

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

ROCK HUDSON DORIS DAY TONY RANDALL "LOVER COME BACK"

Co-starring
EDIE ADAMS
JACK OAKIE • JACK KRUSCHEN

Directed by Delbert Mann
Produced by Stanley Shapiro
and Martin Melcher
Executive Producer Robert Arthur
From Universal-International in Color



ON THE GREAT STAGE

"TO THE ARTS"—Extraordinary
extravaganza featuring lavish
music spectacle with piano ensemble,
famed Rockettes, Corps de
Ballet with brilliant soloists, special-
ty acts and Symphony Or-
chestra

the review of
POPULAR



ASTRONOMY

is there a stargazer in the house?

Probably so, because they're turning up everywhere these days! Many thousands of people each year discover the fascinating world of amateur astronomy . . . and they're also discovering that there's no better guide for the beginner with binoculars or small telescopes than THE REVIEW OF POPULAR ASTRONOMY. Literally designed to "bring the stars down to earth", the bimonthly magazine POPULAR ASTRONOMY tells the amateur . . . the beginner . . . the young student . . . and the intelligent layman . . . just what he needs to know to enjoy the excitement and stimulation of this challenging pastime.

TYPICAL CONTENTS INCLUDE:

- Authoritative articles by prominent astronomers
- Clear and accurate star and planet charts for each month
- Features on telescopes and telescope making
- Guide to objects best-suited for modest instruments
- Historical pieces on famous astronomers and observatories
- Department on astrophotography
- Complete schedule of celestial events for each month

Changing Times recently wrote: "Well and simply written . . . a useful guide for the beginner, giving ideas of what equipment he can use and what he can look at in various parts of the sky."

**Special
bonus
offer!**

Subscribe now and receive first two issues FREE! Just send \$3.00 for a regular one-year subscription and receive POPULAR ASTRONOMY every two months for 16 months. If you are not completely satisfied with the magazine after receiving your first two issues, your money will be completely refunded immediately. Or—send 50¢ for a copy of the current issue.

THE REVIEW OF POPULAR ASTRONOMY
Sky Map Publications, Inc.
P.O. 231-B, St. Louis 5, Missouri



SR GOES TO THE MOVIES

The New Roger Corman

IN THE seven years that young Roger Corman has been producing, directing, or producing and directing movies, he has turned out more pictures than most men do in a lifetime—upwards of sixty films. Few have been memorable, but at the same time few have failed to make money. His current hit is the horror picture, "The Pit and the Pendulum," which seems to be heading for a \$2,000,000 gross. Not surprisingly, Corman has three more Poe stories in the works. At thirty-four, he prides himself on his knowledge of the market, his ability to cut corners and to turn out pictures quickly. One of his films, he recently confessed, he shot in the incredibly short space of two days and the better part of a night—a record that even the television people might envy.

Now, however, with "The Intruder," Corman has taken the plunge himself. He has abandoned his vampires, his monsters from the ocean floor, his drag-strip girls, and his Apache women to take a hard look at the American scene, and at a monster inspired by real life. John Kasper, the arch-segregationist whose rabble-rousing activities made headlines in 1957, was the prototype of the title character in Charles Beaumont's angry novel. Corman bought the book knowing it had been turned down by every major studio in Hollywood, and commissioned Beaumont himself to turn it into a screenplay. Then began a fruitless search for a "name" star willing to play the leading role. This corrupt and corrupting bigot, with his disarming smile and his hate-mongering harangues, would seem to be an actor's dream; but star after star found reason to twinkle out. Without a "name," Corman was forced to scale down his budget and pull in his belt. Accompanied by Beaumont, who plays a small role in the picture, he set out for segregationist territory.

Much of the strength of the film comes from the fact that it was shot entirely on location, with the townspeople all too willingly playing themselves on the screen. No studio set can quite convey the sun-drenched torpor and shabby meanness of a small Southern city, or the squalor of "nigger-town," or the sense of latent violence that throbs behind the fly-specked windows and flaking clapboard façades of such a community. Nor can Hollywood extras, fast becoming as familiar as the stars themselves, assume the air of close-

minded, simple-minded provincialism that is engraved on the faces we glimpse in the pool halls, on the streets, and in the mob scenes of this picture. Corman reported that during rehearsals of a particularly inflammatory speech, several of his extras shouted, "That's right!"

It is not too surprising that they were swayed by William Shatner's performance. As the Kasper character, fomenting race hatred for his own personal aggrandizement, he is enormously persuasive, able to switch at will from a boyish charm to a fiendish delight in the infliction of cruelty. This portrait of a slick, sick, power-hungry demagogue is not quickly forgotten. Excellent support comes from Leo Gordon and Jeanne Cooper as the couple who ultimately bring about his downfall; and from Charles Barnes as the Negro youth whose near-lynching climaxes the film. If not all the performances are up to this level, if some of the writing seems forced and melodramatic, the real people and its real settings serve as a constant reminder that this is no charade. The Kaspers exist—and there is nothing in the film to suggest that, defeated in this one community, he is not even now spreading his poison somewhere else.

To the admirers of "Shadows," John Casavetes's second film, "Too Late Blues," can only come as a disappointment. Although many scenes have an air of improvisation, it is improvisation on a too-familiar theme—the jazz musician who breaks with his friends, goes commercial, then returns repentant to "real" music. And the girl. Unfortunately, as portrayed by Bobby Darin, there is nothing to suggest that "Ghost" has any special talents—or, in fact, that there is any special reason why we should care one way or the other what becomes of him. More interesting is the girl, well played by Stella Stevens—a "no talent kid" pathetically eager to break into show business. But just as her character begins to come alive, the story line veers away from her to follow the flaccid "Ghost." Meanwhile, behind the chatter, some of the nation's top jazz men—Shelly Manne, Red Mitchell, Benny Carter, Jimmy Rowles—are tootling away semiaudibly on some of the most inventive and melodic music written for films. If I were improvising "Too Late Blues," I would tune down the conversation, and let David Raksin's score take over.

—ARTHUR KNIGHT.

The Day They Did It

SCIENCE fiction movies have threatened our world with extinction from a variety of causes; there have been things from outer space, strange blobs, and magnetic monsters; but in the end the earth has managed to survive. Less optimistic, though, is "The Day the Earth Caught Fire," a new such film from England. Its premise is, however, so close to prevalent and widespread fears and worries that it is not so much science fiction as it is a dramatic and imaginative extension of the news. A collaborative effort on the part of Wolf Mankowitz, the writer, and Val Guest, who directed (they are also known for "Expresso Bongo"), the film is a vision of doomsday as it might appear from the vantage point of Fleet Street, and much of it takes place, in fact, in the very offices of the London *Daily Express*.

There have been some climatic changes, we learn first, in England's traditional weather pattern. Unseasonably hot days have roasted London, and a curious dense mist rolls up the Thames, not at all like the usual fog. At the same time the Sahara is having rain, Russia tornadoes, and New York is getting blizzards. All this makes news for the *Daily Express*. A reporter, played capably by a new young actor, Edward Judd, stumbles across some odd facts in the Air Ministry; a science editor adds together some disparate items and comes up with a startling supposition.

It seems the Russians and the Americans have set off huge test bombs at opposite ends of the earth at the same moment. "This time," the science editor (Leo McKern) says, awed by the magnitude of the accident and the story, "they've really done it!" What have they done? They have knocked the earth off its axis. Clever enough up to this point, but Mankowitz and Guest have more up their sleeves. London not only continues to roast, but a massive water shortage looms. Hijacking water gangs operate, and there's a brisk black market trade in the valuable stuff. Public baths are built in Hyde Park, and some of the desperate bathers try to steal a few drops. They are stopped, naturally, for water is public, not private.

The prime minister goes on radio and TV to deliver the usual platitudinous phrases—"All efforts are being made . . .," "We shall explore all ave-

nues . . ." But no matter how they dress it up, the news is always terrible, and grows worse. At the *Express* the staff carries on. Almost hourly conferences are held, presided over by the editor, who is in constant telephonic communication with someone like Lord Beaverbrook. The latter would like more hope and less gloom on the front page.

The editor, by the way, looks and sounds like the real thing. And he is, or at least he was. He is played by Arthur Christiansen, who recently retired from his job after nearly twenty-five years with the *Daily Express* (his journalistic adventures during those years are recorded in his book, "Headlines All My Life," reviewed on page 55). He served as technical advisor on the film, too, which helps account for the thoroughly realistic newspaper office atmosphere. And, incidentally, we get some idea of how the *Express* was built up to be one of the largest circulation newspapers in the world.

It is eventually left to the Russians, those leaders in science, to make the most paralyzing discovery of all, one so cataclysmic in its implications that there is little left for the governments of the world to do but make the gloomy possibilities known to the people, who were of course not consulted when the bombs were set off in the first place. There are some odd reactions, the most interesting of which concerns the behavior of teen-agers. With nothing presumably left to work for, train for, or live for, they go on binges, orgiastic in nature, wasting what water is left, marching noisily through the streets of nighttime London to the bizarre accompaniment of a beatnik band, pushing over cars, adding a grim aimlessness to the city's terror. And is there any hope for the earth? Mankowitz and Guest provide one of a very chancy sort, ironically again involving the use of atomic energy. It wouldn't be fair to reveal it here.

Beyond the fact that "The Day the Earth Caught Fire" is a model of expert moviemaking, continually and excruciatingly suspenseful, with even a love story that is not too hard to take amid the apocalyptic events, it has hard good sense at its base. I lack the knowledge to determine whether the premise is scientifically tenable, but whether it is or not, it is an apt symbol of the wanton destructiveness known as "test-

ing," done in the interests of "national security." As though there's any such thing as *national* security these days. The movie achieves its impact because it was made not merely to entertain, but out of a sense of outrage. It will be compared to "On the Beach." Good as that one was, "The Day the Earth Caught Fire" is better. It is crisply written and acted, always absorbing, and makes no bones about what it has to say.

IF comic relief is needed after "The Day the Earth Caught Fire," as well it might be, another English film, "Only Two Can Play," should do the job. Based on the Kingsley Amis novel, "That Uncertain Feeling," it keeps reasonably close to the original and provides, too, an outing for the inestimable Peter Sellers, here seen as a lowly librarian's assistant, whose intelligence is not matched by his income or position. Suited for better things, he must support a wife and daughter in a grubby Welsh flat, meanwhile obtaining what comfort he can from an inner life that is a kind of frustrated rake's progress.

A notable opportunity to match outer and inner life occurs for him when Mrs. Gruffydd-Williams (Mai Zetterling) enters his library one day in search of a book. She is the wife of the wealthy Gruffydd-Williams and leader of the local literary and dramatic set. Not only does she offer Sellers an open invitation to seduction, but she holds the key, through her influence over her husband, to the post of sub-librarian, which represents that needed step upward to several assistant librarians. At a party to which Sellers and his wife (Virginia Maskell) are invited, his lecherous tendencies are heavily encouraged by his hostess, the while Gareth Probert, playwright and Welsh poet, casts a wolfish eye at his wife. The lechery is more in intent and less in deed, for circumstances intervene that are a little too insane and complex to take the space to describe.

The romp moves along with a sure touch (that of director Sidney Gilliat) but it is not entirely farce. The young librarian's home scenes have believability and point, as well as a touch of pathos, and good dialogue manages to sketch in his discontent, as well as his wife's. He is an "angry," but a subdued one, educated, but without the opportunity to put the education to good use. Sellers makes him both funny and convincing. The novel, as I remember, petered out toward its close, and the movie has this flaw too, in that it never quite manages to find a suitable ending. But everything else about this comedy is quite suitable.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.