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M

(GERMAN MADE)

(English Titles)

New Production and Release.
Directed by Fritz Lang. Scenario by Thea von Harbou. English titles by Wolfe Kaufman. Fritz Arno Wagner, photos. At Mayfair, New York, starting March 31. Running time, 92 minutes.

Murderer.....Peter Loore
Mother.....Ellen Widmann
Child.....Lene Landcut
Safe-Breaker.....Curtat Grundgens
Burglar.....Fritz Gnara
Card Sharper.....Fritz Odemar
Pickpocket.....Paul Kemp
Confidence Trickster.....Theo Lingen
President of Police...Ernst Stahl-Nachbarr
Superintendent Lehman.....Otto Wernicke
Superintendent Groeber.....Theodor Loos
The Blind Beggar.....Georg John
Counsel for Defense.....Rudolf Blumner
Criminal Chief.....Gerhard Blenert

Due to its theme, 'M' will receive divided reaction wherever it's shown. On general release in America this German-made with native

dialog and English titles may be an adverse majority. Mobile to an extreme, even though constantly compelling and often almost thrilling; that undertone morbidity is likely to stand against it in its bid for popular appeal.

The picture is rich with technical excellence and sharply true to life. Sincerity is a fault as much as a virtue in this instance, because the brutal realism of the story will be the cause for any box office trouble the film might encounter.

It was no simple matter to establish a degenerate child murderer as the principal character, treat him as a despicable pathological freak of nature for over an hour, and then in the final ten minutes suddenly turn audience hate into sympathy. In less capable studio hands this fiend who murders golden haired little girls would call for hateful reaction all the way. But through the acting of Peter Loore and the direction of Fritz Lang the child-killer becomes a pitiful figure, warranting pity rather than hate.

But that the picture is assured of the last-minute switch in sentiment is not enough to guarantee that the theme as a whole will be relished. It doesn't leave a sweet taste, despite the literary sugar-coating.

The German technique is followed all the way. Now and then the studio workmanship of that country delivers a technically noteworthy picture, and this is one of them. The thing is simply yet beautifully done and can serve as a film classroom example of how to make the impossible almost possible.

There are so many flawless performances in the cast, Loore's is outstanding mostly because the interest is centered on him. Ellen Widmann, Gerhard Blenert, Otto Wernicke, Theodor Loos and several others can give the average character actor cards and spades on how to look and act. There is no love interest in the picture, so no necessity for romantic types.

English titling job, done over here by Wolfe Kaufman, is first rate. The titles are superimposed at the bottom of the pictures, preventing any breaks in the action and chances of lost interest. Wordings is brief and to the point, covering the essential moments only and coming only when necessary. The story's progress, despite the German dialog, is not difficult to follow by itself, with obvious restraint used to clarify only the key moments. For that reason the foreign aspect is not among 'M's' deficiencies for American exhibiting.

Bigz.

April 4,
1933