BRITISH FILMS FROM THE 50's

SOMETHING MONEY CAN'T BUY (Rank-OPA, 1952) Directed by Pat Jackson; Produced by Joseph Jannit (Vic Films); Screenplay by Pat Jackson and James Lansdale Hodson; Camera C. Pennington-Richards; US release in October 53 by Universal-International; 83 mins. With: Patricia Roc (Anne Wilding); Anthony Steele (Harry Wilding); Nora Lister (Diana Haverstock); A.E. Matthews (Lord Haverstock); David Hutchison (Buster); Michael Trubshawe (Willy); Diana Hart (Joan); Charles Victor (Treasuerer); Henry Edwards (Gerald Forbes); Mary Hinton (Mrs Forbes); L.A. Clarke-Smith (critic); Mara Lane, John Barry (Film stars); Dennis Arundell (Director) and Joss Amler, Michael Brennan, Helen Goss, Joe Linsme, Oscar Quitak, Irene Prader, Johnnie Schofield, Olwen Brooks, Margaret Vyne.

Even apart from the emerging Cold War, Britain had plenty of post-war problems to worry over - and to be translated into films fare. But they somehow lacked the knack of combining honesty with showmanship as Hollywood did so effortlessly in films like *Till the End of Time* and *The Best Years of Our Lives*. Far too many of Britain's post-war essays were stuffily symbolic and talkative (*They Came to a City, The Lost People*) or injected too many elements of class distinction and melodrama (*Children Between, Fiedla*). One of the biggest problems was that of adjustment for wartime soldiers and officers who had enjoyed responsibility, prestige and a fairly comfortable way of life (along with the dangers of war of course) and now found themselves suddenly having to start from scratch. Diana Tahiti chose to handle that theme as a kind of vendetta between retired officers James Mason and John Mills. The intentions of *Something Money Can't Buy* are good, and writer/director Jackson had come up through the documentarist ranks. It deals with a real problem relatively honestly - at first - but then seems to realise that by late 52, when the film was made, the problem was no longer an urgent one - nor one that audiences could reasonably be expected to be too concerned about. So undecided whether to be drama or comedy, it offers some of both, and also exaggerates (and simplifies) the problems and potentiality of starting up one's own business and having to contend with all the startling bureaucracy of post-war Britain. Unlike without its value however, and there's enough talent in front of and behind the camera to make it an entertaining film. It had no specific New York premiere, opening at some half-dozen lesser NY houses on a double bill with Ealing's *The Gentle Gunman* and *John Mills* vehicle that we ran a few years back.

--- TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION ---

VALUE FOR MONEY (Rank, 1955) Directed by Ken Annakin; Produced by Sargeid Molandov; Screenplay by R.F. Elderdfield and William Fairchild from the novel by Derrick Boothroyd; Camera (Technicolor) Geoffrey Unsworth; 93 mins. With: John Gregson (Raybeat Broadbent); Diana Dors (Ruthie West); Susan Stephen (Ethel); Derek Farr (Duke Poppleswell); Frank Pettingall (Mayor Higgins); Charles Victor (Lum); Ernest Thesiger (Lord Drewsbury); Hal Gasmond (Mr. Hall); Jill Adams (Joy); Joan Hacket (Mrs Perkins); James Gregson (Oldroyd); Donald Pleasance (Lumpy); Leslie Phillips (Bobjohns); and Sheila Raynor, Ronald Peasey, Paddy Stone, Irving Davis, Sheila O'Neill, Ruth Shiel, Carol Ray, Eleanor Pease, Oliver Reed, Jane Dore, Mavis Greenaway, Julia Arnull and the Hamell Silver Band.

Although it really has nothing in common with it apart from the star, John Gregson, *Value For Money* is a comedy very much in the tradition of the previous year's *Genevieve*. It lacks the universality of a comedy about old cars (or any kind of lovable antiques) which made *Genevieve* work so well, but like that film it aims less at belly laughs than at continuous chuckles at the expense of some of the Britisher's characteristic traits. In this case the target is North country thriftiness, and in an earlier day one could well see this being remade and reshaped as a Jack Benny vehicle. Its humor remains low-key throughout, but there are some marvellous highlights, especially a tussle over the hill at a fancy London restaurant, and - rightly kept for the closing reels - a magnificient appearance by Ernest Thesiger as a sullen public figure anxious to have fun and try everything instead of being merely a figure-head. He's kept in medium and long shot for the most part, so the gag remains restrained and without mugging. But it is rather as if dear old Horace Finn had finally escaped from the Old Dark House in Wales after many years, determined to have a good time before sister Rebecca tracked him to Yorkshire and led him home again.

*Value For Money* clearly works better for a British audience (though Diana Dors' appeal is fairly universal) but its quiet charm comes through even if some of the gags misfire just a little. Universal clearly felt it had no major market over here, and like its co-feature *tonight opened simultaneously at lesser NY houses, doubled-billed with Ealing's "Out of the Clouds".*

--- William K. Everson

Program ends approx 10:45.

BRIEF DISCUSSION: PERIOD FOLLOWS.

LISTING FOR NEXT WEEK'S SHORTS PROGRAM IS POSTED IN SEVERAL PLACES AT THE REAR OF THE HALL.

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