



## Films

**Tunes of Glory**, directed by Ronald Neame, is a film of unusual quality, as different from routine military dramas as could be wished. A stock situation—rough wartime commander superseded in the home barracks by Whitehall's gentlemanly appointee—is made convincing and compelling by James Kennaway's imaginative screenplay (adapted from his own novel) and the brilliance of Alec Guinness and John Mills as the two protagonists. Guinness, coarse, pathetic and calculating by turns, is at the top of his form, and Mills gives the finest performance of his career. Of the smaller parts, all of which (bar, perhaps, Dennis Price's 'villain') are strikingly successful, Duncan Macrae's humane and understanding Pipe Major is probably the most memorable. This film should not be missed.

Set among the smoke-laden terraced houses of an industrial town in the English Midlands, **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** is a cautionary tale about Arthur Seaton, a young lathe-worker whose philosophy is 'If it's going, it's for me'. A hard worker during the week, he lets off steam in no uncertain manner at the weekend, playing it fast and loose with a married woman until the inevitable back-street punch-up occurs. What makes the film so satisfying is the authentic detail and the well-roundedness of Arthur's character: high-spirited, crude maybe, but not totally irresponsible. Albert Finney and Rachel Roberts give most striking performances, and it really looks as though we will have to take Shirley Ann Field seriously as an actress. Director: Karel Reisz.

Whatever one's opinion of the story of **Never on Sunday**—a slab of whimsy about Homer, a naïf American philosopher who tries to convert a gorgeous Greek prostitute of the Piraeus to the pleasures of the mind—the film has the magnificent Melina Mercouri, supported by a vital, mainly Greek cast, and Manos Hadjidakis's devilishly haunting *bouzoukia* theme-song, which looks like sweeping the world as did the Third Man's zither ditty. Jules Dassin, not content with story and direction, also plays Homer with a certain downy, wide-eyed charm.

**The Alamo** is shot in Todd-AO, and contains much superb photography, particularly of the colourful Mexican army of Generalissimo Santa Anna marching and countermarching in the huge Texan landscape. John Wayne (who produces and directs as well as playing a leading role as Colonel David Crockett) fails to invest any of his main characters with much individuality, and this inordinately long film (over three hours), despite episodes of tension and splendour, wilts into noise and fury.

**G. I. Blues** opens with some warlike shots of tanks ploughing through the woods of Western Germany, but it is not very long before Gunner Elvis Presley pops up in the turret, and after that the nearest thing to a military objective is Lili, the nightclub queen of Frankfurt. For those who like the rotating Romeo this film provides quite an earful, and Juliet Prowse, as the dynamic dancing girl, is an eyeful.

**Suspect** is the first of a number of supporting features to be made by British Lion Films Ltd. in an effort to raise the standard of these productions. The well-written script tackles an important subject ('free' science versus national 'security') intelligently, and the acting is of a high standard. The plot has a flaw, but all in all the film earns good marks.

**Man in the Moon** is *not* for the serious science-fiction fan, but it will do very nicely for those who relish Kenneth More's breezy characterisation of the British chap, spiced-up for the occasion by Shirley Anne Field as a stripper-with-a-heart-of-gold. Government scientific projects are the main targets for satire, from the Common Cold Research Centre (where in a room marked "British Summer Simulator" men sit on benches under shower-sprinklers) to NARSTI—the National Atomic Research Scientific and Technological Institute. Kenneth is gifted with fantastic immunity to any environment, and finds himself chosen, against some opposition, as 'Pathfinder'—the first Briton in space. The climax may not be disclosed; you *may* guess it.

## LETTER FROM GERMANY

The West German film industry is worried. Films are burdened with a high entertainment tax amounting on the average to 20 per cent. of the price of seats. More than 4 million television sets and increasing expenditure on motoring and travel are beginning to have an effect on cinema attendance. Although production has as yet undergone only little change—106 feature films in 1959 as compared with 123 in 1956—box offices show a downward trend.

The tendency at present is to give quality preference over quantity. The cheap so-called B Class film now rarely succeeds in drawing big audiences. It is no longer the star name that is the big attraction, but interesting subject matter presented in an original manner. The most successful German film so far this season is Helmut Käutner's *Das Glas Wasser*, an adaptation of Scribe's comedy, starring Gustaf Gründgens. German producers have great hopes of *The Good Soldier Schweik*, with Heinz Rühmann in the title role, and of *Heldinnen*, a musical version of Lessing's comedy *Minna von Barnhelm*.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most difficult, experiment of recent years, has been the filming of Goethe's *Faust*, in the famous production by the Hamburger Schauspielhaus. Intended neither as a 'film of the play' nor entirely as pure film, the result is a mixture that is well worth seeing.

M.-L. B. (*Deutsche Shell A.G.*)

Liselotte Pulver and Sabina Sinjen in the film *Das Glas Wasser*.

