SHOWING NOW IN HOUSTON...

French Comedy-Of-Manners And Preminger's 'Exodus' Rated High

By FRAN MURPHY

Bill of fare for two entirely different tastes are available in Houston now. At the Alley is a very French-type comedy—THE HAPPY TIME. For the more serious, EXODUS opens a long run at the Tower.

Samuel Taylor's THE HAPPY TIME is billed as a comedy of love. Thematically it is a young boy's initiation into "long pants." The play is set in Montreal. The characters comprise a typical French family, the Bonnards. Here an idealistic father, a wine-loving uncle, a young woman-chasing uncle, and an old woman-chasing grandfather all influence the youngest Bonnard male, Bibi. All are, one way or another, rather ineffectually controlled by women — Maman, a staunch Scotch Presbyterian, Aunt Felicia, the nagger, Sally O'Hara, a tomboy American and Mignonette, a typical French maid.

THE PLAY, when dealing with "the glands" is most enjoyable—the action moves fast, and the lines present a typically French view of the great war between the sexes. However, Bibi's growth must include other things than sex, so the author has interspersed several scenes of universal truism—all very nice, but not too relevant in a comedy of manners.

All in all, the situations and acting of most (especially the boy, and the women-chasing uncle and grandfather) carry the play over the faulty spots, and make a worthwhile evening. An entirely different fare is Otto Preminger's EXODUS—the story of the Jewish fight for a nation.

THE MAIN problem is the one that plagues all book adaptations—what is meant by the written word is often hard to show pictorially. The question then is, to follow the story and miss the symbolism—or include the symbolism and change the story. EXODUS does both—sometimes well, often detrimentally.

The final impression is not so much one of an over-all comprehension of Israel's problems, but of three separated climaxed incidents—the releasing of the ship Exodus from the Cyprus harbor, the partitioning of Israel, and an unfinished exploration of the Arab incidents.

Apart from the rather annoying habit of passing up perfect places to end the story, the picture does hold the audience's interest. The actors all do a creditable job, even (if previous dislikes can be dispelled) Sal Mineo. The attempt to turn the book to a movie was a monumental job, and was done amazingly well.