SLEEPING CAR TO TRIESTE (Two Cities-Rank-GFD, 1949) Directed by John Paddy Carstairs; produced by George H. Brown; Screenplay by Allan Mackinnon and William Douglas Home from "Rome Express" by Clifford Grey; Music, Benjamin Frankel; Camera, Jack Hildyard; US release, Eagle-Lion; 95 mins.

With Jean Kent (Valya); Albert Lieven (Zurta); Derrick de Marney (George Grant); Paul Dupuis (Insp. Jolif); Rona Anderson (Joan Maxted); Bonar Colleano (Top Sgt. West); David Tomlinson (Tom Bishop); Alan Wheatley (Poole); Finlay Currie (Alastair McBain); Hugh Burden (Mills); Coco Aslan (Poirier); David Hutcheson (Denning); Zena Marshall (Suzanne) and Eugene Deckers, D.no Galvani, Leslie Weston, Michael Ward, George de Warfaz.

When "Sleeping Car to Trieste" first appeared, some 16 years after the original "Rome Express", it was somewhat resented - partly because it was longer and not as good as its ancestor, more because its presence kept the old one in limbo, and mainly because the stars of the 1949 version couldn't hope to match the roster of the original - Conrad Veidt, Gordon Harker, Esther Ralston, Cedric Hardwicke, Frank Vosper and others. Now another 39 years have gone by (I) and with the original back among us again (we showed it a few seasons back) the remake can be enjoyed for its own merits. It is now the kind of story that nobody makes anymore, so it has acquired a pleasing patina of age, and while the cast certainly isn't as good as the original, it is still very ingeniously re-cast by equivalent players. (Finlay Currie appears in both versions, though not in the same role). Many of its players have since retired, died or apparently disappeared, and they too give it the feeling of being an old friend. The charming and graceful Rona Anderson hasn't been seen in films for some time, but primarily because she is constantly busy, often in long-running plays, on the London stage. I somewhat unfairly stated above that the new one was longer than the old; it is, but only by one minute. It seems longer because it takes its time getting under way, and because it doesn't have the kind of stars that grab attention and make one forget the time. But it's slick, funny and suspenseful, and a most enjoyable comedy-thriller still. You'll have no trouble spotting the occasional stock shot from the original, especially as Universal had already pilfered a few shots to add production value to their "The Black Cat" in 1934!

-- Ten Minute Intermission --

NIGHT BOAT TO DUBLIN (Associated British-Pathe, 1946) Directed by Lawrence Huntington; screenplay by Huntington and Robert Hall; produced by Hamilton G. Inglis; Music, Charles Williams; 99 mins.

With: Robert Newton (Capt. David Grant); Muriel Pavlow (Marion Decker); Raymond Lovell (Paul Faber); Guy Middleton (Capt. Tony Hunter); Herbert Lom (Knitel); Marius Goring (Frederick Jannings); John Ruddock (Bowman); Martin Miller (Prof. Hansen); Brenda Bruce (Lilly Leggett); Gerald Case (Insp. Emerson); Julian Dallas/Scott Forbes (Luit. Allen); Leslie Dwyer (George Leggett); Olga Lindo (Mrs Coleman); Jean Maude (Sydney Vane) and the orchestras of Carroll Gibbons and Edmondo Ros.

Rather surprisingly, "Night Boat to Dublin" appears to have had no U.S. release - not even by Monogram, which had the U.S. rights to the Pathe product, and could presumably have trimmed this down to programmer length as per their usual practice. It did however see the light of the American day via a later tv release. For the American market it is, admittedly, too long and lacking in zip and fast action; compare it for example with Warners' "Background to Danger" which crammed an incredible amount of plot, action and chase into less than 80 minutes. Nevertheless, if one isn't expecting something like the Raoul Walsh film, it's pleasing enough in its own way, with interesting players (though Marius Goring is disposed of all too quickly) and a plot, which like so many thrillers of its day, seeks to add topicality by making the atom bomb one of its major gimmicks. It has enough action near the end to wrap it up neatly, but it is writing and acting rather than thrill and pace that make it so entertaining. (Program ends app. 10.54) -- William K. Everson