

# AT CITY THEATRES

## WINTERGARDEN

### ACTION FILM

**TORPEDO BOAT:** Thrills and spills in a story whose keynote is speed. If ever an actor is "typed" it must be Arlen. Average.

**DR. BROADWAY:** The film brings an interesting new screen personality in Macdonald Carey. It opens with a blonde holding up Broadway traffic by screaming from a nine-story ledge that she is "going out of this world." Carey, a psychologist, pretending to be a pigeon, discover it's all a publicity stunt.

Anyone who has been driven at break-neck speed by an untrustworthy driver will experience the same sensations watching one of the most dramatic scenes "Torpedo Boat" has to offer. Arlen, eyes glittering, and whole face exultantly alight, bumps across the water at a terrific pace, deaf as a madman to the desperate pleading of his companion.

This is the stuff of which action films are made, and "Torpedo Boat" has its full measure of excitement of this kind. In plot, it is ordinary enough. The story tells of the efforts of two speed-loving young men to convince the Navy of the efficacy of a new kind of mosquito boat they have designed. Their romantic entanglements give Mary Carlisle and Jean Parker opportunities to be tomboyish and tragic, respectively.

This sort of intrepid part is by no means an unfamiliar one for Arlen, and, ruggedly masculine, he does his usual sound job. The mobile features of Philip Terry lend interest to the role of Arlen's partner. Some tense moments are relieved with comedy, most of it provided by large but cheerful Ralph Sanford's malproprisms. —B.G.

## ST. JAMES

### CRIME FILMS

**"DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES"** gives Emlyn Williams an opportunity for some fine character acting. The film has all the suspense and excitement anyone could wish for.

**"BLACK LIMELIGHT"**: The film adaptation of a well-known play. Tense

adaptation of a well-known play. Tense and dramatic.

The two British films now showing at St. James have much in common, but differ sufficiently in theme and presentation to be combined successfully into one programme.

Both present players with rich speaking voices, both centre round baffling murder mysteries which Scotland Yard is called upon to solve, and certainly neither film is wanting in excitement or suspense.

The motives of "Dead Men Tell No Tales" might not bear too much looking into, but no one can argue that three murders, and threats of even more, will not hold the average film-goer's whole attention. Some superb, though sometimes gruesome, surprises, are disclosed just when they are least expected, and the ending is surely the most exciting imaginable. Emlyn Williams' very fine performance does much towards the success of the film.

"Black Limelight" is not so much a film of action as "Dead Men Tell No Tales," though it has the usual call for quick action at its end. The story centres round a woman forced to wait and wonder in her home while the police search for her missing husband, who is suspected of murder. Joan Marion plays the role of the highly-strung wife, and Raymond Massey that of her hunted husband.

The lighter fare of the programme includes a delightful cartoon about a wily little fox who knew all the tricks when it came to fooling the hounds.—E.E.S.

**CARLTON** Brisbane fire-fighters appear on the screen in the new programme at the Carlton Theatre. Newsreels and short subjects of varied interest give good entertainment. Films made following the Japanese attack on Milne Bay are of great interest; also British and US airmen co-operating in Egypt. Short subjects include colour films and a Disney cartoon.

## REGENT

### ART v. CRAFT

**"BALL OF FIRE"**: A shy professor, a gangster's girl and how "e learned about women from 'er." Barbara Stanwyck well cast, Gary Cooper not so

wyck well cast, Gary Cooper not so fortunate.

"Ball of Fire" does not seem entirely decided in its mood until the film is well under way, but after much light farce, it settles into a few scenes of comedy and even a moment or two of serious intent. It owes a slight debt to "Pygmalion," for we find a professor of English wandering in the slums taking notes on American slang, that fruitful source of modern lingual study.

Gary Cooper's physical attractions are obvious to all who are not blind and deaf. Thus when he is cast as an academic celibate in love with literature only, one feels that the correct slang idiom might be "Oh yeah," expressing a state of dubiety. Into his professorial existence comes a tough and shapely little vulgarian who sets this introvert analysing his impulses and deciding that "emotionally she is most disturbing." The part fits Barbara Stanwyck admirably, and if the yarn had been written with a little less burlesque of the scholarly mind a really good comedy might have emerged.

Seven elderly men portray the other professors, only one of whom had ever been married. The latter's sentimental memories of his somewhat austere honeymoon, constitute the film's best wit. His bride had obviously not been, as the grim house-keeper remarked of Barbara Stanwyck's brazen little dancer, "the kind of woman to make the whole of civilisation topple."

An edition of "The March of Time" proves most instructive about the Argentine and its 30million people. A Donald Duck cartoon shows our hero again beset by the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," but emerging as loquacious as victorious.

D. L. WARAKER.

**METRO** Child lovers should not miss "Blossoms in the Dust," a film which deals with the efforts of a public-spirited American woman to help unwanted children. Included in the cast is Greer Garson, who gives a fine performance, Walter Pidgeon, and a host of lovely babies. The film is beautifully filmed in technicolour. Short subjects complete the programme.

**LYCEUM** Variety in entertainment is provided on the new programme at the Lyceum with "Union Pacific" and "Wee Willie Winkie." The first is a period picture featuring Barbara Stanwyck and Joel McCrae in a story of romance and action built against the background of the great transcontinental railroad.

the great transcontinental railroad. Shirley Temple is her usual charming little self in "Wee Willie Winkie." Victor McLaglen adds to the enjoyment of the film.

**EMBASSY** Undertaking to involve a woman judge in a flirtation, Walter Pidgeon becomes very much involved himself in "Design for Scandal," a bright comedy which owes much of its success to the clever acting of Rosalind Russell in the role of the judge. In "Blondie Goes to College" we renew acquaintance again with the delightful Bumpstead family in the persons of Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake and Larry Sims.

**TIVOLI** George Formby plays a dual role in his latest comedy, "South American George," which is showing for a second week at the Tivoli. He is equally successful in the roles of a bashful Lancashire lad, and a temperamental operatic star, complete with side whiskers. "Confessions of Boston Blackie" stars Chester Morris in the role of a well-known West End detective who, with customary skill, shows the police how to solve a crime.

**MAJESTIC** "Bahama Passage" portrays romance and adventure on a tropic island, in vivid technicolour. Madeleine Carroll and Stirling Hayden have the leading roles. In support is "The Remarkable Andrew," an unusual film with a small-town setting, and featuring a parade of American patriots.

**HIS MAJESTY'S** "The Maltese Falcon" is a first-rate thriller, and has its full share of suspense and drama, which, however, is lightened with clever touches of humour. The film derives its name from an antique gold-encrusted statuette coveted by many. The cast has been well chosen and Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor do particularly fine work. In the supporting film, Cesar Romero appears in "A Gentleman at Heart."

**REX** James Cagney has been splendidly cast in "Captains of the Clouds," an outstanding film which deals with planes and the men who fly them. The story of the film is set among Canada's northern lakes (with much of their real beauty captured by technicolour) and on Canadian Air Force stations, where young men from all over the Empire are undergoing training. The supporting film is "Mexican Spitfire at Sea," featuring Lupe Velez.

**CIVIC:** As is to be expected in a Sonja Henie film, expert skating is one of the outstanding fea-

... Sonja Henie film, expert skating is one of the outstanding features of "Thin Ice," in which Tyrone Power supplies the romantic lead for the Norwegian star. The story of the film holds the interest and makes for excellent light entertainment. The supporting picture is "The Road to Frisco," with Ann Sheridan, Humphrey Bogart and George Raft.

## Repertory Success

"They Fly by Twilight," by Paul Dornhorst, the choice of the Repertory Theatre for last night's production, is a clever play. Its plot has little that is new, yet there is not one line which fails to hold firmly the attention; and even the first act, that period which is frequently forgiven for dullness because it constitutes a series of introductions, is vividly exciting.

The honest little grocer whose soul finds beauty in great poetry, is lovingly drawn. Through his nauseated eyes we come to loathe the cruel and cheap crudities of his wife, who has all the ugliness of vulgarity, but none of its compensating warmth. Their quarrel is almost obscene in its passion of hate and bitterness. The dramatic tension of the subsequent murder is admirably built up; and the play's final moments, gentle yet pregnant with suffering, are artistically satisfying.

In so small a cast, every player was important and all played admirably. William Williams was far more natural than usual in a most difficult role. Jean Jarrott and Marion Askew were suitably loud and flamboyant as two middle-aged "ladies of the chorus" enjoying their matronly status, their port and their salacious badinage. Betty Ross, as that unhappy figure, the woman of character in love with a married man, was appealing, while Allen Denby aptly opened his mouth only to push food and beer into it, or to voice an opinion on the races. Allan Burke as an adenoidous and tap-dancing youth also did well, but the role should be played by a younger male. Mrs Maibry Wragge produced and the show was an entire success.—D. L. WARAKER.