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The Band Wagon

An all-around piece of musical splendor, in the MGM classical style, namely Fred Astaire. Although the title is linked to one of Astaire's great Broadway hits, this film bears no resemblance to the original (except for some of the Dietz-Schwartz songs). Cyd Charisse is here for ~~her~~^{some} languorous dance-movements, turning a gentle adagio in Central Park with Astaire into a timeless pas de deux, and Vincente Minnelli's direction is aimed artfully toward high entertainment. Jack Buchanan, Astaire's British counterpart, is seen here in one of his final appearances, leaving one a fond glimpse of his droll, dry sense of fun, and certainly, Michael Kidd's pop-ballet satirizing Mickey Spillane's detective novels is one of the most brilliant dance achievements in the history of the musical ~~film~~ cinema. — ag