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'Pickpocket' Art At New Yorker

By ALTON COOK

Included in the secondary attractions of "Pickpocket" is a brief but comprehensive course in the art of lifting wallets and watches. This Robert Bresson picture from four years back has been picked up by the New Yorker Theater for introduction to America.

Like a magician, the aspiring pickpocket must practice endlessly to master the finger dexterity and tricks of his craft. It is suggested that work on a pinball machine will increase finger control. It is a fascinating art for which the picture could conceivably win many recruits.

But Film Is Sad

These processes are treated with humor, particularly one hilariously funny coup where loot is passed from hand to hand by a bewilderingly rapid team and out the window to a waiting bagman. The main basis of the picture, however, is tragic and solemn.

The leading young man is a morbid ne'er-do-well who simply refuses to face the necessity of earning a living. Picking pockets has an all embracing appeal to his sense of art, adventure and human dignity.

Creates Complications

However, his painstaking artistry turns out to be much less gratifying than anticipat-

ed. He morbidly creates a lot of complications in his emotional life, particularly a numbing love affair with a girl drifting as uncertainly as himself.

Martin La Salle plays the erring youth with an unrelied air of sullen anger. The girl, Marika Green, merely looks bewildered.

Unless you happen to be a student of the knack of picking pockets, there is not likely to be much reward in "Pickpocket." Certainly it offers slim pickings for the student of the cinema.