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Produced by JOE PASTERNAK
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BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

The River Around Us

THE happiest event of the year is the return of Circle-in-the-Square. After settling licensing difficulties with the New York City Fire Department, this "cabaret" has miraculously picked up right where it left off after "Summer and Smoke," "The Grass Harp," and "The Girl on the Via Flaminia." The new production is "The King and the Duke," Francis Fergusson's 1939 salute to Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn." Under Jose Quintero's direction and with some rich lyrical musical atmosphere composed by G. Wood, this minstrel melodrama has become a full canvas of the joy and the sadness, the humor and wonder of life along the Mississippi. The plot, while it provides token suspense, is secondary to the play's primary purpose of recreating the pure-hearted child's view of adult life as that view fights for survival in a world that takes advantage of it.

To Huck Finn and the simple-souled Jim floating downstream on a raft the events along the banks at a distance seem exciting, but threaten their security. Suddenly the tranquility of their voyage is disturbed by two rascals who board their craft uninvited. While these scoundrels, who pretend to be a king and a duke in order to command subservience, lead Huck into great danger, they also bring him adventure and the love of Mary Jane, of whom, he says rapturously, "she has more sand in her than any girl I ever see." And after the rush of events is over and the raft is peaceful again we are conscious of life's ineluctable journey from innocence into complication.

The acting of a large cast of relative unknowns lives up to remarkably high standards. Each actor appears totally and genuinely involved with no individual virtuosity catered to. Almost all the action comes out of the life of the story rather than out of a director's preconceived notions.

As for individuals, Ralph Williams's Huck is wonderfully free of cuteness, John Armstrong's King is a properly bizarre yet always believable portrait of bogusness, and Patsy Bruder's Mary Jane is a combination of ladylike manners and youthful enthusiasm. G. Wood proves the poor man's Noel Coward, as he supplements his composing chores by playing Deacon Lot Hovey with humor

and authority. William Hook's cake-walking dances are full of genuine pleasure rather than the phoney and superficial glee that usually attends such doings. Keith Cuerden and Jan Marasek have likewise combined to provide simple selective scenery and moody lighting that give the feeling of vast Mississippi stretches.

The one dilemma that Jose Quintero's masterpiece of direction does run into is, perhaps, that in the achievement of so much truth and beauty there has been a loss of punctuated impact and pace. Possibly this dilemma, which has been apparent in most of Mr. Quintero's work, will be eventually resolved through the further evolution of this young art theatre. But whether it is or not, "The King and the Duke" is right now a marvelous theatre evening. Not only is it pleasant, original, and rewarding, but it serves to remind us that New York has one theatre group with a unity of approach and a complete integrity of production.

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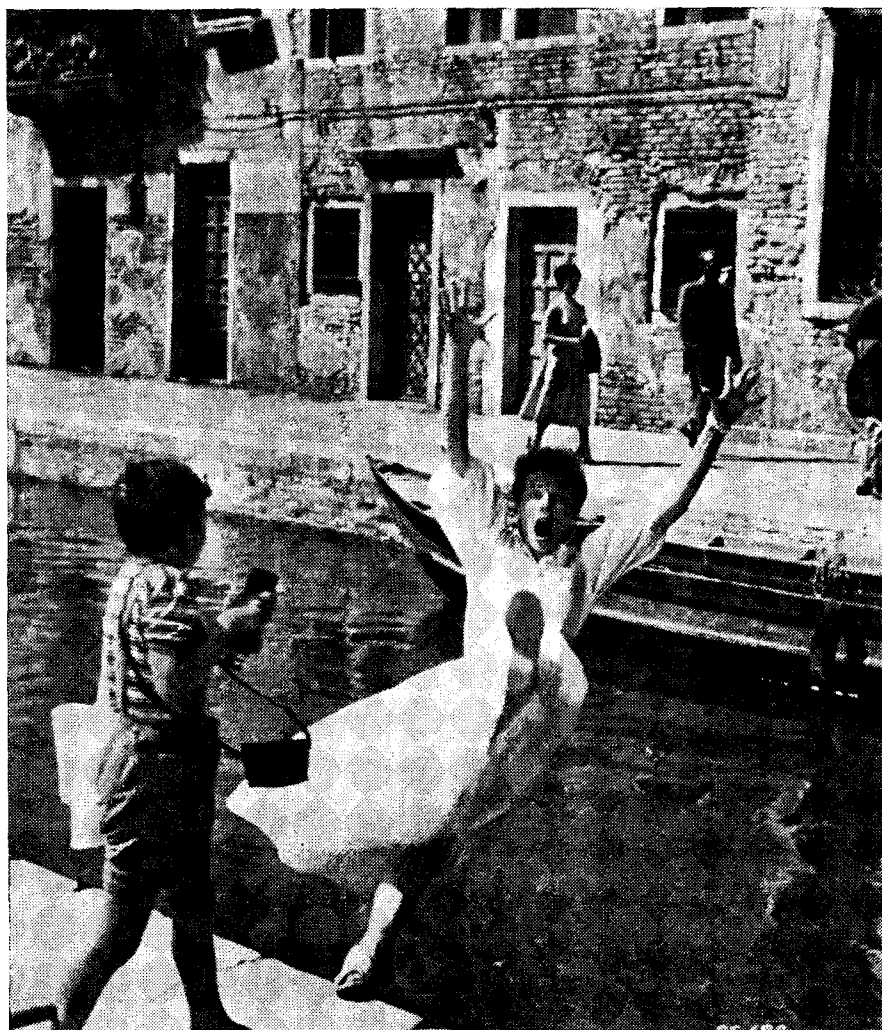
There is also a kind of integrity about non-commercial ventures such as the Rockland Foundation's production of "The Long Way" at Nyack. This stage-piece by William Engvick with music by Alec Wilder also concerns the problems of growing up. In this case a thirteen-year-old girl undergoes a series of imaginary disillusionments to realize that what is real in life is preferable to daydreaming, and that what is remembered is important. These disillusionments are mainly comic, with the little girl projecting herself into replacing a gun moll and a movie star.

The score is lovely. June Ericson, who plays young Martha, comes across as an exciting and distinguished new stage personality as she plucks adolescence by the nose. Yet the inventiveness and the beauty of the work are often wasted because of the author's failure to find a form and stick to it. Sometimes it seems a parallel to "Little Red Riding Hood," sometimes it swells into full opera, and sometimes it becomes pure satire. And since the play's revelations are mostly for Martha, the audience tends to be more amused and charmed than really involved. "The Long Way" has plenty of makings but not enough wrappings.

—HENRY HEWES.



One Touch of Venice



—From "Summertime."

"... the art of Hepburn and the architecture of incredible Venice."

THE ORIGIN of Venice dates from the invasion of the barbarians," states the guidebook "How to Visit Venice and Its Neighborhood," published by Cesare Cappello of Milan. The great migrations of the savages forced the Venetians off the mainland and onto the islands of the lagoons, where they built their astonishing city. That influx, however, appears to have been minor compared to the invasion of Venice which I was privileged to witness early this summer.

They stream through the Mondrian front of Venice's railroad station, exclaim over the delightful circumstance that it is necessary to travel to the hotel in a boat, decide that the mantel at home requires a pair of the

brass sea-horses that ride the gun-wales of the black gondolas. Thirty minutes after they are checked in at the hotel you will see them in San Marco Piazza, feeding unbelievable hordes of pigeons. There are the retired people—the women in flowered prints, the men in berets—there are the youth hostel groups in khaki shorts, and there are the hostile youth groups who want to see the bar where Hemingway drank the "Montgomer-ies," even though they hated the book.

Almost inevitably, the stampede of arrivals has recently included a motion-picture unit (come to film a story about a more-or-less typical tourist) and press people (come to see the premiere of the finished product). It is pleasant to report that the Amer-

ican film's passion for real Italian exteriors has produced a film which is a sort of travelogue-with-drama about the city of splendor and century-aged grace. It is called "Summertime," the Ilya Lopert-David Lean mounting of Arthur Laurents's play "Time of the Cuckoo."

Katharine Hepburn arrives in Venice, alone except for 16mm movie camera and the lady traveler's mail-pouch carryall bag. After she exposes several hundred feet of Kodachrome on the city's postcard views we come right down to the fact that she is alone. In truth, she has been alone all her life, but there is an added measure of desperation that comes from being alone in this city of enchantment.

Enter Rossano Brazzi, a merchant of Venice who has not permitted frequent parenthood to dim his romantic heart. Brazzi is an elegant, well-spoken Continental man, and any lady tourist who did not relish a go with him should turn in her exposure-meter. After some heartbreaking hesitation in the preliminaries, conducted at Florian's, the first cafe of the Western world, Hepburn surrenders. There is a trip to Murano on gossamer wings. But, alas, it can never be, this symbolized by the fact that when he gives her a gardenia it falls into the canal. Hepburn goes home. Brazzi, for some reason not explained, misses her at the railroad station and has to sprint sixty yards up the platform for one last despairing look. As S. J. Perelman said in another context, it shouldn't happen to a Doge.

AS A movie "Summertime" does what movies were supposed to do when Edison first invented the darn things. It brings to you through the magic of the camera all the glory of a famous city thousands of miles away.

For many years in the history of film production the foreign scenes have been shot by "second unit" cameramen, and the visits of the stars simulated by such devices as the rear-projection of backgrounds and the extraordinarily skillful fakery of the Hollywood craftsmen. As film-goers we have become accustomed to seeing the peculiarly stiff walk of an actor pacing an unseen treadmill while the panorama of Piccadilly Square unreels a bit mistily on the process screen behind. We have come to accept such conventions as the rear view of a slightly bowlegged stand-in wearing Grace Kelly's hat and coat and waving goodbye to Bill Holden's aircraft carrier from a Tokyo pier. Such tricks achieve needful economies, and they often work no hardship on the dramatic content of the film story, but they do cheat us of the real views