

BANK OF AMERICA CINEMA

CLASSIC FILM SERIES



JANUARY - JUNE 2010

FROM THE BOOTH

The building is for sale, and who knows what the future will hold. What we can guarantee is at least another six months of great films. We've made sure this season will be one to remember, starting with G.W. Pabst's silent masterpiece *Pandora's Box* with live accompaniment by Jay Warren, and ending with Jane Russell's, ah, assets in Howard Hughes's notorious *The Outlaw*. In between, we've stocked up on films we've wanted to show for the past five years but couldn't find through normal distributors—rare prints of such gems as Douglas Sirk's weepie *The First Legion*, Anthony Mann's scandalous *God's Little Acre*, and John Cromwell's elusive *The Enchanted Cottage*. Between March 13th and June 26th, blood pressures will rise and edges of seats will be perched on—we're running the 1940 Republic serial *The Mysterious Dr. Satan!* And in April we have two radio films to celebrate the career of Chuck Schaden, who started this film series back in 1972. Thanks, Chuck. We literally wouldn't be here without you.

Film program: Michael W. Phillips Jr. (MP)

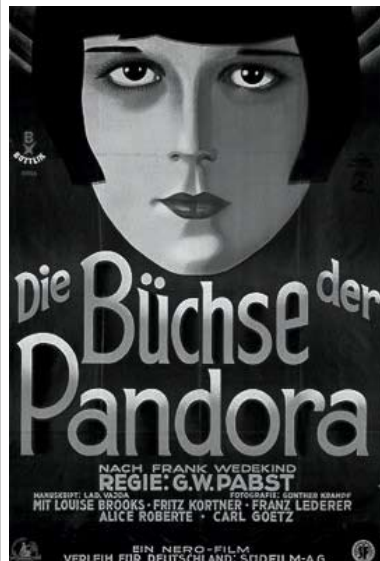
Special print coordinator: Julian Antos (JA)

Program design: Becca Hall

With assistance from Kyle Westphal (KW) and Michael King (MK)

PANDORA'S BOX • 1929

DIRECTED BY G. W. PABST



G.W. Pabst did not “discover” Louise Brooks—teenage Ziegfeld Follies chorine, Paramount contract player, and all-around magnetic embodiment of an inchoate sexual revolution. Impressed by Brooks’s extended cameo in *A Girl in Every Port*, Pabst stumbled upon a form that would match her ego and exhibitionist instincts and plucked her away from a stingy and indifferent Paramount front office. Ostensibly an adaptation of a cycle of respected plays by Frank Wedekind, *Pandora's Box* is really little more than a parade of racy incidents masquerading as narrative—Brooks’s Lulu seduces every strata of Weimar society from meter reader to impresario, flouting sexual conventions and constantly escaping or instigating violence. If this were an American film, it would be an exhausting 70-minute pre-Coder starring Barbara Stanwyck

and a negligee. Here it’s elevated to a portrait of a whole society, constantly renewed by Brooks’s glowing, unaccountable work. It’s not a performance—it’s embodiment. (KW)

Accompanied by Jay Warren on the theater organ.

131 min. • Nero-Film AG • 35mm

Short: “Talman Girls Funny Formal Party 1956”

A NOTE ABOUT THE SHORT:

We found this colorful 8mm footage hidden among the spare reels in our booth. Before the film series, it seems Talman Bank employees looking for fun turned to grass skirts, silly dances, cowboy costumes—and amateur filmmaking!

MY SISTER EILEEN • 1955**DIRECTED BY RICHARD QUINE**

No, it's not déjà vu—we showed the 1942 non-musical version last year. This 1955 take on Ruth McKenney's accounts of her daft sister's adventures in New York has Betty Garrett stepping in for Rosalind Russell and Janet Leigh top-lining as the titular Eileen. The plot this time around has Ruth trying to convince playboy publisher Jack Lemmon that she's actually Eileen. After a dispute with the producers of a 1953 stage musical version, Columbia commissioned new music and a studio lawyer lurked on set to make sure the film was nothing like the stage show. (MP)



108 min. • Columbia • 35mm Color

Short: The Sap Takes a Wrap (Charley Chase, 1939)

THE FIRST LEGION • 1951**DIRECTED BY DOUGLAS SIRK**

Douglas Sirk's little-known pre-weepie, a "faithful, temperate and generally reasonable film" according to the *New York Times*, is a testament to both faith and doubt. When a dying priest miraculously rises and walks, the entire seminary gears up for the canonization of its founder. When word of the miracle spreads, lawyer-turned-priest Boyer is castigated for his "lawyerly" investigation, but a series of events conspire to test everyone's faith and motives. Emmett Lavery, adapting his 1934 play, was nominated for the Writer's Guild "Best Written American--Low Budget" award, but he didn't win. (MP)

86 min. • Sedif Productions • 16mm • Unavailable on DVD

Short: Little Rascals: Free Wheeling (1932, Robert F. McGowan)

HELLZAPOPPIN' • 1941**DIRECTED BY H. C. POTTER**

Though Universal wimped out last minute and slapped a love story on this screen adaptation of the successful Broadway musical (much like MGM did to their Marx Brothers films), *Hellzapoppin'* still makes very little sense. The notably unfunny Olsen and Johnson are thrust into a world of self-referential absurdity (hell on a sound-stage, and a promiscuous-as-ever Martha Raye) via taxicab while Shemp Howard squabbles with his girlfriend in a projection booth. The first ten minutes are probably as good as American comedy (or avant-garde, for that matter) get, and the rest is a beautifully executed train wreck. (JA)



84 min. • Mayfair Productions • 16mm • Unavailable on DVD

Short: Two Nuts in a Rut (1948, Edward Bernds)



MY NAME IS JULIA ROSS • 1945
DIRECTED BY JOSEPH H. LEWIS

TWO O'CLOCK COURAGE • 1945
DIRECTED BY ANTHONY MANN

"You haven't forgotten us again, have you, Marion?" Good question—film noir protagonists can never be too sure about their identities, even when they're emblazoned on the theater's marquee. Julia Ross (Nina Foch) takes a job as personal secretary to a



wealthy widow (Dame May Whitty as Mrs. Hughes), and, like any good noir lead, promptly blacks out. She comes to days later in a gothic Cornwall estate, where Mrs. Hughes insists Julia is actually her son's (George Macready) amnesiac wife Marion, just returned from a stay at the mental hospital. Of course, she could just be giving Julia the ever-popular *Gaslight* treatment, but who would do something like that? Though begun as a B picture, *My Name is Julia Ross* became the sleeper hit of the year (a fitting honor for a film that turns on a fateful nap), and catapulted director Joseph H. Lewis to, well, even better B-grade noirs.

Anthony Mann, too, explored the lost art of forgetting stuff with *Two O'Clock Courage*, in which a sassy cabbie (Ann Rutherford) picks up a fare (Tom Conway) with the ultimate noir double whammy: he's an amnesiac and a murder suspect. Seems like there should be more to the story, but I... can't seem to... remember... (MK)

65 min. • Columbia • 35mm Unavailable on DVD

68 min. • RKO • 16mm

Short: Journey into Light (MGM Minatures)



IMITATION OF LIFE • 1934

DIRECTED BY JOHN M. STAHL

Two single mothers, one white and one black (Claudette Colbert and Louise Beavers), launch a business empire together but find that financial success can't fix their family problems. A standout melodrama—and that's not a bad word—that the misguided *New York Times* dismissed as "the most shameless tearjerker of the Fall," this first film version of Fannie Hurst's bestseller seems light-years ahead of its own time and of the 1959 Douglas Sirk remake. The highlight of the stellar cast is the unheralded Ned Sparks in one of the greatest supporting performances in classic Hollywood. (MP)

111 min. • Universal • 16mm

Cartoon: Hot Lips Jasper (George Pal, 1945)



HISTORY IS MADE AT NIGHT • 1937

DIRECTED BY FRANK BORZAGE

Jean Arthur divorces wealthy shipbuilder Colin Clive to pursue well-adjusted Parisian waiter Charles Boyer; Clive objects and tries to sink the two lovers on one of his ocean liners. The film should be absurd, and it is absurd, but nobody pulls this sort of thing off as well as Frank Borzage, who culls tenderness from lust and favors, in the words of Andrew Sarris,

“love over probability.” This is about glossy and melodramatic as the hopeless romantic ever got, so if you must come alone, you’re advised to bring a handkerchief. (JA)

97 min. • Walter Wanger Productions • 16mm • Unavailable on DVD
Cartoon: Love Comes to a Magoo (1958, Tom MacDonald)

MONSIEUR VERDOUX • 1947

DIRECTED BY CHARLES CHAPLIN

Monsieur Verdoux, Chaplin’s first feature after a trumped-up white slavery prosecution, was understandably replete with unfashionable cynicism; his character, a charming Parisian clerk who takes to marrying and murdering wealthy dowagers (including the unsinkable Martha Raye) to support his own provincial family, was meant as an indictment of western democracy itself, which all too adeptly applied business-like efficacy



to genocide. Quickly denounced and boycotted in an America eager to excuse World War as an aberration rather than the culmination of modernity, *Monsieur Verdoux* today looks like Chaplin’s masterpiece, a hilarious comedy of manners about surviving in a corrupt world. (KW)

124 min. • Charles Chaplin Productions • 35mm

Short: The Gay Parisian (Jean Negulesco, 1941)

THE VISIT • 1964

DIRECTED BY BERNHARD WICKI

The world’s richest woman (Ingrid Bergman) returns triumphantly to the hometown she fled in shame as a teenager. She’s willing to invest in the economically depressed town, on one condition: the townsfolk must kill the man (Anthony Quinn) who betrayed her years before. Of course they refuse—but that’s a lot of money. Swiss author Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s play *The Visit of the Old Lady* was nominated for a Tony in 1959; he insisted that it was a comedy, but as he said in another work, “A story is not finished, until it has taken the worst turn.” (MP)

100 min. • Cinecitta • 16mm CinemaScope • Unavailable on DVD

Cartoon: One Froggy Evening (Chuck Jones, 1955)



THE DEEP BLUE SEA • 1955

DIRECTED BY ANATOLE LITVAK

"Sometimes the sea looks inviting," Hester (Vivien Leigh) murmurs just after her suicide attempt fails because she didn't pay the gas bill. She's married to a boring old judge (Emlyn Williams) and shackled up with a formerly dashing pilot (Kenneth Moore), but neither life has managed to make her happy. Early CinemaScope may not have been the best choice for this intimate drawing-room drama based on Terence Rattigan's hit play, as the format's limitations ruled out the close-ups that Leigh's performance needed, but this stunning Technicolor print should knock your socks off nonetheless. (MP)

96 min. • London Films • 16mm Technicolor CinemaScope • Unavailable on DVD

Cartoon: Goggle Fishing Bear (Preston Blair and Michael Lah, 1949)

DRAGONWYCK • 1946

DIRECTED BY JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ

Writer/producer Joe Mankiewicz added directing to his resume with this brooding blend of historical romance and Gothic horror in the *Rebecca* mold—you know, the kind with "Secret thoughts ... That led to secret love ... That led to rapture and terror!" according to the film's posters. Gene Tierney's a poor farm girl sent to live with rich relatives, one of whom (Vincent Price, naturally) may be a murderer. Ernst Lubitsch was supposed to direct, but a heart attack slowed him down, and he later had his name removed from the film entirely after a run-in with the Production Code. (MP)

103 min. • 20th Century-Fox • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 1: Return of the Copperhead (1940)

**GOD'S LITTLE ACRE • 1958**

DIRECTED BY ANTHONY MANN

Robert Ryan and his albino farmhand spend their days in vain attempts at finding gold on his single acre of land while Aldo Ray carries on an adulterous relationship with the sultry Tina Louise. After flopping on its initial release as an "over 18" film, Anthony Mann's steamy Erskine Caldwell adaptation made the usual rounds on television and fell into the public domain, sadly forgotten even despite Mann's only slightly more straightlaced (and generally extraordinary) westerns. Even so, this slice of Southern pulp sees Mann at his most bizarre, which is saying a lot for the director of *The Furies* and *Man of the West*. (JA)

118 min. • United Artists • 35mm • Unavailable on DVD

Serial: Mysterious Dr. Satan 2: Thirteen Steps (1940)



DEAD OF NIGHT • 1945

DIRECTED BY ALBERTO CAVALCANTI, CHARLES CRICHTON, BASIL DEARDEN, AND ROBERT HAMER

"There's a ghost as well as a skeleton in everyone's cupboard." The pioneering horror anthology *Dead of Night* features some of Britain's finest talents in six interlinked tales of the macabre, with a framing story about an architect whose recurring nightmare comes true. The American release was stripped of two segments but our print is intact, with "Golfing Story" and "Christmas Party" taking their places alongside such unforgettable shorts as "Ventriloquist's Dummy," in which Michael Redgrave's dummy won't behave. Unusual fare from Ealing Studios, which is better known for comedies like *The Lavender Hill Mob* than ghost stories. (MP)

103 min. • Ealing • 16mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 3: Undersea Tomb (1940)



Doors open at 7:00 for special festivities in honor of Chuck Schaden, radio superstar and founder of Bank of America Cinema, in celebration of his 40th year in radio.

THE BIG BROADCAST • 1932

DIRECTED BY FRANK TUTTLE

We begin our two-weekend celebration of our founder Chuck Schaden's radio career with the grandfather of all radio musicals. Paramount stuffed dozens of radio personalities into the thin plot about a budding star (second-billed Bing Crosby, playing a guy named Bing Crosby) who won't settle down and be famous. George Burns and Gracie Allen, the Mills Brothers, Cab Calloway, and the Boswell Sisters are just the highlights of this who's-who of 1930s radio. The formula was such as success that Paramount filmed three more *Big Broadcast* films in the 1930s. Chuck will introduce the film in person. (MP)

82 min. • Paramount • 16mm • Unavailable on DVD

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 4: Human Bomb (1940)

RADIO DAYS • 1987

DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN

INTRODUCED BY STEVE DARNALL, HOST OF "THOSE WERE THE DAYS" ON WDCB

Woody Allen narrates his youth in New York. Diane Keaton sings, but there's still a lot to appreciate: colorful Jewish relatives, a sublime soundtrack, and Woody Allen waxing poetic as no other New Yorker can do. And though Allen's East Coast neuroses may never cater to the bulk of our well-adjusted Midwestern sensibilities, this blatantly nostalgic coming of age piece (not to say that Allen himself ever really came of age, or that he isn't at his absolute best when blatantly nostalgic) still holds a good deal of worth for anyone aching with melancholy and still waiting for the next chapter of *The Lone Ranger*. (JA)

88 min. • Orion Pictures • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 5: Doctor Satan's Man of Steel (1940)

THE MARK OF ZORRO • 1940**DIRECTED BY ROUBEN MAMOULIAN**

Tyrone Power steps into Douglas Fairbanks's formidable boots in Rouben Mamoulian's lavish adaptation of Johnston McCulley's pulp novels. He's Don Diego, a foppish aristocrat in Spanish colonial California who spends his evenings wooing the beautiful Linda Darnell and his nights robbing the rich and giving to the poor. Expert swordsman Basil Rathbone, playing the evil Pasquale, again had to play down his skills and lose to an inferior opponent—Power was replaced in long shots by someone who could actually fence. Eugene Pallette plays another kindly priest, and Gale Sondergaard plays another evil temptress. (MP)

94 min. • 20th Century-Fox • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 6: Double Cross (1940)

**I'M NO ANGEL • 1933****DIRECTED BY WESLEY RUGGLES**

With the clock ticking down to the day that the Production Code would take the spice out of her patented hot sauce, Mae West followed up *She Done Him Wrong* with a bit of déjà vu: she's pitted against Cary Grant again, she leers and rolls her hips suggestively again, she dispenses double entendres again, and she belts out a half-dozen sexy songs again—but this time there's a lion! But who cares about plot: it's about exchanges like this:

"Believe me, I've been places and seen

things." "Mmm-hmm. I've been things and seen places. That sort of evens us out." (MP)

87 min. • Paramount • 16mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 7: The Monster Strikes (1940)

A CANTERBURY TALE • 1944**DIRECTED BY MICHAEL POWELL AND
EMERIC PRESSBURGER**

Kim Hunter, Dennis Price, and the astonishingly good John Sweet (an actual American sergeant Powell recruited for the role of an out of place U.S. soldier in England) wander around the fictitious Chillingbourne, outside of Canterbury, awaiting their respective fates. Probably the strangest film in a body of work that was characterized by its own vibrant anomalies, it's also The Archers' quietest film—much closer to Powell's early masterpiece *Edge of the World* and the films of Yasujiro Ozu than *The 49th Parallel* or *A Matter of Life and Death*—though it has the most to say. (JA)

124 min. • The Archers • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 8:

Highway of Death (1940)



LADIES IN RETIREMENT • 1941**DIRECTED BY CHARLES VIDOR**

Ida Lupino's crazy sisters (Edith Barrett and Elsa *Bride-of-Frankenstein* Lanchester) come to visit her in the hinterlands after getting kicked out of their London home, and darned if anyone can get any peace and quiet. What could have been a cozy domestic comedy is here a creepy little melodrama equal parts *The Old Dark House* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*, just not very funny. But one needn't look for laughs when they get to hear Ida Lupino say things like "I won't swear on the Bible. It's wicked." in a house full of dead birds. Remade in 1968 as *The Mad House*. (JA)

91 min. • Columbia • 35mm • Unavailable on DVD

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 9: Double Jeopardy (1940)

**LIFEBOAT • 1944****DIRECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK**

Six survivors from a torpedoed passenger ship (including the sometimes remarkable Tallulah Bankhead in her first film since the unremarkable *Faithless* in 1932) stumble into a Nazi while failing to navigate their way to safety in a dinky lifeboat, and that's about it. Experimental by circumstance (Zanuck was cheap, Hitchcock wanted a little less to work with), *Lifeboat* thrives on its single set and a bunch of close-ups, and though its detractors wrote it off as an exercise, the whole thing is so tense and claustrophobic (and well cast) that it can't help but be likable too. (JA)

97 min. • 20th Century-Fox • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 10: Bridge of Peril (1940)

**MR. WU • 1927****DIRECTED BY WILLIAM NIGH**

"A maiden defiled must be put to death by the hand of her father," according to the "ancient Chinese law" that prompts the mayhem in this adaptation of a popular 1914 play. Lon Chaney demonstrates a few of his thousand faces in the decidedly pre-PC story of a Chinese patriarch who loses his marbles when his daughter—sensitive readers may want to skip ahead—kisses an Englishman! Chaney got to play two characters at different stages of life (his makeup took six hours to apply), and audiences thrilled to Hollywood's fanciful ideas of ancient Chinese customs, especially those connected with honor and revenge. The aptly named Mordaunt Hall decried the softening of the source material in the *New York*



Times, complaining that Wu's "vengeance is more limited than it was in the play." You've been warned. Jay Warren will accompany the film live on the electric theatre organ. (MP)

90 min. • MGM • 35mm • Unavailable on DVD

Short: It's a Gift (1923, Hugh Fay)



BRUTE FORCE • 1947

DIRECTED BY JULES DASSIN

"Those gates only open three times: when you come in, when you've served your time, or when you're dead." Jules Dassin's shockingly violent existential prison movie pits antihero con Burt Lancaster against sadistic guard Hume Cronyn, both men delivering among the best performances of their careers. Producer Mark Hellinger assembled a crack team, including screenwriter Richard Brooks, composer Miklos Rozsa, and Garbo's favorite cinematographer William Daniels. The film upends Hollywood's conservative values, eschewing clear associations of good with authority figures and evil with criminals, and allowing punishments that outweigh crimes. It's ostensibly an escape caper, but from this prison, "Nobody escapes. Nobody ever escapes." (MP)

86 min. • George Minter Productions • 16mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 11: Death Closes In (1940)



DECISION AT SUNDOWN • 1957

DIRECTED BY BUDD BOETTICHER

Just a bit more morally ambiguous than usual, Randolph Scott rides into a nervous little town called Sundown to give John Carroll, who absconded with Scott's wife (Karen Steele, who also starred in *Ride Lonesome* and was married to Boetticher for a year or two), his comeuppance. Equal parts psychological western and blood and guts, Boetticher's third collaboration with Scott feels more like a sophisticated TV movie shot for the big screen than a mid-50s western, but all that really means is that Charles Lang got to write in more innuendos and Boetticher's gorgeous Technicolor palette got a few more splotches of red than would have been possible if this were some above-the-radar Victor Mature disaster. (JA)

77 min. • Columbia • 35mm color

Short: Mysterious Doctor Satan 12: Crack-Up (1940)

FOR ME AND MY GAL • 1942

DIRECTED BY BUSBY BERKELEY

Like *The Strawberry Blonde*, *For Me and My Gal* is a wartime nostalgia confection that locates Americana in an earlier style of entertainment—vaudeville. Judy Garland (in her first adult role) and Gene Kelly (in his screen debut) play two small-town hoofers whose path to New York's (or is it Newark's?) Palace Theater is fraught with betrayal, regret, spinsters, hussies, and the draft. None of that gets in the way of the terrific and exuberant musical numbers, which include "Ballin' the Jack," "When You Wore a Tulip and I Wore a Big Red Rose," and, of course, "For Me and My Gal." (KW)

104 min. • MGM • 16mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 13: Disguised (1940)



THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE • 1945**DIRECTED BY JOHN CROMWELL**

Matinee idol Robert Young plays a disfigured soldier hiding from the world in a haunted New England cottage, and the beautiful Dorothy McGuire plays the homely caretaker in John Cromwell's adaptation of Sir Arthur Pinero's WWI-era morale-boosting play about love's rose-colored glasses. Herbert Marshall is the blind pianist who recounts the otherworldly story in flashback, and Spring Byington's in there too. Grumpy old Bosley Crowther resisted the film's undeniable, wistful charm, complaining instead that it was both unrealistic and "more of a horror film than a psychological romance." Some people just don't believe in miracles. (MP)

91 min. • RKO • 16mm • Unavailable on DVD

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 14: The Flaming Coffin (1940)

**THE OUTLAW • 1943****DIRECTED BY HOWARD HUGHES**

After being hacked at by censors for six years, Howard Hughes's voluminous, almost comfortingly naïve western was released to hordes of wide-eyed adolescents and salivating old men with an advertising campaign sporting the tagline "How'd you like to tussle with Russell?" Any merits Howard Hughes possessed as a filmmaker (don't try to take your socks and shoes off to count them) are probably best appreciated in *The Outlaw*, as the bulk of Hughes' gaudy eccentricities are channeled through Jane Russell. At the very least it looks darn good, with cinematography by Gregg Toland (of, ahem, *Citizen Kane* fame). (JA)

116 min. • Howard Hughes Productions • 35mm

Serial: Mysterious Doctor Satan 15: Doctor Satan Strikes (1940)



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