

# Nothing Magical in Welles' 'Black Magic,' Says Critic

By HERMAN C. GOLLOB

Black Magic (UA) starring Orson Welles and Nancy Guild (Palace)

The only two feats of black magic accomplished in the film of the same name, taken from Alexandre Dumas' Cagliostro and now antagonizing moviegoers at the Palace, are (1) the near setback of the film industry to its early beginning and (2) the mass coma into which the film audience is thrown by the eloquent boredom of the production.

"Black Magic" is truly a tale told by an idiot, who in this instance happens to be producer-director Gregory Ratoff.

It chronicles the life of the fat-nosed Cagliostro, (played by Orson Welles) eighteenth century gypsy charlatan who essayed to parlay his gift for hypnosis into mastery of France, involving himself in a nefarious plot to turn public sentiment against Marie Antoinette, court favorite of Louis XIV.

Sly director Ratoff has cunningly sought to camouflage this sublime atrocity's many blemishes by making scanty use of light. The resultant murkiness makes it virtually impossible at times to see what's going on, which in itself may be considered somewhat of a negative advantage.

The more conventional among us will argue that the quasi-absence of light is used as an effect, but we know better.

The absurd plot complexities, the

endless chain of banalities (example: a frantic Madame Dubarry, fervently imploring Cagliostro to hurry to the side of ailing King Louis, cries "Hurry, we haven't a minute to lose!"), the grossly exaggerated performances of a uniformly poor cast—all keep the film moving at the fast clip of a miller struggling through a layer of congealed tar.

What puzzles this reviewer is the appearance of the brash, self-confessed genius, Orson Welles, in a part which any extra would consider demeaning.

We had heretofore considered Welles; whose first venture into films in "Citizen Kane" was (as writer, producer, director, and star, one of filmdom's most finished performers. His unintelligible mutterings through bored teeth in "Black Magic" have now planted the seed of suspicion in our mind.

A dual role is handed Nancy Guild, seen as the girl who unfortunately becomes the apple of Citizen Orson's evil eye and as Naughty Marie. She, therefore, has the distinction of turning in two insipid characterizations, Akim Tamiroff, Tamara Shayne, Berry Kroeger, and Raymond Burr are also on hand to take part in the melodramatic claptrap.

The evening's entertainment was further enhanced by the spasmodic crowd of an anonymous young lady seated directly behind me. With a little more effort, I'm certain that she could have succeeded in arousing Alexander Dumas from the hereafter to see this pathetic transfer of his book to the screen.



Sam G. Pate, senior business major from Sweetwater, has been appointed cadet colonel in command of the Infantry regiment.

## Operation Miki Offers Reserve Officers Duty

Today is the last opportunity for Organized Reserve Corps officers to accept 90 days actively with the Army to participate with the Invasion Forces and Empire Group of "Operation Miki." Colonel Oscar B. Abbott, executive for the Texas Military District, announced Saturday.

"Operation Miki" will be a joint Armed Forces exercise near Fort Lewis, Washington, and will be conducted beginning September 1.

Quotas for Texas Reserve Officers exist for company grade of the Armored, Medical Service, Chemical, and Ordnance, and for field grade Reservists of the Infantry and Artillery.

"The Army considers this exercise of utmost value and places it in priority one of all training activities of Reserve Officers," Colonel Abbott said.

"Due to the short notice given the Texas Military District, we must have applications for 'Operation Miki' in the hands of the Organized Reserve Corps Instructor's office at the PMA Building, College Station, by August 22."

Those selected to attend the exercises will be notified immediately. They will report to the Chief Empire, Joint Exercise Miki, Fort Lewis, Washington.

## Fire Equipment Tested Friday

The latest types of forest fire control equipment were tested by the Texas Forest Service, A&M System, Friday near Cleveland to determine the most effective mechanical equipment for forest fire line construction.

Approximately 100 spectators followed the tractors and plows through the test strips which were 200 yards in width and one half mile in length. The strips were laid out in three different pine and hardwood types commonly found in East Texas.

Small tractors and plows were matched with units weighing many tons. Speed and effectiveness of line construction were the two important factors that were being tested.

Records were prepared on such factors as loading time, unloading time, plowing speed and effectiveness of line construction. One time keeper was assigned to each piece of equipment. An inspection team checked the line construction by each tractor and plow to determine its effectiveness. These records will be compiled and made available to interested persons.

The forest products industries and the U. S. Forest Service cooperated with the Texas Forest Service in the trials by providing equipment tested.

As a result of the trials, public agencies and private industries can determine the most effective combination of tractor and plow for use in the construction of fire lines. This, it is pointed out, will provide more efficient fire protection for the 11,050,000 acres of valuable timber in East Texas.

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ALL PROPERTY WILL POSITIVELY BE SOLD AND TITLE GIVEN AT TIME OF SALE. Owner leaving state and must sell NOW. In case of rain sale will be held at later date. Property can be inspected any evening after 3 p.m.

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