SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Dodsworth in Hollywood—"La Kermesse Héroique" and a fine labor short

ODSWORTH, the movie, does everything it sets out to. Sidney Howard's adaptation is superior to the Sinclair Lewis novel and Walter Huston achieves all the emotion that could possibly be drawn from the botched character of the book. Axiomatically, there would have to be a quota of balmy Southern California touches. The script has Mary Astor living in a Naples villa to save money, but at the same time she is shown wearing two-hundred-dollar gowns and a mink wrap with H. Jaeckel & Sons oozing from every skin. When Dodsworth sells his great automobile plant an overalled worker in the yard says, "Sorry to see you go, Sam." But the scenes click off in a sequence that has the logic of its own premises; and these premises are as shallow as Lewis's book.

That thesis was valid in Norway at the time and under the conditions Knut Hamsun worked it out in Shallow Soil. In a contemporary American setting it is a pretty and spurious anachronism. Sam Dodsworth is the familiar Sinclair Lewis business man. He might not be much of a hand at explaining old cathedrals and he might not know the difference between a demi-tasse and a demimonde and when it comes to Vatsyayana's erotic theories, why he jist don't know from nothing, but, by gum, he stands for good plumbing, concrete roads, and free wheeling. Dodsworth spells progress. Dodsworth has got to be on the go. A Dodsworth out of harness isn't worth a plugged dime.

And that, according to Sinclair Lewis, is the tragedy of Sam Dodsworth. His wife has dragged him off to Europe, he's out of harness, he hasn't a thing to do. Fortunately, you can't down a good man and he hits on a new project, an airway between Seattle and Moscow, so the tragedy is not really a tragedy, but a triumph of individual initiative. Here is where Dodsworth is fundamentally vitiated as a contemporary symbol.

It would be silly to explain that Sam Dodsworth is not meant to be any such thing, because his most significant characteristics recur throughout Lewis's writings.

The essential tragedy of a real Dodsworth vould lie in the fact that he is a gifted man, ull of decent, fruitful, creative impulses which are repeatedly checked by his job and its implications. A real Dodsworth no longer symbolizes progress in any important sense. Automobile manufacturers no longer manufacture "the best possible car at the price." They consciously make cars that won't last too long, they wilfully buy up inventions to keep them out of circulation; their big job now is to break unions. This would be part of the essential tragedy in the life of decent Sam Dodsworth. And those philistine streaks about which Lewis and Sam Goldwyn are so complacent could be made to intensify this tragedy.



Would it be too much for a hard-headed business man to realize that a Seattle-Moscow airway is at best chimerical in the present international setup? If that's the most hopeful notion Sam could hit on, Progress must be in a hell of a shape. That airway would not resolve the difficulties even of the Lewis-Goldwyn Dodsworth. Mary Astor is their only solution. Because the movie fails to face the problems of a real Dodsworth, its overwhelming emphasis is of necessity placed on his marital tangles and that is what makes it tangential and unimportant. All the actors do good jobs, the photography is adequate and if you're in the mood for a picture, see this one in preference to The Texas Rangers and The General Died at Dawn. In New York the Rivoli is being picketed, so New Yorkers may have to wait. Edward Newhouse.

BRILLIANT satire on the screen is a very rare occurrence. There are only a very few films that fall into this category: René Clair's The Italian Straw Hat (The Horse Ate the Hat), Pabst's Dreigroschenoper, Boris Barnet's The Patriots, Chaplin's Lady of Paris and Modern Times, some of the early work of Lubitsch, and Jacques Feyder's Les Nouveaux Messieurs. And now Feyder, the Belgian who failed in Hollywood (remember The Kiss with Garbo and Gilbert?) has made an extraordinary film satire that is brilliant, witty, lusty, and human: La Kermesse Héroique, which opened New York's newest film house, the Filmarte.

As in every good film of its type, the plot is simple. The quality is achieved through the characterizations and the production. Feyder has gone back to early seventeenth-century Flanders, during the invasion of Philip of Spain. Preparations for the annual carnival in the provincial town of Boom are interrupted by a messenger of a Spanish duke giving notice of his impending arrival with the troops. The timid burgomaster and his aldermen, fearing plunder, rape, and murder, pretend the death of the burgomaster, trusting that the Spaniard's respect for a village in mourning will make him seek other shelter. But their wives take matters into their own hands. The burgomaster's wife (beautifully played by director Feyder's wife, Francoise Rosay) organizes the women of the town to give the Spaniards such a welcome as will save Boom from fire and sword—and which pretty well erases the "iv" from "carnival."

Every scene—especially the long shots containing an enormous amount of detail—is handled with precision and finesse. Feyder has caught the essence of that period of the Renaissance. Many of the scenes are reminiscent of a Peter Breughel canvas in more ways than one. It would be difficult to underestimate the quality of the director's work.

This initial program at the Filmarte was further distinguished by the presentation of America's first professional labor sound film, Millions of Us. It is the first offering of a group of film workers in Hollywood under the name of American Labor Films, Inc. It is equally significant that this militant plea for organized labor should come from people in an industry that has contributed so much to antilabor propaganda. In two reels it tells the story of an unemployed young man who is prevented from becoming a scab by a union organizer. From a mechanical point of view the film has the best Hollywood can offer. The main defects lie in the direction and the scenario. But those are minor faults at this time . . . for it states its message clearly, simply, and with eloquence. The film contains the famous quotation from Lincoln on the revolutionary right of Americans to overthrow the government when it no longer serves them. And it is amazing to hear Lincoln hissed and booed by some in the audience. The censors wanted to ban the film because of the Lincoln quotation. But when they learned that it was from the first inaugural address (those distinguished censors of ours, under the guidance of the University of the State of New York, had to be told) they were compelled to give Millions of Us a free passport. It is a film that deserves the fullest support. Only audience response will insure the continuance of such films. The management early this week, however, apparently in response to pressure from enemies of labor, decided to cut this picture from the program. But the hisses that the silk-stocking crowd gave Lincoln in the first few days were nothing to the applause of the later audiences. Insistent demands from potential audiences should be able to put it back on view. PETER ELLIS.

*

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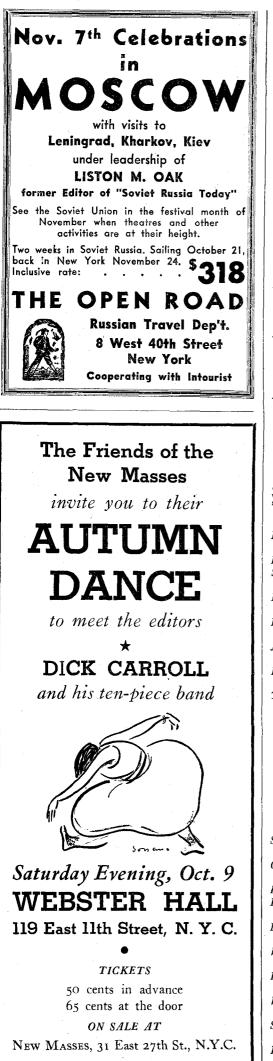
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played with lots of imagination on Victor 25398. Henry Allen, Jr., and His Orchestra. A great Negro trumpet player with some other talented musicians give us "When Did You Leave Heaven?" and "Algiers Stomp" (Vocalion 3302).

CLASSICAL

- Mozart. Huberman and the Vienna Philharmonic under Issay Dobrowen give a new rendition of the G major violin concerto (Columbia Masterworks Album 258).
- Schubert. Schnabel and members of the Pro Arte String Quartet, assisted by Alfred Hobday on the string bass, play the "Trout" quintet (Victor Masterpiece Album 312).
- Beethoven. Egon Petri's American recording debut in the C minor sonata, Opus 3, proves a notable success, including the authentic reproduction of piano tone (Columbia Masterworks Album 263).
- Brahms. The Pro Arte Quartet, plus Anthony Pini as second 'cello and Hobday playing the bass, in a distinguished performance of the rarely heard sextet for strings (Victor Masterpiece Album 296).
- Bach. A sound interpretation of the Twelve Small Preludes, arranged for harpsichord, by that outstanding practitioner, Yella Pessl (Columbia 170634).

The Radio

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups. Readers are asked to report at once any anti-working-class bias expressed by any of these artists or their spon-sors.)

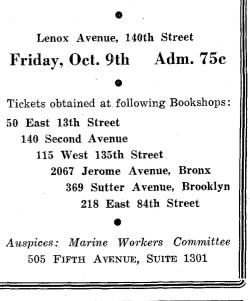
FORTHCOMING BROADCASTS

Norman Thomas, Thurs., Oct. 1, 10:45 p.m., Columbia.

- Earl Browder, Fri., Oct. 2, 10:45 p.m., N.B.C. Sherwood Anderson and Amelia Earhart, Fri., Oct. 2, 3 p.m., Columbia.
- Notre Dame vs. Carnegie Tech, Ted Husing at the mike, Sat., Oct. 3, abor 3:30 p.m., Columbia.
- Raymond L. Buell, Foreig. Policy Assn., speaking from Geneva, Sun., Oct. 1:30 p.m., Columbia. John Erskine on "The Lively Arts," Sun., Oct. 4,
- 10:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.
- Dr. J. P. Warbasse, president of the Coöperative League, Thurs., Oct. 8, 3:30 p.m., Columbia. Theater Collective. A series of four special weekly
- programs sponsored by the International Workers Order, supplemented by the I.W.O. symphony and mandolin orchestras. Thursdays, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22; WMCA, N.Y., 9:45 p.m.; WCFL, Chicago, 8:30 p.m.; WIP, Philadelphia, 9:30 p.m.; KQV, Pittsburgh, 9:15 p.m. Fridays, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23; WJBK, Detroit, 9 p.m.; WHK, Cleveland, 10:30 p.m.

REGULAR FEATURES

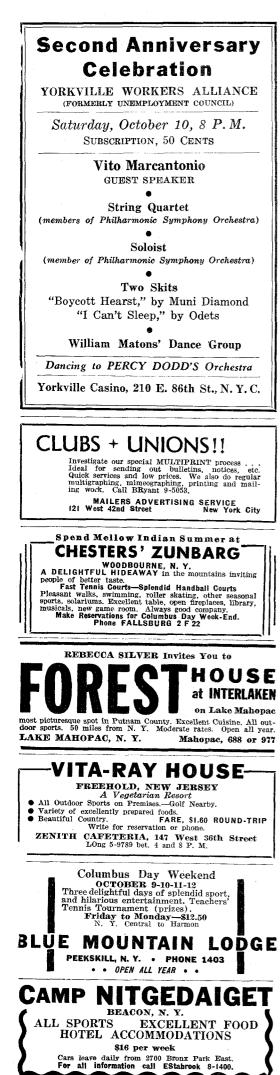
- Seattle Symphony Orchestra, with Cameron conducting, Thursdays at 8 p.m., Columbia.
- Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Barlow conducting. Sundays at 3 p.m., Columbia.
- Bruna Castagna. Saturdays at 9 p.m., Columbia.
- Fred Astaire and Johnny Green's Orchestra. Tues-days at 9:30 p.m., N.B.C. red.
- Rudy Vallée's Varieties. Thursdays at 8 p.m., N.B.C. blue.
- Waring's Pennsylvanians, Fridays at 9 p.m., N.B.C. blue.
- Burns and Allen. Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m., Columbia.
- Willie and Eugene Howard. Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.
- Stoopnagle and Budd. Wednesdays at 9 p.m., N.B.C. red.
- Raymond Gram Swing, commenting on international affairs, Fridays at 9 p.m., Mutual.





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The Theater THUMBS UP

- Boy Meets Girl (Cort, N. Y.). Sam and Bella Spewack write about the Hollywood cuckoos. Dead End (Belasco, N. Y.). New York's slum kids
- realistically treated by Sidney Kingsley. Gilbert & Sullivan (Martin Beck, N. Y.). The Ru-
- pert D'Oyly Carte company in superlative production of the Savoy operettas. Pinafore, which will continue through Saturday, Oct. 3, will be followed by a week's run of Patience.

The Horse Eats Hat (Maxine Elliott, N. Y.). Federal Theater Project adapts the French farce you may have seen as the René Clair film The Horse Ate the Hat. Hair-raising hilarity.

- Idiot's Delight (Shubert, N. Y.). Robert Sherwood's
- anti-war comedy, with Lunt and Fontanne. Injunction Granted! (Biltmore, N. Y.). The Living Newspaper W.P.A. project in an episodic history of American labor struggles.
- On Your Toes (Imperial, N. Y.). Rodgers and Hart songs, plus Ray Bolger and Tamara Geva.
- The Path of Flowers (Daly's N. Y.). Valentine Katayev's Soviet social satire in an amusing production by the W.P.A. Experimental Theater.

FAIR AND COOLER

So Proudly We Hail (46th Street Theater, N. Y.). A bitter anti-military training, anti-war, antifascist play by Joseph Viertel, who knows what he's talking about.

The Screen WORTH SEEING

- My Man Godfrey. William Powell and Carole Lombard in a slick amusing picture.
- Dodsworth. Sinclair Lewis's story pretty well done. Reviewed in this issue.
- La Kermesse Héroique (Filmarte, 202 W. 58, N. Y.). This film won the Grand Prix du Cinema in France and is funny besides. A swell labor short, Millions of Us, opened on the same program. Reviewed in this issue.
- Sing Baby Sing. Those vaudevillians, the Ritz brothers, make this one of the funniest films in months.
- The General Died at Dawn. Clifford Odets's first screen play, with Gary Cooper and Madeleine Carroll.
- Der Kampf. A new Amkino offering at the Cameo, N. Y., picturing Dimitrov's trial by the Nazis, with Dimitrov and Henri Barbusse as themselves.
- Swing Time. Dancing by You Know Who and comedy by Helen Broderick and Victor Moore save a dull story.
- Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare again turns out to to be a great playwright.
- The Great Ziegfeld. Full of a variety of things that make it worth while.
- La Maternelle (55th Street Playhouse, N. Y.). A revival of the fine French film of the childmother relationship.

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- Walker Galleries, 108 E. 57th St., N. Y. Municipal Art Committee. Exhibition of works of New York artists at the temporary gallery of
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HERE AND THERE

Japanese Art. A special loan exhibition is on view at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

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N. H. Italian Primitives. The Jarves collection is on view at the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts, New Haven, Conn.

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(from the index of "Imperial Hearst")

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