

Play banned by Lord Chamberlain filmed with its New York cast SWEET 'SYMPATHY' HIDES THE FACTS

A FILM with an "X" certificate that is based on a play which was banned for public presentation by the Lord Chamberlain sounds tough stuff indeed. "Tea and Sympathy" is about a boy in an American school who is taunted with not being a "regular fellow." The handling of the story and its subject is so delicately done, however, that, in spite of the certificate, it can offend no one.

The boy, John Lee (John Kerr) likes books and classical music, knows how to cook and sew a button on a shirt, and refuses to have a crew cut. The other boys label him "sister-boy" and badger and torment him until he is so confused that he nearly kills himself. His house-master's wife (Deborah Kerr) is the only person to befriend him and believe in him — at the cost of her marriage and without realizing that her own husband (Leif Erickson) is as much in need of her help.

Deborah Kerr gives a very warm-hearted performance, although some of her dialogue is over-sentimental and indeed sometimes silly. From John Kerr (no relation) there is a very understanding portrait of the boy. Incidentally, these two are repeating the roles that they played when "Tea and Sympathy" was given on the New York stage.

Some of the failure of this picture to bring home truly its deep moral problem must be attributed to the wide-screen, full-colour treatment which it has been given by Hollywood. One feels that there was a story which would have been a fitted from the more intimate feeling of black and white, and the small screen.

The picture of a boy's school that the film presents is quite horrifying, as are all the aggressive students, concentrating so hard on being "regular guys."

This film version of Robert Anderson's play disguises the real issues of the matter so effectively that it hardly seems necessary for it to shield itself behind the "X" certificate.

★ ★ ★

JUVENILE charmer, Colin Petersen is back on the screen again and, complete with freckles, mischievous smile and a natural flair for acting, will undoubtedly claim many more admirers in addition to those who loved him in "Smiley," in the title role of "The Scamp." Colin will probably be the envy of a host of small boys as he succeeds in dodging the reprimands of the school and uncannily getting himself into every prank available. But the wild youngster will not be envied for his wretched home life. He is the motherless son of drunken Dawson (Terence Morgan) who cares little about Tod's upbringing or welfare.

Schoolmaster Stephen Leigh (Richard Attenborough) discovers Tod and fails for his winsome ways. But he is also horrified at the lad's slovenly home and lack of parental control. Stephen offers to care for Tod when Dawson goes abroad. At first resentful, Tod gradually responds to the kindnesses extended to him by Stephen and his doctor wife Barbara (Dorothy Alison).

All is well until Stephen is forced to thrash Tod. The boy runs amok and smashes shop windows. He is brought before the juvenile court and given another chance, partly because Dawson has returned with a new wife and promises a good home for his son.

But life for Tod reverts back to running the streets. His drunken father beats him unmercifully one night and, defending his step-mother, who

has sought to intervene, Tod slays his father with an ash-tray. He rushes hysterically to Stephen for help. The police trace Tod and he is asked to explain the circumstances of his father's death.

This film is simple and human. It combines laughter and tears. Nothing in it is far fetched. Many actors to-day would do well to study the talent of Colin Petersen. Jazz fans also watch out for the way the boy beats the drums. Perhaps in ten years time we shall see "Smiley" showing his prowess with the skins on the stage. He obviously has a natural aptitude for being a drummer as well as a first-class actor.

★ ★ ★
It is a little difficult to understand why "The Seven Thunders" was made, unless to give the new part young French actress, Anna Gaylor, her first starring role in a British picture. The story concerns two British soldiers and their efforts to escape from occupied France during the last war. But the film lacks action and authenticity. British studios have proved, many times, they can do better.

Stephen Boyd got off to an excellent start in the celluloid world when "The Man Who Never Was." His role in "Island in the Sun" was a waste of potential talent. And now his latest film offers little scope for a promising actor.

Boyd's Tony Wright seems completely devoid of life or acting ability and it is high time his golden locks were ruffled up a little.

Boyd and Wright arrive in Marseilles and we are led to assume they have escaped from an Italian P.O.W. camp. They hide out in a rambling tenement on instructions from the French Resistance Movement.

The town seethes with German troops, but this does not deter Boyd from nonchalantly stepping out and rescuing Anna Gaylor from a drunken Nazi. Confined to the precincts of the tenement and running short of cash, the P.O.W. suffer neither from starvation or the five o'clock shadow. Boyd passes his time happily with Anna Gaylor and Wright nips upstairs for tea with, believe it or not, Kathleen Harrison.

James Robertson Justice musters a few laughs in the wrong places as the war-time Bluebeard. Instead of helping refugees escape from France he offers them doped brandy, disposes of the bodies in his quick-lined cellar and then dies into their cash.

Final scenes of the dynamiting of the old Marseilles are quite effective in this otherwise slow and unconvincing film.

★ ★ ★

AMERICA, his "adopted" country, receives a satirical comment in Charles Chaplin's latest — and British-made film, "A King in New York." Behind the skill on commercial television there are some hard knocks for such as the Un-American Activities Committee. Into the mouth of his eleven-year-old son, Michael, who plays the part of a boy whose parents are being charged with contempt for not informing against their friends, Chaplin puts a long speech loaded with what are undoubtedly his own feelings on the committee.

All this may seem a little unnatural. For this is, in the comedy, a comedy, and a glorious comedy at that.

Chaplin may be 68, but the genius that has rocketed over 80 films to success and fame shows no signs of diminishing. Author, actor, director and music composer, Chaplin still does everything himself, and does it beautifully.

In "The King in New York" he is King Shadov, de-throned monarch of Estrovia, who arrives in New York to find that his Prime Minister (Jerry Desmond) has gone off with the funds of the Royal Treasury, on which he was relying for a hectic time. Completely broke,



As a result of running wild and smashing shop windows Tod (Colin Petersen) appears before the Juvenile Court. Schoolmaster Stephen Leigh (Richard Attenborough) tries to comfort the boy. A scene from the new British picture "The Scamp."

he meets television personality, Ann Kay (Dawn Addams), who makes him an overnight celebrity. Next step — and he is advertising whisky — and producing one of the funniest scenes in the whole film, when for the first time he tastes the stuff.

Lovely Dawn Addams — star of "Singing in the Rain," "The Moon in Blue," and "The Robe" — justifies her choice as the latest of Chaplin's leading ladies.

She gives a spirited, vivacious performance. Chaplin is still the screen's great comedian, even to those who are too young to have seen his masterpieces. Here, the tone of the film is entirely different, but there is still enough of the old Charlie left to recapture some of the spell.

★ ★ ★

WHEN Britain's theatre knight, Laurence Olivier, chose America's Queen of Sex, Marilyn Monroe, to be his leading lady there was a tremendous outcry on both sides of the Atlantic. It grew even louder when it was known that the story chosen for the film was Terence Rattigan's "The Sleeping Prince," which appeared in London some years ago.

"The resultant film however, 'The Prince and the Showgirl,'"



Lovely Deborah Kerr as she appears in the new M.G.M. film "Tea and Sympathy" with John Kerr and Leif Erickson



Sympathy for schoolboy Tom Lee (John Kerr) from housemaster's wife Laura Reynolds (Deborah Kerr) when Tom runs away after being tormented by his school friends. A scene from "Tea and Sympathy," the new M.G.M. film in CinemaScope and colour.

should silence all those critics who said that the teaming of Olivier and Monroe would not work. No longer merely a very seductively sparkling performance, she shows quite a talent for comedy.

Her showgirl, Elsie Marina, who, in a coronation-celebrating London finds herself the guest — and the only guest — of a Grand Duke at the Carpathian Embassy, is a deliciously sparkling performance. A talent and wit is revealed that in "How to Succeed in Business and 'Bus Stop'" was only hinted at.

Olivier, of course, is very polished as the Carpathian Grand Duke who, though wealthy and powerful, is extremely lonely. Jeremy Spencer plays his young son, King Nicholas, whose disagreements with his father over the running of their country introduce a background of politics to the romance with Elsie.

★ ★ ★

SOME years ago we saw James Cagney in his first musical, "Yankee Doodle Dandy." He then showed his versatility for doing a few soft-shoe-shuffles and putting over some rousing songs. Universal-International have now cast Cagney in their golden jubilee film "Man of a Thousand Faces."

This is the life story of silent film star Lon Chaney and once again Cagney leaves his gangster roles to tap his nimble feet in the first few scenes. Lon Chaney was of course famous for his ability to transform himself into any given character — clown, pirate, etc. — all with the aid of his small make-up box.

Cagney is first seen as the young clown, miming and dancing his way to more serious roles and eventually stardom at Quasidimo in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

Chaney was one of three normal children born to parents who were deaf and dumb. Cagney, however, is not too convincing when it comes to talking to his parents with his hands.

Trouble with his first wife, Cleve (Dorothy Malone) comes with the expected arrival of their first child. Cleve is afraid the baby might be born like her husband's parents — deaf and dumb. Creighton is, however, a perfectly healthy boy and for a time Lon and Cleve are happy.

Chaney's many varied roles get him nick-named "The Mystery Man" and he is soon recognized as a great star and cast in "The Hunchback." A wealthy man, now, he married

which should not be missed by anyone who is proud of Britain's triumphs in the air; are Bernard Lee and Helmi Cherry.

★ ★ ★

BRITISH-BORN Ray Milland and two up and coming British stars, Kenneth Haigh and Anthony Newley, carry the Wurst Production "High Flight" to sky high success. These three monopolize the screen and expertly intersperse high tension and humour.

As the film is a tribute to the R.A.F.'s jet pilots, it naturally revolves around Cranwell R.A.F. training station. Milland plays gruff Wing Commander Rudge, in charge of a group of new cadets at Cranwell. Two of the cadets are Haigh as Tony Winchester and Newley as Roger Endicot.

The name Winchester has an ominous ring for Rudge. In the war Rudge caused the death of Winchester's father by disobeying orders. His conscience has troubled him ever since, even though he was cleared at the inquiry. Winchester was only a child when his father died and knows nothing of the tragedy. Rudge and Winchester are continually at loggerheads and the inevitable show-down comes when Winchester discovers how his father died.

This is, however, only a part of the film which covers in beautiful CinemaScope and Technicolor the training of modern day jet pilots in the vast, silent kingdom above the clouds. The photography is first class and there are some wonderful shots of supersonic planes diving, looping and climbing like jet powered sea-gulls.

Also starring in this film.