

FLASHES

THE TRIANGLE AGAIN

"DON'T CALL IT LOVE" IS SMART COMEDY

By Grace Kingsley

This is another of those "Don't Change Your Stenographer," "Is That What You Call a Husband?" "What's Your Wife Thinking Of?" "New Husbands for Damaged Ones" kind of pictures—"Don't Call It Love," down at the Metropolitan.

I don't know how it got by the censors, but I'm glad it did, because "Don't Call It Love" is sophisticated and entertaining.

I suppose that if the piano-tuner hadn't interrupted Jack Holt and Nita Naldi just as he did, we should never have seen the picture. No matter that Miss Naldi wears the very wickedest gowns, and that everybody except said piano-tuner evidently had the very naughtiest thoughts, or that the lady had the purplest kind of a past.

The theme of "Don't Call It Love" is a good deal like that of "The Boomerang," in which, you remember, the hero remarks "Love isn't sweet and kind and helpful and inspiring, it's a mean cruel, dirty, despicable game."

They made the supreme feminine figure in this a prima donna, which, of course, gave a chance for all sorts of hectic love scenes. The heroine is a poor Patient Griselda type, who is faithful and honest and true, and just waits and waits. She gets him at last—what's left of him.

Nita Naldi always looks to me like a poster of somebody else. She is always so hectically overdone. And she is always stiff—except when she leans backward to be kissed.

But she is improving, for she introduces a human note in making her vampire show moments of feigned ingenuousness—which is a clever note.

William De Mille surely does know his business. No matter what the flavor of the offering, whether whimsical or sophisticated, he gets the very tang of that flavor into his production.

Clara Beranger adapted "Rita Coventry" to the films, and the title has been changed to "Don't Call It Love." Which was a very good idea.

She has given us the perfect gobs of smart epigrams which peppered the book, and these subtleties page the laughs in the audience, too.

Never trust a man's opinion of himself except when he says he's a fool," says one.

"No man in the world is square," says another, "there is always a curve on which he will skid."

The Madonna-like beauty of Agnes Ayres is revealed in the role of the patient Griselda sweetheart, but she seems suffering from unwanted self-consciousness. Besides, she will show up with her hair marcelled on the Judgment Day or refuse to enter heaven.

I have a feeling that adverse criticism of Miss Ayres's once genuine manner of acting has had a bad effect on her work, or else Mr. De Mille doesn't know how to get the best out of her.

Theodore Kosloff didn't have much to do, except alternately to kiss Nita's hand and rave at her, but did it so well that we wished we could see more of him.

Rod LaRocque gave a skillful and flexible performance of the young piano-tuner who finally engaged the egotistical singer's attention. Here is one of the finest young actors in the business.

Jack Holt, of course, is the fine, upstanding hero of always.

The reporter wasn't natural—the fellow who came to get a story about the supposed bride and groom when Nita and Jack registered at the hotel—he didn't hold on long enough!

If you are crazy about kids' performances, you will probably like the Kiddies Revue very much, because the youngsters are prize dancers. Little Frances Dexter does especially good work in a Russian dance. Collins and Harlan, of phonograph fame, show you how to make records, if it excites you any.

"RENDEZVOUS" PROVES BABY STAR TRIUMPH

We all know that Marshall Neilan is great, but why doesn't he prove it oftener? Sometimes I think he loses interest in a story which seems to him inferior and sometimes I think he should make only episodic things like "Bits of Life," one of the great pictures of all time. Or else he needs a big inspiration in his directors. Certainly when he has directed Mary Pickford he has never muffed it.

Neilan's picturization of "The Rendezvous" at the California, resolves itself for me into a series of dull moments while I await the bright coming of Lucille Ricksen, Sydney Chaplin and Conrad Nagle. These three work so excellently that the picture is worth going to see on their account. Otherwise it is uninspired, draggy and trite.

Lucille Ricksen is the most vividly dramatic, tensely appealing emotional young actress which this and most former years have turned out. As the poor little harried Russian princess living as a peasant amid the communistic uproar, her work is simply superb. She has the tender appeal of Bessie Love, the fine strength of Mae Marsh.

Why doesn't somebody star Syd Chaplin in a great character role? Here is one of the most skillful actors on the screen, both for pantomime and facial expression.

As the soldier in "Rendezvous," he very nearly steals the picture. His scene in which he comes into the girl's house and nochalantly interrupts the villain by juggling three hand grenades is a bear. That is a bit of business worthy the sparkling genius of Neilan.

There's another scene, too, which speaks of Neilan at his best. That's when the girl, rendered deaf by the beating of her husband, unknowingly locks him in a deserted mosque, and doesn't hear his wild calls for her help. Here, presumably, he perishes.

Conrad Nagle lives the role of the Yankee soldier-hero. Kathleen Key is very clever in a minor part. Elmo Lincoln plays a mean villain, and the others are entirely satisfactory.

Some day a great story of Russia will be made, but "The Rendezvous" isn't it.

An amusing little cartoon comedy, "Five Orphans of the Storm,"ooms up entertainingly.

The musical program by Carli D. Elinor is very pleasing indeed, and is worth the price of admission all in itself.