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architects. As Carver then says to  
Graves:

*They are leading us. We can forget  
—that years  
Were broken into blocks of days. We  
shall see  
Monoliths of time—and the hours sing-  
ing.*

Stanley Burnshaw's remarkable poetic  
drama *The Bridge* is itself a mono-  
lith and a guidepost pointing to tomor-  
row when men may be both dreamers  
and workers. It is to be hoped that it  
will find a theater worthy of its theme,  
and actors worthy of its characters.

HAROLD PREECE.

# "GIRL No. 217"

"GIRL No. 217," the current  
Soviet film at the Stanley, is  
a motion picture for adults.  
It is as carefully planned a film as we  
have seen in many a day; each scene  
contributes to the total significance of  
the whole. There is no waste dialogue,  
no parts tailored to fit popular taste.  
While some may argue that *Girl No.*  
*217* does not rank with the very top  
Soviet classics, no one can deny that,  
by the sound and skillful blending of  
its component parts—writing, acting,  
directing, decor, music, etc.—this film  
represents movie-making at its best.

*Girl No. 217* is one of the thousands  
of captured civilians taken into bondage  
by the Nazis. Through their sufferings  
the film reflects the degradation of the  
average German civilian. For examples  
of Germans the producers have chosen  
"ordinary" representatives of Hitler's  
civilization: a grocer, his wife, his  
blonde, prurient daughter, her crippled  
suitor. Self-deformed by their faith in  
the shibboleth of Nordic supremacy, the  
Germans examine the offered slaves by  
poking them with umbrella and cane.  
In a later scene, the arrant stupidity and  
arrogance of the family is brilliantly  
fixed when the *water* discovers, to his  
amazement, that the Russian girl is  
capable of following simple instructions  
around the kitchen.

The systematic brutalization to  
which these erstwhile human beings  
have been subjected is obvious in their  
every act. Not necessarily members of  
the Nazi party (there is not a single  
*heil* throughout the film), these burgher  
types inflict the most inhuman tortures  
upon their prisoners. There is no discern-  
ible spark of decency left in them. Each  
reveals his corruption in terms of his  
own interests: to the crippled suitor,  
the daughter's prospective dowry is  
more important than the daughter  
herself; the father's greed triumphs  
over any feeling for his daughter's hap-  
piness or his son's life; the mother,  
whose matronly appearance is at star-

ting odds with her relish of evil, treats  
her slave with all the insensate equa-  
nimity of a Brownshirt torturer.

As dramatic foil to the Germans  
there are the Russians, who are re-  
solved to survive, as the Germans are  
resolved that they shall perish. Their  
anguish is epic in its martyr-like in-  
tensity. But here is no submissive  
martyrdom. The prisoners resist by  
every device at their command; they  
hoard bread crumbs against the day  
when they can escape. They finally  
bring release for themselves and the  
audience—by killing the grocer's son  
and his SS friend, who are on leave  
from the front.

There are many beautifully built up  
scenes throughout the film. In particu-  
lar, the scene of the family wrangling  
over a pot of money that the grocer had  
cached away is touched with genius.  
The acting, directing, dialogue and  
photography are integrated to produce  
a feeling of realism that is overwhelm-  
ing. Mikhail Romm, one of the Soviet  
masters, has helped write and has di-  
rected the film with a continual aware-  
ness of its purposes. Even the furniture  
and the props are used to build the  
characters of the German-impersonat-  
ing actors. At one point, the introduc-  
tion of a toy chamber pot, as a mustard  
holder, and the uncontrolled ribaldry  
with which this object is greeted,  
defines the vulgarity of the Germans as  
no dialogue could. The music score by  
Khatchaturian, young Armenian com-  
poser beautifully points up the meaning  
of the film. The sequence in which  
Tanya is confined to a solitary cell, too  
small for her to sit down in, is given  
almost its complete feeling by the music.  
The banging of the guard to keep her  
awake becomes a volcano of nerve-  
wracking sound, a torture to her pain-  
gripped body and mind. The score also  
invests the final moments of the film,  
where she stabs the Nazi soldiers, with  
a Hamlet-like quality of drama, and  
reveals what she must feel as she makes

ner way through the dark house. The acting, of course, is equal to the subject matter, and it is difficult to pick one member of the cast over any other.

*Girl No. 217* pulls no punches. It is tough and honest, and I would like to see Hollywood handle subjects equally important to us in the same manner.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

## The Navy's Orchestras

Washington

THERE has been some mild criticism of the armed forces in this country to the effect that they neglect the intellectual and esthetic needs of their soldiers and sailors. The reply from the military is an equally mild smile; unresentful, a little amused, and much too busy to even think about so ephemeral and untraditional a matter. But there always seem to be a few scattered officers, high enough to matter, who have progressive ideas which they put unostentatiously into practice where they may. The mental and artistic goods which the US Army and Navy have provided have actually been considerable. Among them are two symphony orchestras established by the Navy here in Washington. And good ones.

The personnel for these orchestras is drawn from the Navy and Marine bands stationed in the Capital. Every service man knows that the life of a bandsman is not all peaches and cream, as civilians are sometimes apt to think. They work hard and long, often play under appalling conditions, always have to be spick and span and they have other military duties heaped on them to keep them occupied the rest of the time.

Both bands have their associate orchestras, conducted by their band-leaders; and cymbal and drum players change to violin and harp for regular rehearsals and concerts. The orchestras thus have a nucleus of seasoned bandsmen with three or four "hash-marks" on their arms. But added to this is a large number of orchestra men who have entered the Navy and Marine bands from all the major orchestras in the country, and the result is that the personnel of these groups is topnotch. The loss to our famous orchestras, and it is quite audible to the experienced ear, is the Army and Navy's gain. The Army is still too matter-of-fact to employ musicians as musicians, but the Navy's policy of specialization, of placing every man where he best functions, has led to pleasure for all concerned.

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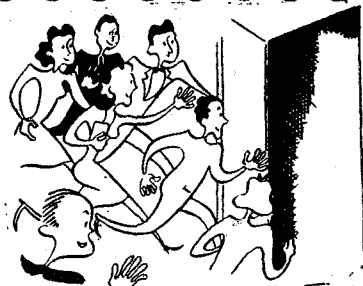
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