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Bank of America  
cinema



# FROM THE BOOTH

THERE'S A LOT OF CHANGE afoot as we embark on our 36th year. First is obvious: we're now the Bank of America Cinema. Although the packaging is different, we haven't changed the recipe, and we're still dedicated to showing the finest films classic Hollywood has to offer. Second, after five years of programming and projecting, Michael King is leaving us for a new job, so say hello to Kyle Westphal and Becca Hall, the new faces behind the counter and up in the booth. Third, we're changing things up a bit on the schedule: instead of having one overarching theme (or, more often, no theme at all), we're splitting the season up into mini-themes. July rides in on a train, August looks at John Ford in the 1930s, Joan Crawford rules September, October comes back from the dead, the British invade in November, and December is devoted to the collateral damage caused by the Nazis. But we're not too regimented—we reserved room for angst-ridden writers, dancing gangsters, singing cowboys, housing crises, an unkillable Karloff, and little tramps. And they're almost all in 35mm.



Program by Michael King (MK) and Michael W. Phillips, Jr. (MP)



## IN A LONELY PLACE | 1950

DIRECTOR: NICHOLAS RAY

"I make it a point never to see the pictures I write." Humphrey Bogart, for once playing a character with a name worthy of his visage: Dixon Steele, a disgruntled screenwriter who speaks exclusively in quips so eloquently constructed yet effortlessly caustic that one yearns to read his screenplays. Despite only having recently become a part of it, Nicholas Ray poured an ocean of rage at the Hollywood system into his fourth film as a director—the first scene alone contains more vitriol than a dozen viewings of *The Player*. Adding to the pathos is Ray's casting of his soon to be ex-wife Gloria Grahame as the love interest, which might account for the most cynical meet-cute in screen history with Bogart as a murder suspect and Grahame his alibi. Often pigeonholed as noir, thanks in no small part to the crackling script and Bogart's erratic, electric performance, *In a Lonely Place* is the kind of film you could quote all day, and its conflicted takes on domesticity (a subject Ray exploded in *Bigger Than Life*) and Hollywood are illustrated in a couple of early exchanges: Q: "Don't you like to talk anymore?" A: "Not to people who have my number," and "There is no sacrifice too great for a chance at immortality." (MK)



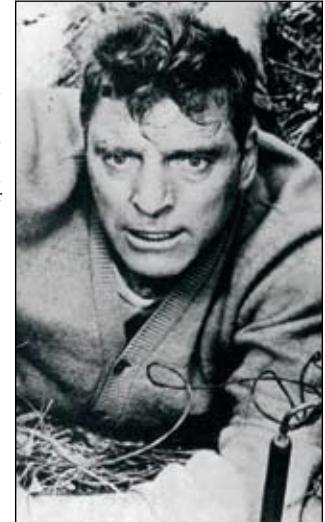
COLUMBIA 94 MIN. 35MM

SHORT: "PORKY'S PREVIEW" (1941), TEX AVERY (PORKY PIG)

## THE TRAIN | 1965

DIRECTOR: JOHN FRANKENHEIMER

"I wanted all the realism possible. There are no tricks in this film. When trains crash together, they are real trains. There is no substitute for that kind of reality." Good thing he wasn't making a movie about nuclear war. Maybe John Frankenheimer (listed in the opening credits as a peer of Van Gough and Cezanne) insisted on so much realism because his producer-star, Burt Lancaster, had already steamrolled original director Arthur Penn, who lasted exactly one day of shooting because he was more interested in conversation than in demolition. In this based-on-a-true-story actioner, Lancaster is a French railroad inspector and member of the Resistance who's charged with preventing the Nazis from stealing a trainload of priceless artworks. This "prevention" consists of a lot of explosions and trains crashing together. (Real trains, remember; see above.) Paul Scofield is his Nazi nemesis, and Jeanne Moreau is the girl. Although the emphasis is on action, Frankenheimer's film (it says so right on the title screen) manages to wrestle with the idea of sacrificing oneself for something as intangible as a nation or a culture, as Lancaster, no art lover, comes to embrace the mission he initially belittles. (MP)



JULY 12, 2008

*trains*

UNITED ARTISTS 133 MIN. 35MM TECHNICOLOR  
SHORT: "WE'RE IN THE HONEY" (1948), SEYMOUR KNEITEL



## UNION PACIFIC | 1939

DIRECTOR: CECIL B. DEMILLE

It's no surprise that epic filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille made an epic film about the building of the Transcontinental Railroad; the real surprise is that it took him until 1939 to get around to doing it, and it's no mistake that the *New York Times* called the film "a labor only slightly less Herculean than the building of the railroad itself." Joel McCrea plays a railroad troubleshooter hired to prevent the bad guys from preventing the good guys from finishing the railroad on time, Barbara Stanwyck's the Irish tomboy love interest, Brian Donlevy's the boss, Robert Preston is on the wrong side, and Akim Tamiroff is Fiesta, the Mexican mule boss. Like something out of a Cecil B. DeMille film, the three-day world premiere in Omaha was so huge that 250,000 people showed up, eight National Guard battalions had to be called in to maintain order, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt kicked it off remotely by pushing a button in Washington. In 2002, the Cannes Film Festival reached back across time and gave DeMille the Palm d'Or from the 1939 inaugural fest, which had been interrupted by World War II. (MP)

PARAMOUNT 133 MIN. 16MM  
CARTOON: "SMILE, DARN YA, SMILE!" (1931), RUDOLPH ISING



## 3:10 TO YUMA | 1957

DIRECTOR: DELMER DAVES

"I s'pose I could try." One of the most stock lines of dialogue, uttered in weepies and war movies alike, reverberating throughout Hollywood as much as tender "I love you's" or a woman's scream. But how often does the plot actually turn on such a sentiment? First seen standing idly by during a holdup, compliant with the robbers, Dan Evans (Van Heflin) is no Good Samaritan. Virtually any movie-house spectator would act the same, but after fifty solid years of westerns, audiences were so accustomed to rote cinematic heroism that Evans's resignation comes as a shock. After all, John Wayne always tried, and the absence of such generic givens is precisely what makes Delmer Daves's elegiac oater so quietly moving—it's not every western that rounds up the posse with the rallying cry of: "Safe. Who knows what's safe? I know a man who dropped dead from looking at his wife. My own grandmother fought the Indians for sixty

years, then choked to death on lemon pie." That's good enough to send Evans from zero to vigilante, as he saddles up to engage the most cordial outlaw in the west (Glenn Ford) in the most protracted showdown since *High Noon*. Certainly the best film to ever come of Elmore Leonard's writing, Daves pitches this at a contemplative clip, coaxing patient performances out of Heflin and Ford, echoed by George Duning's lilting score. (MK)

COLUMBIA 92 MIN. 35MM  
SHORT: "THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY" (1903), EDWIN S. PORTER

## JUDGE PRIEST | 1934

DIRECTOR: JOHN FORD

Will Rogers may not have fit bestselling author Irvin Cobb's descriptions of Judge William Pittman Priest, the small-town, whisky-loving, no-nonsense judge in 1890s Kentucky, but in his first film with director John Ford, he made the beloved character his own. Much like Rogers's popular radio show, the film meanders through much of its running time, content to observe the rhythms of daily life. The "famous alarm clock" here is a plot involving romantic intrigue, buried pasts, courtroom drama, and, of course, Rogers's patented wry observations on everything going on around him. Rogers's love for ad-libbing prompted his frustrated director to tell a costar, "Better consult Mr. Rogers. He does most of the directing in this picture." Perhaps the fact that Rogers was the top box-office draw in 1934 had something to do with Ford's reaction. Despite the film's regrettable stereotyping of its black characters, Stepin Fetchit, who appears as Rogers's handyman, said later, "When people saw me and Will Rogers like brothers, that said something to them," and Ford did shoot two anti-lynching scenes that his studio cut from the final print. Ford resurrected them for his partial remake, 1953's *The Sun Shines Bright*. (MP)



20TH CENTURY FOX 80 MIN. 35MM  
SHORT: "SCRAM!" (1932), RAY MCCAREY (LAUREL & HARDY)

## YOUNG MR. LINCOLN | 1939

DIRECTOR: JOHN FORD

Johns Ford and Wayne have become inextricably linked in popular film memory, but throughout the 1940s Ford often catered to another, decidedly more mild-mannered muse: Henry Fonda, seen here in their first of seven collaborations. Cinematic fodder for big-time directors ranging from D.W. Griffith (*Abraham Lincoln*, starring Walter Huston) to Steven Spielberg (the in-the-works *Lincoln*, starring Liam Neeson), the Great Emancipator has proven to be one of cinema's most resurrected Americana idols, right up there with Jesse James. Ford's take focuses on Lincoln's pre-presidential early years as a Springfield trial lawyer, and is counterintuitively one of his most poetic and ethereal works, earning critical comparisons to Mizoguchi. Rejecting the imitative trappings that plague standard biopics, Henry Fonda instead gives a thoughtful interpretation of an icon—for a demonstration of the perils of caricature, one need look no further than Raymond Massey's lookalike impersonation in the following year's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Ford nabbed Oscar nominations for Best Picture and Director, but not for *Young Mr. Lincoln*—the Academy chose to recognize his other feat of 1939, a little picture called *Stagecoach*. (MK)



20TH CENTURY FOX 100 MIN. 35MM  
SHORT: "THE BRIDGE" (1931), CHARLES VIDOR (AKA "AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE")

john ford

AUGUST 16, 2008



## STEAMBOAT ROUND THE BEND | 1935

DIRECTOR: JOHN FORD

In his last filmed appearance (though it was released a month before *In Old Kentucky*) acerbic comedian Will Rogers is Doc John Pearly, a riverboat captain who uses his floating fortress to peddle snake oil—at least at first. After his nephew (John McGuire) is arrested for murder, Rogers must open a floating wax museum, find a wayward prophet, and win a steamboat race in order to prevent a hanging. Yep, you read that right. Unlike *Judge Priest*, this one is focused on action: the centerpiece is the epic steamboat race in which Rogers and his ragtag crew (including John Ford's big brother Francis and Stepin Fetchit) must make the supreme sacrifice in order to win. Eugene Pallette plays the sheriff, and novelist Irvin S. Cobb, who created the character of Judge William Priest, plays Pearly's nemesis, the captain of the *Pride of Paducah*. The film was released barely a month after Rogers's death in an airplane crash, an event that had prompted Hollywood to stop production and thousands of movie houses to darken their screens for two minutes in memory of the beloved comedian. (MP)

20TH CENTURY FOX 82 MIN. 35MM

CARTOON: "BOAT BUILDERS" (1938), BEN SHARPSTEEN (MICKEY MOUSE)



## PAL JOEY | 1957

DIRECTOR: GEORGE SIDNEY

Along with *Fire Down Below*, this Broadway transplant marked the end of a four-year absence from movies for once-ubiquitous pinup Rita Hayworth—it also marked the end of her tenure at Columbia Pictures, the studio her star power nearly singlehandedly kept afloat in the 1940s. Never one to waste time, studio head Harry Cohn was already grooming costar Kim Novak as her replacement; putting the two of them in pursuit of Frank Sinatra in *Pal Joey* literalized the transition, and the met the unspoken rule that the expanded widescreen canvas required the services of Three! Big! Stars! to fill. Sadly, Hayworth's career never recovered, but a decade after *Gilda* she proved she could still pull off a PG striptease better than anyone. Cohn had been eyeing this property since it premiered on Broadway seventeen years prior, and over the years he solicited virtually every star on the walk of fame: Gene Kelly (the stage lead), James Cagney, Cary Grant, Marlon Brando, Gloria Swanson, Mae West, etc. It's a good thing he landed on Sinatra—not only were ten Rogers & Hart songs imported from the play, but four more were added, including the immortal "My Funny Valentine" and "The Lady Is a Tramp." Hard to imagine Brando crooning his way through those chestnuts. (MK)

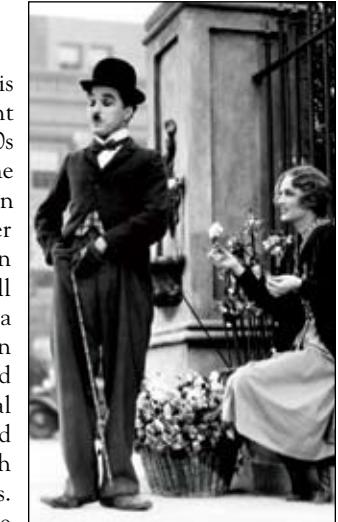
COLUMBIA 111 MIN. 35MM COLOR

NEWSREEL: "NEWS PARADE OF 1957"

## CITY LIGHTS | 1931

DIRECTOR: CHARLES CHAPLIN

Of the holy trinity of silent clowns, Charlie Chaplin is not only the sole survivor who can lay claim to outright masterpieces in the 1930s (not to mention the 1940s and 50s), but whose work arguably improved in the sound era. That's not to say he welcomed the burden of speech that would silence the creativity of Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd; on the contrary, Chaplin succeeded by stubbornly refusing to play along, still Tramping in his sound-era debut, which boasts not a single line of dialogue. And that's not to say Chaplin didn't value the advent of synchronous sound in and of itself—in fact, he seemed to understand its potential better than anybody, writing the score for *City Lights* and demonstrating that no amount of chatter could reach the comedic heights of a simple case of the hiccups. But the greatest moment of *City Lights* comes before the Tramp even appears, as Chaplin the director mocks the superfluousness of expository dialogue in a manner that should be familiar to fans of another famous Charlie, Brown. What follows is one of Chaplin's most heartfelt and character-driven pictures, culminating in a sensitively rendered coda that is said to have reduced Albert Einstein to tears at the film's gala premiere. (MK)



UNITED ARTISTS 87 MIN. 35MM

SHORT: "THE PLAY HOUSE" (1921), BUSTER KEATON



AUGUST 30, 2008



## DANCING LADY | 1933

DIRECTOR: ROBERT Z. LEONARD

It's the age-old backstage story of the budding Broadway starlet (Joan Crawford) who's torn between two loves, the rich playboy (Clark Gable) and the sweet, hard-working industry guy (Franchot Tone). Of course, Crawford added a bit of realism to the arrangement when she pulled for her sometimes-lover Gable (in their fourth film together) and her current boyfriend Tone to play the feuding fellows. Now, because this is a musical, Crawford must dance, and although screen newcomer Fred Astaire was enlisted to make her look good, it's clear that she was lucky it wasn't her day job. In fact, this film's success saved her day job: reeling from a couple of flops, she needed a hit, and although critics panned it, *Dancing Lady* was MGM's biggest money-maker of the year, becoming their yardstick for the "100% commercial picture." In addition to being Astaire's screen debut, it was the first time the Three Stooges bore that moniker and the second film for both Nelson Eddy and Eunice Quedens, who didn't change her name to Eve Arden for another few years. Maybe she took a page from the star, who was born Lucille Fay LeSueur. (MP)

MGM 92 MIN. 16MM

SHORT: "PLANE NUTS" (1933), JACK CUMMINGS (TED HEALY AND HIS STOOGES)



## SUDDEN FEAR | 1952

DIRECTOR: DAVID MILLER

Executive producer Joan Crawford was eager to show off in her first film after escaping her contract at Warner Bros., and she picked a doozy with this adaptation of Edna Sherry's 1948 potboiler. Heiress and playwright Myra Hudson (Crawford) is a little nervous about running into Lester Blaine (Jack Palance) on the train to California, probably because she's just dashed his hopes of Broadway greatness by firing him from her new play. But true love will out, and after the usual whirlwind romance, the two quickly get hitched. Her lawyer (Bruce Bennett, her hubby from *Mildred Pierce*) is suspicious, and it doesn't help matters when Lester's ex (Gloria Grahame) shows up on the scene. But could the doting, attentive Lester really be after her money? (Hint: of course he could.) Although she had script and casting approval, Crawford still wasn't happy with her granite-jawed costar (she wanted Clark Gable), and Palance's Method training led him to, ahem, overplay the love scenes. But the end result must have been satisfying: the film snagged four Oscar nominations, including Crawford's third and Palance's first. (MP)



RKO 110 MIN. 35MM  
CARTOON: "THE HYPO-CHONDRI-CAT" (1950), CHUCK JONES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

joan crawford



## HUMORESQUE | 1946

DIRECTOR: JEAN NEGULESCO

Joan Crawford's Oscar for *Mildred Pierce* paid immediate dividends, as her role in this film was dramatically expanded to make her a co-lead. She repaid the favor by delivering one of her finest performances, looking exquisite under the lighting and camera of her favorite cinematographer, Ernest Haller. Paul Boray (John Garfield, with a real musician tucked under each arm) is an up-and-coming violinist who allows rich society lady Helen Wright (Crawford) to fund his rise to the top, only to brush her off because there's only room for one true love in his life—Crawford's obviously never thought much about the phrase "second fiddle." When Frank Borzage filmed Fannie Hurst's story back in 1920, Boray's Jewish background was integral to the plot, but it's notably absent here. In fact, the story is almost completely different, since Clifford Odets recycled much of this one from an unused early script for the George Gershwin biopic *Rhapsody in Blue*. The real similarity is between *Humoresque* and Garfield's other 1947 triumph, the boxing movie *Body and Soul*. Only, you know, there's less punching in this one. (MP)

WARNER BROS. 125 MIN. 16MM  
CARTOON: "TUBBY THE TUBA" (1947), GEORGE PAL

SEPTEMBER 27, 2008



## THE GAY DESPERADO | 1936

DIRECTOR: ROUBEN MAMOULIAN

Edward G. Robinson wasn't the only one in Hollywood poking fun at gangster pictures—no less than Mary Pickford and former Paramount bigshot Jesse Lasky produced this south of the border romp, shot in the deserts of Arizona. Inspired by the wave of gangster movies director Rouben Mamoulian helped invent with *City Streets*, small time crook Braganza (Leo Carrillo) yearns to be no less than Public Enemy #1, with visions of transforming his ragtag band of bandits into a sleek underworld syndicate. Then again, his idea of organized crime consists of starting a riot in a movie theater (don't get any ideas), pranking the radio station, stealing a convertible, and repeatedly saying "give 'em the works," so he's not exactly setting the bar too high. Also an aspiring patron of the arts, Braganza's first puzzling order of business is recruiting a tenor (Metropolitan Opera star Nino Martini); his second is kidnapping an heiress (Ida Lupino), and I think we can all guess what his third is. In all his eternal wisdom, Oscar never once noticed Mamoulian, who received his long overdue first directing prize for this film, courtesy of the New York Circle of Film Critics. (MK)

UNITED ARTISTS 86 MIN. 16MM  
SHORT: "SAGEBRUSH TOM" (1915), TOM MIX

## TOMORROW IS FOREVER | 1946

DIRECTOR: JOHN HUSTON

In the thick of a typically prolific period during which he authored a daily column for the *New York Post*, Orson Welles took his second straight-up acting gig (after *Journey Into Fear*) to pay the bills. No doubt enticed by the opportunity to wear exaggerated makeup and whisper in a fake Austrian accent, Welles plays a disfigured WWI veteran who pseudonymously returns home to wife Claudette Colbert after twenty years of reconstructive surgery and accent-practice. Natasha Gurdin, freshly imported (and renamed) by director Irving Pichel, who remembered her as an extra from his earlier production *Happy Land*, plays Welles's adopted daughter in her credited debut as Natalie Wood. The director's casting wasn't always so prescient—despite having one of the world's most famous on-air personalities on set, Pichel opted to voice the role of a radio commentator himself.

Ripped from the pages of *Ladies Home Journal* (which printed Gwen Bristow's source novel), this benign weepie had the unusual distinction of being banned in South Carolina after Welles repeatedly denounced a notorious police brutality incident on his weekly radio show—"the actual celluloid driven out of the city with a fiery sword." Your move, Larry Clark. (MK)

RKO 105 MIN. 35MM

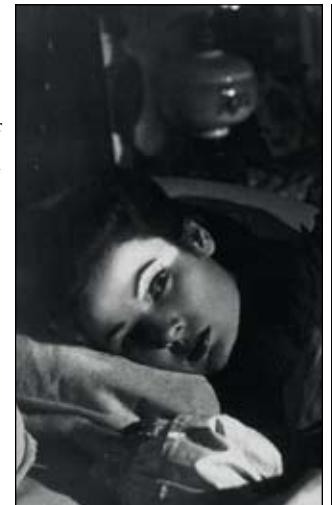
SHORT: "MIGHTY LIKE A MOOSE" (1926), LEO McCAREY (CHARLEY CHASE)



## THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR | 1947

DIRECTOR: JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ

When true love calls, does it really matter that one of the parties has been dead a hundred years? Not in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's softhearted spookfest, in which Gene Tierney, playing a recent widow, rents a seaside cottage that's already occupied by Rex Harrison's grumpy ghost. The pair decide they like each other enough to collaborate on a book and share the master bedroom (in 1947? scandalous!), but trouble arrives in the form of a suitor with a pulse ("perfumed parlor snake" George Sanders). Let's take a moment to thank whatever power that brought Harrison's ghost back that there's no singing involved. Producer Darryl Zanuck had a different fantasy version of R.A. Dick's novel in mind: "Norma Shearer has one great picture left in her yet," he wrote, "and she would make the same comeback that Joan Crawford made last year [in *Mildred Pierce*]. She is certainly no deader than Joan was." Alas, Shearer stayed retired, Gene Tierney got the job, and the rest is history. Or was it all a dream? Like a restless spirit that just can't find peace, the story haunted American TV screens in the late sixties with Hope Lange and Edward Mulhare as the leads. (MP)



20TH CENTURY FOX 104 MIN. 35MM  
SHORT: "HAUNTED SPOOKS" (1920), HAL ROACH (HAROLD LLOYD)

OCTOBER 4, 2008

back from the dead

OCTOBER 11, 2008

back from the dead

OCTOBER 18, 2008

back from the dead



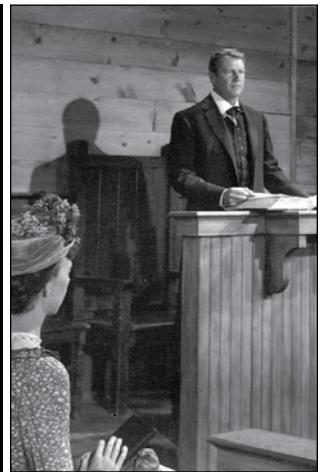
## CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS | 1948

DIRECTOR: TERENCE YOUNG

Wealthy art lover Paul Mangin (Eric Portman) has a hallway lined with life-size dummies wearing period costumes, which is just weird. He's convinced that his paramour (Edana Romney, who cowrote the script and produced the film) is the reincarnation of the woman in his favorite painting, but she's in love with someone else. Is she really back from the dead? Or, given her rejection and Mangin's increasingly eccentric behavior, is she heading there? First-time director Terence Young is best known for his three early James Bond films, but this is light years from those techno-thrillers: in keeping with the main character's obsession with art, the emphasis in this moody, atmospheric chiller is on baroque lighting and gothic melodrama, with a finale in a more garish style, the wax museum of Madame Tussaud. Relative newcomer Romney spent four years scraping together a cast and crew to make her dream project, which she eventually was able to film in France with British film chief J. Arthur Rank's assistance. Alas, it was Romney's first and last production. Watch for Christopher Lee in his first film role, along with the first Miss Moneypenny, Lois Maxwell. (MP)

UNIVERSAL 108 MIN. 35MM

CARTOON: "MODELING" (1921), DAVE FLEISCHER (KOKO THE CLOWN)



## STARS IN MY CROWN | 1950

DIRECTOR: JACQUES TOURNEUR

A gun-slinging preacher man (Joel McCrea) brings fire and brimstone to another of cinema's endless supply of podunk hellholes, conducting his first mass stickup-style at a local watering hole and forcing his parishioner/captives to pray at gunpoint. What sounds like an ideal launching off point for Quentin Tarantino is in fact the setup for Jacques Tourneur's elegiac survey of 19th-century Americana, complete with doe-eyed orphans (Dean Stockwell, previously seen as Nick and Nora's son in the final *Thin Man*, and later, indelibly, in *Blue Velvet*), down-home wisdom, and the healing power of prayer. That isn't to say that the film ignores other, less celebrated American traditions such as land grabs, typhoid, and the Klu Klux Klan—indeed, Tourneur's bold stance against racism was unfortunately radical for both his 19th-century characters and the real-life 1950 audiences his film opened to. All in all, it's still pretty rosy stuff for the auteur of *Cat People*, *I Walked With a Zombie*, and *Out of the Past*; critic Chris Fujiwara has noted that the can-do spirit doesn't quite gel with the rest of Tourneur's allusive oeuvre, calling *Stars in My Crown* a "seemingly anomalous work that, by its optimism, constitutes an enigma of its own within a career based on enigma." (MK)

MGM 89 MIN. 16MM

SHORT: "BRONCHO BILLY'S SENTENCE" (1915), BRONCHO BILLY

# horror show HALLOWEEN

NOVEMBER 1, 2008

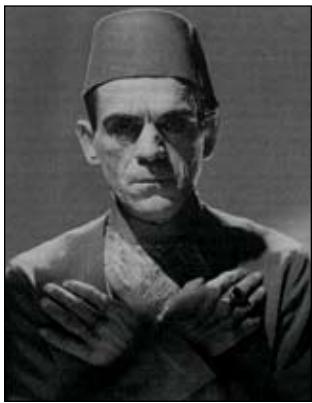


## THE MUMMY | 1932

DIRECTOR: KARL FREUND

SHORT: CARTOON: "FELIX WOOS WHOOPEE" (1928),  
OTTO MESSMER (FELIX THE CAT)

Churning out monster movies faster than they could read, Universal Pictures introduced their first horror without a literary pedigree: "Stranger than *Dracula*, More Fantastic than *Frankenstein*, More Mysterious than *The Invisible Man*," *The Mummy* cashed in on the then-raging curse of King Tut's tomb and the studio's suddenly massive star (here billed as Karloff the Uncanny, a step up from the "?" credit he received in *Frankenstein*). Backstory is beside the point when you're just recombining the same tried-and-true ingredients: eight-hour makeup sessions (courtesy of innovative master Jack Pierce), spooky crypts, a vastly overqualified director (Karl Freund, cinematographer for F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang in their pre-Hollywood heyday), and the flimsiest of plots. Freund was a particularly inspired choice, bringing a healthy dose of the expressionism he helped to invent to his directorial debut. Unlike *Dracula* or *Frankenstein*, this incarnation of the Mummy didn't inspire familial sequels, but Imhotep rose again throughout the 1940s in a series of remakes starring everymonster Lon Chaney, Jr., before finally being put out to pasture with Abbot and Costello.



UNIVERSAL 73 MIN. 16MM

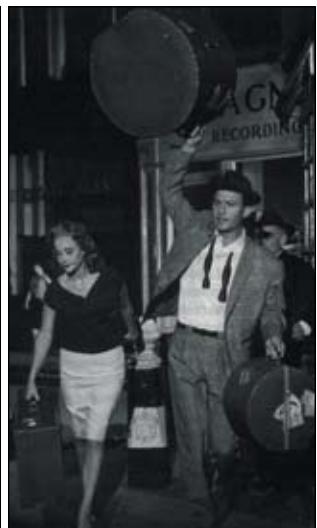


## THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG | 1939

DIRECTOR: NICK GRINDE

Though he still haunted the cheap remakes thanks to their eager use of stock footage, by the time of Chaney, Jr.'s reign, the living, breathing Karloff was on to oddities like *The Man They Could Not Hang*. Eight years after *Frankenstein*, Karloff made the switch from guinea pig to mad scientist, here coming up with a formula for resurrecting the dead that actually (well, loosely) anticipates artificial hearts. At least one eager test subject sees the potential, consoling his fiancée with the reassuring "he won't miss! Why, inside of two hours we'll be eating chop suey and fighting about where we'll be going on our honeymoon!" Shortsighted fools shut down his mad operation and sentence Karloff to death, somehow overlooking the big fat ace up his sleeve (and the title of the movie). Time to start bumping them off, preferably with methods so convoluted they'd make Dr. Phibes blush. Director Nick Grinde was pretty hung up on hangings—the next year he put Karloff through the mad doctor paces twice more in *Before I Hang* and *The Man with Nine Lives*. (MK)

COLUMBIA 64 MIN. 35MM



## EXPRESSO BONGO | 1959

DIRECTOR: VAL GUEST

"It is strictly-from-jiveville entertainment, with the build-up of a bongo singer the most important business at hand." Bosley Crowther likely intended to sound dismissive in his *New York Times* pan of Val Guest's hipster epic, but he did manage to nail the ambience and the plot in a single sentence. Hammer Films vet Val Guest brings us on a lurid tour of the espresso bars, dance clubs, and urban decay of swingin' Soho. Laurence Harvey plays a sleazeball promoter looking for a big score, which he locates in the person of Cliff Richard, who plays the bongo player he elevates to stardom—until someone (Yolande Donlan) even less principled than Harvey gets her hooks into the impressionable youth. Wolf Mankowitz and Julian More's stage musical skewered the music industry, its naïve fans, its lower-than-dirt promoters, and its lowest-common-denominator view of music; I'm not sure if Richard, a real-life rock star in his native Britain (who, like his character, changed his name), was colossally oblivious or willing to poke fun at his own stardom, but he sure knows how to pound the skins. (MP)

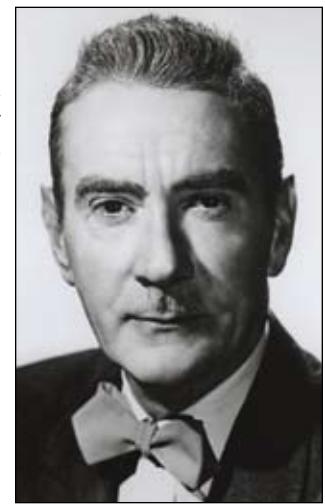
CONTINENTAL 111 MIN. 35MM  
CARTOON: "SYMPHONY IN SLANG" (1951), TEX AVERY



## SITTING PRETTY | 1948

DIRECTOR: WALTER LANG

When Harry and Tacey King (Robert Young and Maureen O'Hara) advertise for a live-in babysitter for their rotten kids and their Great Dane, they're surprised when Lynn Belvedere turns out to be a sharp-tongued, effete, superior, haughty, British man (Clifton Webb) who informs them, "I happen to dislike all children intensely. But I can assure you that I can readily attend to their necessary though unpleasant wants." They're even more surprised when it turns out that he's a miracle with kids, a dispenser of sage advice, a scholar, and a writer of tell-all biographies—and the one he's working on now happens to be about the nosy neighbors who think he's having a fling with O'Hara. Clifton Webb snagged his third and final Oscar nomination as Mr. Belvedere, a part that he became so identified with that he appeared in two sequels and as similar characters in a handful of other films. But this was quite a change for him: he had been pretty much typecast as a high-society murderer by his turns in *Laura* and *The Dark Corner*. (MP)



20TH CENTURY FOX 84 MIN. 35MM  
"THE FIRST 100 YEARS" (1924), HARRY SWEET (HARRY LANGDON)

## STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN | 1946

DIRECTORS: MICHAEL POWELL AND EMERIC PRESSBURGER

"This is the story of two worlds: the one we know and another which exists only in the mind." If it's a choice between the humdrum and the collective mind of cinema's most imaginative duo, sign me up for the latter. Powell and Pressburger were at the height of their powers immediately after WWII, and they never conjured a better story for their unmistakable blend of quirky sentimentality, formal gamesmanship, and grand vision than this typically understated epic (Powell himself named it his favorite of their films). They were also never ones to miss a chance for morbid humor—David Niven stars as a fighter pilot who sweet-talks an American radio operator (Kim Hunter, recommended for the role by Alfred Hitchcock) even as his plane is going down. Lo and behold, he survives the crash and romances the girl, much to the chagrin of the heavenly court (Raymond Massey) who want him to remain in the afterlife. The fantasy elements are elaborately rendered in methods both physical (the lavish escalator to heaven weighed in at 85 tons) and chemical (Earth appears in Technicolor, heaven in black and white), making this a characteristically one-of-a-kind experience. Released in Britain under the more apropos title *A Matter of Life and Death*. (MK)



EAGLE-LION 104 MIN. 35MM

CARTOON: "THE MAIL PILOT" (1933), DAVID HAND (MICKEY MOUSE)



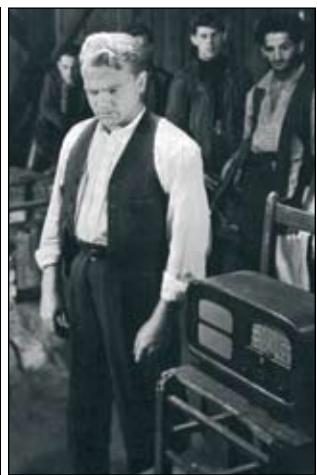
## THE MORTAL STORM | 1940

DIRECTOR: FRANK BORZAGE

"How soon will man find wisdom in his heart, and build a lasting shelter against his ignorant fears?" One of the first Hollywood films to take a stand against Nazism, Frank Borzage's *The Mortal Storm* examines how Hitler's ascent to power tears apart the residents of a small German town. Frank Morgan plays a Jewish professor with two "Aryan" stepsons who join the Nazi Youth; his daughter (Margaret Sullavan) is engaged to another Nazi (Robert Young), but she slowly becomes attracted to the moral courage of a pacifist (James Stewart, Pennsylvania accent intact) who dares to speak out against fascism. Borzage's trademark soft-focus romanticism might seem an odd fit for a film about the Nazi menace, but his foregrounding of how the Nazis' campaign of dehumanization and violence destroys personal relationships is perhaps more powerful than most outright "war movies." The German government was so upset at the film's stance that Goebbels shut down MGM's Berlin offices and banned the import of any other MGM films. But he couldn't stop the flood of anti-Nazi films that grew into a torrent as the United States geared up for war. (MP)

MGM 100 MIN. 16MM

CARTOON: "EDUCATION FOR DEATH" (1943), CLYDE GERONIMI



## 13 RUE MADELEINE | 1947

DIRECTOR: HENRY HATHAWAY

Henry Hathaway followed up his popular semi-documentary spy thriller *The House on 92nd Street* with this similar tale of double-agent skullduggery in pre-D-Day WW2. We showed this one because James Cagney > William Eythe. Cagney is Robert Sharkey, the multi-lingual scholar (all of them delivered in a Lower East Side accent, natch) chosen to run a top-secret program that trains Allies (including Annabella) to go undercover behind German lines. His efforts to stymie a German double agent (Richard Conte, of all people) backfire when the spy escapes with information about the members of the program, and Cagney has to sneak into Paris after him. Don't worry—there's a narrated prologue to explain all of this in case you want to take notes. Cagney wasn't

wild about the project—he only took the job to finance the eventual flop *The Time of Your Life*—but imagine the movie we'd have gotten had Darryl Zanuck got one of his alternate choices, Randolph Scott and Rex Harrison. Watch for two uncredited corporals (Karl Malden and Red Buttons) in the training scenes. (MP)

20TH CENTURY FOX 95 MIN. 35MM

CARTOON: "THE DRAFT HORSE" (1942), CHUCK JONES



DECEMBER 14, 2008

collateral damage



## THE HOUSE ON TELEGRAPH HILL | 1951

DIRECTOR: ROBERT WISE

Marriage was a dark, dangerous institution in 1940s, if films like *Gaslight*, *The Secret Beyond the Door*, and this little number are to be trusted, a sacred contract entered only by psychopaths in search of victims as much as soulmates. If these films are any indication, qualities women were looking for in a man at the time included (1) a couple perfect crimes already behind him, (2) a penchant for mindgames, and (3) a house in serious need of an estate sale. This version adds a surprisingly heavy duty backstory: the unsuspecting wife (Valentina Cortesa) is a Holocaust survivor. Upon being sprung from the concentration camp, she adopts the identity of one of her deceased compatriots who often reminisced about a cushy lifestyle in America, and a few scenes later she's married to the master of the titular house (Richard Basehart), mothering her false son (Gordon Gebert), flirting with her knight in shining armor (William Lundigan), and seriously getting the creeps from the help (Fay Baker), not to mention a terrifying portrait of the deceased house matriarch that any sensible decorator would have taken down long ago. Behind the scenes, director Robert Wise hit the jackpot this year with the not-that-much-less-unlikely *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. (MK)

20TH CENTURY FOX 100 MIN. 35MM

SHORT: "AMBROSE'S FIRST FALSEHOOD" (1914), DELL HENDERSON (MACK SWAIN)

DECEMBER 20, 2008



## THE MORE THE MERRIER | 1943

DIRECTOR: GEORGE STEVENS

Tired of turning down everything Harry Cohn threw at her, Jean Arthur turned around and asked her husband, producer Frank Ross, to see if he could come up with something more suitable. Ross put his head together with an uncredited Garson Kanin and emerged with this yarn about a WWII-inflicted housing shortage in Washington D.C., wherein Arthur rents a room to millionaire/matchmaker Benjamin Dingle (Charles Coburn), who in turn rents half of his room to the requisite hunk (Joel McCrea). Even more improbable is that Hollywood allowed a beautiful, charming 43-year-old actress to be seen as a natural object of lust—after all, that's seven years older than Mrs. Robinson, the chauvinist's standby for cougars everywhere. After directing a bevy of Oscar-nominated performances,

George Stevens received his first of five Best Director nominations, but the rest would have to wait—his next project was in North Africa as head of the U.S. Army's combat photography unit. *The More the Merrier* also got nominated for just about everything else: Picture, Actress, Writing (twice), you name it, but the only winner was Coburn for Best Actor. Such accolades eluded the 1966 remake *Walk Don't Run*, but it did mark the final screen appearance of Cary Grant (filling in for McCrea), with Samantha Eggar and the 1964 Tokyo Olympics subbing for Arthur and WWII, respectively. (MK)

COLUMBIA 104 MIN. 35MM

SHORT: "RICKY AND ROCKY" (1971), TOM PALAZALLO



# Bank of America :cinema



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