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ASPHALT.

(Silent)

(GERMAN MADE)

Ufa production and release. Directed by Joe May. Supervised by Erich Pommer. Rolf Vanloo's novel adapted by Fred Majo and Hans Szekely. At the 53th St. Playhouse May 3. Running time, 82 minutes.

The Son.....Gustav Froehlich
The Mother.....Else Heller
The Father.....Albert Steinrueck
The Girl.....Betty Amann
Consul General.....H. A. Von Schlettow

"Asphalt" is so well produced that it is good entertainment in spite of itself. A boy cop and a girl crook do a lot of bromidic things, but in a different way, atmospherically and otherwise. That's why silent houses can grab this. A disc orchestration makes it possible for some of the wired spots to consider it. The picture is a good in-between for all but the better first runs.

How it got that title is a mystery, since there is no reference to roadways except when the intro is flashed. This is the usual hodge-podge of German trick photography, with asphalt, road builders and etc. occupying a few seconds in the running time.

Berlin street scenes quickly lapse into the meat of the story, a pretty girl crook slipping a diamond from a gullible old clerk. The young cop frisks the crowd and finds the stone in the handle of a parasol.

It is now obvious that the producers intend depicting the sterling qualities of the coppers and also that sometimes a crook is a crook through necessity. If UFA had succeeded in this trend, however, the theme would have been a clumsy imitation of the story rehashed many times in Hollywood.

Betty Amann is an unusually pretty little actress, but much of her appeal in "Asphalt" is sacrificed by close-ups which bare those long lashes as false and the tears as strictly chemical. She is far better in the semi-range views having to do with her apartment and how she lures the young policeman from the duty of turning her in.

One of the most amusing and warmest sequences is when Miss Amann, after keeping the cop waiting and reclining in bed, leaps at him like a monkey.

Gustav Froehlich is amusing as the boy patrolman until the fight sequence with Betty's regular friend, von Schlettow, who essays the role of consul general. There is much heaving of crockery, but, like most of the action in this production, it has sincerity.

The consul is shown robbing a bank, and that takes the official curse off things when the cop, not knowing this, kills him in the bedroom row.

There are plenty of discrepancies in the script, but "Asphalt," despite these and the inclination to pad the running time on irrelevant incidents, has a continuity strongly enough threaded to be listed among its qualities as an entertainer. *Waly.*