

'Some Like It Hot' Not as Hot as Expected

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

"Some Like It Hot," long-heralded and starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon and a host of old-timers from the gangster era—plus Joe E. Brown—is often funny but not the unalloyed delight it was cracked up to be. Considering that its writer-director, Billy Wilder, is a veteran comedy constructionist, I was rather surprised to discover that it is not at all sure what kind of comedy it is.

No doubt can exist, though, that it is primarily a sex farce. For those who like it hot, the picture has Miss Monroe in provocative poses and situations to match. And it has Lemmon and Curtis running around in female attire, a couple of Charley's aunts transported from the 90s to the prohibition era.

Fleeing From Mob

The pair, jobless musicians, inadvertently witness a facsimile of the Valentine's Day massacre in Chicago and, taking it on the lam from George Raft and his mob, find themselves members of Sweet Sue and Her Society Syncopators, an all-girl orchestra.

The ukulele player and vocalist in the band is Sugar Cane, otherwise Miss Monroe. Lemmon falls for her but it is Curtis she goes for when he turns up in the guise of a bored millionaire playboy. (The scene has now shifted to Miami Beach.) Meanwhile Joe E. Brown, also a millionaire and even more eccentric, goes on the make for the "girlish" Daphne, as Lemmon calls himself.

About this time Raft & Co. reappear, and bullets fly in a bang-up finish that is more sanguinary than sanguine.

Literal Water Polo

To balance this questionable macabre humor there are some funny stretches involving Marilyn and Lemmon in a crowded Pullman upper berth, Marilyn and Curtis in a baldly suggestive and extended seduction sequence aboard a yacht, and Lemmon and Curtis in a routine ensue when the former announces to the latter that he is "engaged" to Brown.

Some of the other lines are amusing, too, when Tony boasts to Marilyn of his sports prowess and she inquires, "Water polo? Isn't

that dangerous?" "I'll say!" he retorts. "I had two ponies drown under me."

Miss Monroe has her typical malapropisms. "Diamonds!" she exclaims admiringly. "They must be worth their weight in gold."

I didn't think she looked her best or for that matter, remembering "Bus Stop" and "The Prince and the Showgirl," played it. With sex she is still endowed abundantly. She sings—passably—"Runnin' Wild," "I Want to Be Loved by You" and "I'm Through With Love."

Startling Topper

It is Lemmon and Brown who, in their individual comic styles, provide the best laughs. But Joe E.'s final tag is a startler from one who for years eschewed anything blue.

Curtis is good enough but a couple of paces behind them. His Cary Grant accent as the playboy (not his doing) annoyed the hell out of me.

Assisting are Pat O'Brien, Nehemiah Persoff, Joan

Shawlee, George E. Stone, Mike Mazurki, Harry Wilson, Billy Gray and Beverly Hills.

I. A. L. Diamond wrote the screenplay with Wilder. The Mirisch Co. picture for United Artists is now at the Chinese Theater.