

March 18, 1964

Screen: Saucy 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow': Sophia Loren Starred in 3 Comedy-Farces

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

THE mere thought of seeing Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni strutting their stuff, under Vittorio De Sica's direction, in three comedy-farce vignettes will no doubt attract sufficient film fans to "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" to guarantee a beautiful engagement for this new show at the Festival and the Tower East.

And if the fans can bear the creeping ennui that the first two items are likely to produce, they should get more than ample satisfaction and compensation from the third.

That is, if they are open-minded enough not to take a ribald joke that joins religion and sex as a shocking sacrilege. For this third item is a shameless dilly in which Miss Loren expansively portrays a courtesan who is suddenly immobilized by an onrush of piety, and Mr. Mastroianni plays her panting suitor who must wait out her pietistic whim.

It is a wonderfully elaborated burlesque that has flowed from the facile pen of Cesare Zavattini, one of the top screen writers of Italy. And Mr. De Sica has staged it with the same flair of bouncing ribaldry that he got in "Gold of Naples" and other of his pizza-padded films.

Miss Loren is in her finest fettle as this well set-up Roman prostitute whose beaming equanimity is unsettled at the very time her most lusty customer, a scatterbrained sport from Bologna, is in town for a couple of days.

It seems that her next-door neighbor in the terrace apartment overlooking the Piazza Navone is storming at her because she has flirted with the neighbor's grandson, a seminarian, and the youth has recklessly decided to abandon the holy calling forthwith.

While the breezy buck from Bologna waits in bewildered dismay, the prostitute battles boldly with the old woman next door and finally comes to terms with her when the grandmother bursts into tears. But then, with everything settled, with the youth returned to the fold and the buck admitted to the boudoir the prostitute changes her mind in the midst of an extravagant strip-tease. To assure the youth's reconversion, she remembers, she has made a vow of abstinence—for one week.

That's the gist of it, but the details had better go un-described, first, because they defy description and, second, to leave you something to enjoy. Let it be said merely that Miss Loren is a female of dazzling temperament and Mr. Mastroianni is hilarious as a voluptuary, Italian style.

But before this item comes up, the viewer must endure two prior pretentious items that get progressively worse. The first, written by Eduardo De Filippo, starts out with a pretty good joke, and it does contain some scenic and salty Neopolitan atmosphere.

It has Miss Loren as a housewife who must stay in a state of pregnancy — a legal loophole—to avoid being arrested for black market activities.

It's fun at first, with Miss Loren amusingly out of form and swapping vulgar wise cracks with her slum friends who greatly sympathize. But it gets both gross and obvious when her poor husband—Mr. M., of course—runs out of strength to provide her with an exemption and she must go to jail. The idea is singularly heavy and the humor is painfully forced.

The next item, based on a short story by Alberto Moravia, is no more than a cheerlessly trivial and empty dialogue. Miss Loren, looking lusciously stylish as the elegant, brittle wife of a Milanese manufacturer, takes her lover, Mr. M. for a ride in her beautiful Silver Cloud Rolls-Royce, and that's the only bit of fun the viewer has — sitting back in the sleek vehicle and watching the colorful country near Milan roll by.

When they have a slight accident, Miss Loren abandons her lover to look after the car and she, selfishly and nonchalantly, rides off with another man.

So that's it — a spotty picture, in excellent color with a good musical score provided by Armando Trovajoli, who briefly plays the "other man" in the Milan item.

The English subtitles will do.

The Cast

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW, screenplay by Alberto Moravia, Cesare Zavattini and Eduardo De Filippo; directed by Vittorio De Sica; produced by Carlo Ponti. A Champion-Concordia Film released by Embassy Pictures. At the Festival Theater, 57th Street west of Fifth Avenue, and the Tower East Theater, Third Avenue and 72d Street. Running time: 120 minutes.

Part I—Adelina (Naples)

Adelina Sophia Loren

Carmine Marcello Mastroianni

Pasquale Nardella Aldo Giuffrè

Lawyer Verace Agostino Salvietti

Police Captain Pasquale Cennamo

Part II—Anna (Milan)

Anna Sophia Loren

Her Lover Marcello Mastroianni

The Other Man Armando Trovajoli

Part III—Mara (Rome)

Mara Sophia Loren

Rusconi Marcello Mastroianni

Grandmother Tina Pica

Umberto Giovanni Ridolfi

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