

'GREEN PASTURES,' BEAUTIFUL IN SIMPLICITY, IS IMPRESSIVE

Circle Shows Film Version of Fine Play

Adaptation Is Praised for
Excellent Direction and
Good Acting.

BY JOHN W. THOMPSON
Starting when the earth was nothing but a "mess of bad weather," Marc Connally's movie adaptation of "The Green Pastures" relates as impressive a sermon as we ever have heard.

But don't get the idea that Mr. Connally's fable is "preachy." It is grand entertainment, and is acted excellently by a large all-Negro cast. Although Rex Ingram's portrayal of De Lawd is not quite as convincing as the late Richard B. Harrison's interpretation, his characterization does not lack power.

"The Green Pastures" opens with a group of small pickaninnies at Sunday School down South. Their teacher, Mr. Deeshee, tells them Bible stories. Throughout the film, the camera returns momentarily to this little group, and lets one listen to naive questions asked by the youngsters.

Early scenes of the Negro fable depict a "wash day" in progress in Heaven. Every one is supremely happy, eating catfish sandwiches and "biled" custard, smoking 10-cent "see-gars." Gabriel approaches, horn in hand, shouts: "Gangway, for the Lawd God Jehovah!"

On walks the gentle, be-whiskered Divinity, clad in a long-tailed coat. He too sips custard, tucks a cigar in his pocket. But the custard lacks something. De Lawd decides it needs more Firmament. So he just "races back" and causes there to be more Firmament. Then there is too much Firmament and little angels' wings get damp, and it looks for a moment as though there might be a pneumonia epidemic in Heaven. So De Lawd just "races back" again and causes there to be earth and the sun, as a place to "dread" off excess Firmament.

Lord Has Trouble

That's the fable about the creation of the world, as it exists, or existed, in the minds of Southern Negroes. But once He has the earth, trouble starts for De Lawd. He creates Adam and Eve to live there, and their children kill each other. There is wickedness and sin all over the place. So De Lawd gives it up as a bad job, calls Noah from the flock, gives him his divine commission.

After 40 days and night life begins again on the earth. But the people backslide again. This time it's trouble in Egypt, where De Lawd's people are in bondage. He sends Moses and Aaron to liberate them, to lead them to the Land of Canaan. Things go pretty well for a while, but when night clubs open in Babylon and the High Priest puts religion on a business basis, De Lawd decides to refuse further responsibility for his creation.

Years later, He hears a voice calling to him from earth. He tries not to listen but finally is persuaded to help the young soldier who solicits His aid in restoring faith and love on earth. De Lawd enables the young man's warriors to win back the Ark of the Covenant in the battle of Jericho.

From Heaven, De Lawd hears cries of the crowd at the Crucifixion. He realizes that even God must suffer, and takes new hope in his poor child, the earth.

Mr. Connally and William Keighley directed the movie version of "The Green Pastures," with a finesse which exceeds even the fine stage production. Vivid, close-ups and swift changing from reality to fable and fantasy enables audiences to grasp easily the idea that the author did not try to re-write the Bible, but merely tried to represent the simple faith of the Negro.

Simplicity Observed

We wish to congratulate Warner Brothers for not going "Hollywood" in this production. The Heavenly gates, which might have been tall spires, glittering with pearls, are not that at all. They are the fine gates seen all through the South at entrances to fine mansions. The art of the finest gates as far as the play's characters are concerned, the same simplicity was observed throughout the picture.

There are many individual performances that merit praise. Chief among them is Eddie Anderson's Noah, which stands out as the best acting. Ernest Whitman's King Pharaoh also is convincing.

"Green Pastures" wouldn't be "Green Pastures" without music by the Hall Johnson choir. It's the loveliest music we've heard from the screen. Simple folk songs of the South were moulded into thrilling and sentimental ballads which fit the theme more nearly than any other background music the screen has employed. This probably is because music is a foundation for just such religion as described in "Green Pastures."

England banned the play because it was "sacrilegious"; Russia because it was "Godly." Persons who saw first showings of the picture yesterday at the Circle surely agree with us that at least two nations are wrong.

Harry Carey Signs

Harry Carey, Western star, has been signed to play an important role in Wesley Ruggles' new film, "With Banners Blowing."

AIR CONDITIONED COMFORT

LOEW'S

Are They Human?
Dolls That Walk—Talk
Love—and Kill!

DEVIL DOLL

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FATHER AND DAUGHTER RELAX



'The Devil Doll,' Newest of Horror Pictures, Is Full of Mystery and Surprises

Lionel Barrymore, Disguised as Woman, Plays Leading Role in Loew's Offering With Ease and Conviction; Photography Good.

What next? We've had zombies, Draculas, Kong and son, vampires, walking dead, and now we have the "Devil Doll" to make us look under our beds before retiring.

The "Devil Doll," playing at Loew's, stars Lionel Barrymore and is crammed intriguingly with all sorts of surprises and mysterious action. It is alive with sure-fire entertainment, for the most part well acted, and at the same time is a lot of hokum which won't stand up under much cross-examination.

More than a contribution to medical science, it is a contribution to motion picture science because technical production is more outstanding than plausibility of plot.

In "The Devil Doll," we have Paul Lavond, a Paris boy strongly committed to his Devil's Island prison for a crime he didn't commit, struggling through swamps in a successful escape. With him is Marcel, a mad scientist, also escaping from prison.

Learns Secret Process

At Marcel's home, Lavond meets Melita, Marcel's wife, who helps her husband show the newcomer how to reduce animals to one-sixth normal size and yet keep them alive. The only thing they can't do is to keep the brains intact, and the dogs respond only to other's words.

Many of the film's occurrences confirm such an assertion.

One of the most unpredictable

clan of workers in the industry is the scenario writing sect. The writers on the picture, "Girls' Dormitory," provided players with a long-remembered period of play when they put a large fair concession in the script.

Those in the cast, accustomed to 12 or more hours a day under torturing klieg lights, were well pleased

with the carnival scenes. For three solid days of nine hours each the actors and actresses, including 100 stock girls, tripped hilariously through "shots" on roller coasters, merry-go-rounds and Ferris wheels.

Retakes of certain scenes also provide unforeseen and sometimes comic complications.

Not long ago Jean Lang was informed she would have to appear in added sequences in a picture. The scenes to be taken had to match others filmed a month previously when she was suffering from a slight cold.

To recuperate the same huskiness of voice, Miss Lang spent an entire afternoon in a deserted canyon near Hollywood, singing and shouting until her throat was raw.

Large Sets Used

The method used in photographing humans, making them appear less than a foot high, is not entirely new. The process of super-imposing the figure upon the background has been used in many pictures. But it always is detectable. So M-G-M, at tremendous cost, utilized a huge sound stage, and built enormous sets, six times normal size, instead of super-imposing.

This presents normal actors and actresses simply and naturally against a background of, say, a dressing table six feet high, or a stool six feet high, or shows the girl jumping over a bedroom slipper five feet long.

Mr. Barrymore, impersonating an old lady, Mme. Mandelup, is excellent. His make-up, carriage and voice are convincing, even after audience knows what he is about. He must have received a great kick out of playing the role.

The juvenile roles are well portrayed by Maureen O'Sullivan and Frank Lawton. The late Henry B. Walthall is seen briefly as the mad scientist, Marcel.

Loew's second feature, "We Went to College," which stars Walter Abel, Una Merkel, Hugh Herbert and Charles Butterworth, is a comic tale about a group of alumni who go back for homecoming. It is well worth sitting through. (By J. W. T.)

Eleanor Has Double

Four-year-old Juanita Quigley is to Eleanor Powell's miniature dancing facsimile in "Born to Dance." Juanita is to do a Powell dance routine.

AMBASSADOR

"Show Boat," with Irene Dunn and Alan Jones. Also "Florinda Special" with Jack Cagin, Frances Drake.

OHIO

"The Moon's a-Hoppin'" with Margaret Sullavan and Henry Fonda. Also "Desert Gold."

DAISY

2540 W. Mich. St.
Double Feature
William Boyd

"CALL OF THE PRAIRIE"
"PRIDE OF THE MARINES"

Sun. Double Feature—Carol Lombard

"The Princess Comes Across"

"THE LAW IN HER HANDS"

DAIRY

2541 W. Mich. St.
Double Feature
Chester Morris

"THREE GODFATHERS"

"Treacherous Rides the Range"

Sun. Double Feature—Irene Dunn

"SHOW BOAT"

Joe E. Brown "SONS OF GUNS"

MECCA

2542 W. Mich. St.
Double Feature
Fred. Bartholomew

"LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY"

Sun. Double Feature—William Boyd

"BAR 20 RIDES AGAIN"

Gary Cooper—Jean Arthur

"MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN"

PARAMOUNT

2543 W. Mich. St.
Double Feature
Patricia Ellis

"BOULDER DAM"

Joan Perry "Mysterious ANGIE"

Sun. Double Feature—Sylvia Sidney

"The Trail of the Lonesome Pine"

"The Leathernecks Have Landed"

BIJOU

114 E. Washington St.
Double Feature
Edward Arnold

"SUTTER'S GOLD"

"SUNDOWN TRAIL"—Shorts

Sun. Double Feature—James Dunn

"DON'T GET PERSONAL"

"KENTUCKY BLUE STREAK"

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SOUTH SIDE

Fountain Square

Double Feature
Wendy Berry

James Stewart "SPEED"

"THE FIRST BABY"

Sun. Double Feature—Fred McMary

"The Princess Comes Across"

"THE KING STEPS OUT"

Sanders

At Fountain Square
Double Feature
Sethers

"YOU MAY BE NEXT"—

"THE BAR 20 RIDES AGAIN"

Sun. Double Feature—Frances Lee

"Madge Evans "Exclusive Story"

Wheeler—Woolsey "SILLY BILLIES"

Avalon

Fro. Church
Double Feature
Dick Foran

"SONG OF THE SADDLE"

Donald Woods "ROAD GANG"

Sun. Double Feature—Myles Loring

"DANGEROUS INTRIGUE"

Oriental

150 N. Meridian St.
Double Feature
Frances Farmer

"TOO MANY PARENTS"

Sun. Double Feature—Myrna Loy

"THE GARDEN MURDER CASE"

Sun. Double Feature—Frances Farmer

"CHARLIE CHAN AT THE CIRCUS"

Garfield

2545 W. Mich. St.
Double Feature
Ethel Hudson

"THE COUNTRY BEYOND"

"TOO MANY PARENTS"

Sun. Double Feature—Frances Farmer

"PETTICOAT FEVER"

"THE GARDEN MURDER CASE"

Sun. Double Feature—Al Jolson

"THE SINGING KID"

"BULLETS OR BALLOONS"

First Neighborhood Showings

SHOW BOAT ARTISTS FEATURE LYRIC BILL

BY RALPH NORMAN

Radio's summer doldrums are vaudeville patrons' good fortune. Scarcely a week goes by that the Lyric does not present on its stage one or more popular radio entertainers. Currently representing the air waves are Show Boat's Keller Sisters and Lynch, a harmonizing trio, two women and a man, who sing their own clever arrangements of popular tunes.

The Lyric show is a varied and above-average vaudeville bill together with the picture "The Crime of Dr. Forbes," starring Gloria Stuart and Robert Kent.

Acrobatic Act Daring

Opened with a daring, at times breath-taking acrobatic act by the Danwills, the stage offering is snappy and not too long. Also in the spotlight are the Brians, who present a really funny pantomime three comedians, Melba, Kirk and Howard, who mimic such personages as Hitler, Mussolini and Halle Stien with astonishing fidelity, and the Jans and Lynton dance review, which closes the show with artistic, rhythmic effects.

We feel that it is not too late to mention the Lyric's rhymed introduction of its vaudeville stunts. Borrowed, we suspect, from Horace Heids, who popularized rhymed announcements on the air, the idea adds to the enjoyment of the performances.

The "punch" in "The Crime of Dr. Forbes" comes in the last-minute turn of events, which we suspect, even the most astute mystery fans do not fowse. Accused of murdering his benefactor, Dr. Eric Godfrey (J. Edward Bromberg), Dr. Michael Forbes (Robert Kent) faces conviction when unexpected revelations free