAN Merry-Go-Round" is not particularly merry, but it certainly goes round. Each revolution is marked by Leo Carillo (another of those gangsters with musical souls) declaiming, "I am a man of few words, but when I speak I say plenty." The first two or three times he said this, it was almost funny: when he had repeated it for about the twelfth time, it had gone far beyond being a joke.

Into its 88 minutes this film also crams the playing of four jazz bands, all of which sounded very much the same to me, the crooning of Phil Regan and Gene Autry, dancing, vaudeville novelties, a glimpse of a baseball game (Heaven knows why!), and the fast but not noticeably clever talking of James Gleason, Luis Alberni and Henry Armetta.

"Joy Of Living" Is Almost Joyless

["The Joy of Living." RKO Radio. Directed by Tay Garnett. Starring Irene Dunne, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. Already released.]



ALSO RAN

EARLIER than anticipated, it becomes necessary to gird up our metaphorical loins and apply the harsher side of our new grading system. Perhaps it's because one expects something rather special from any Irene Dunne film that

"UNSPOKEN THOUGHTS."

CASH PRIZE AND THEATRE TICKETS IN "RECORD'S" NOVEL CONTEST



She thinks: "I wish he'd obey that un-butler-like impulse."

He thinks: "....."

IN addition to a cash prize of THREE GUINEAS for the cleverest and most original entry, 50 consolation prizes of double theatre tickets are to be awarded in the "Unspoken Thoughts" competition conducted by the "Record" in conjunction with the 20th Century-Fox picture "The Baroness and the Butler," starring Annabella and William Powell.

The third part of this novel contest appears here. Above you will see the two stars in an illustration from the picture. They might be thinking almost anything, but we have made a guess at what William Powell may be thinking. What you have to do is to supply the unspoken thought of Annabella—but you must do it in not more than 12 words.

Four of these scenes from the picture will be published (the first two have already appeared). As they appear, cut them out and keep them by you till you have the whole set of four. Then fill in the missing line in the space left beneath each illustration, and send your entries to the "Baroness and the Butler Contest," care of the "Radio Record,"

P.O. Box 1680, Wellington.

All entries must be received not later than Wednesday, July 20, 1938.

On the basis of cleverness and originality, a cash prize of three guineas will be awarded for the best set of "unspoken thoughts."

In addition, consolation prizes of double theatre tickets to see "The Baroness and the Butler" will be awarded in every city and town in New Zealand where the picture is screened, as follows:—Auckland (four double passes); Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin (three each); Wanganui, Palmerston North, Invercargill (two each); Hamilton, Cambridge, Dargaville, Gisborne, Hastings, Masterton, Napier, Nelson, New Plymouth, Te Kuiti, Timaru, Whangarei, Ashburton, Blenheim, Dannevirke, Eltham, Feilding, Foxton, Gore, Greymouth, Hawera, Hokitika, Kaikoura, Levin, Marton, Motueka, Oamaru, Ohakune Junction, Pahiatua, Patea, Rangiora, Stratford, Temuka, Taihape, Waimate, Waipawa, Winton, Wairoa, Westport, Woodville (one each).

"The Joy of Living" rates no higher than "Also Ran." And I'm not so sure it doesn't deserve a "Dead Horse" grading when you consider that, in addition to Irene as its star, it began with the advantage of a supporting cast containing Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Allee Brady, Guy Kibbee, Jean Dixon and Eric Blore.

For, in spite of its advantages, the picture emerges as just another machine-made crazy comedy.

Away From It All

HOW tired one becomes of irresponsible heroes and heroines who refuse to behave like normal human beings, and who burble so knowingly

about the delights of an expansive, untrammelled existence. Really, these bright young things can be terribly dull on occasions!

In this particular piece of unintentionally heavy farce, the hero is a fellow whose recipe for the wider, happier life is that you should always do what you want to do, whenever you want to do it. I'd like to see anyone try it—but, then, I'm forgetting the censor.

With this insidiously subversive doctrine, he pursues Irene Dunne, who is a worthy subject because, as a stage star with a sponging family, she is so busy earning millions of dollars to keep the home fires burning and papa's