THE LA SALLE BANK
PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE
CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD
DIRECTOR SERIES
FROM THE BOOTH

Four years ago, *The Last Flight* played here at the LaSalle Theatre. It was the first time I had heard of the film’s director, William Dieterle. I couldn’t help but take notice of his talent; the film is a work of genius. Since that time, I have seen enough of his oeuvre to be convinced that his first American film was no fluke. However, you can’t identify his work the way you can with a Ford or a Hitchcock; there are no stylistic consistencies from one film to the next. Like Michael Curtiz, Dieterle was a contract director who upheld the “Warner Bros. Style.” (But are only “auteurs” worthy of praise?) Dieterle displayed excellent showmanship, but he was no venerable studio hack. There are moments, as in *Madame DuBarry*, when there are flashes of a Dieterle touch—moments of such energy and uniqueness. Either these are signs of a forgotten auteur, or he was just some professional workhorse who wore white gloves on the set. Today, he is known as a skillful craftsman of “biopics,” yet, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *All That Money Can Buy* (both made at RKO) reflect his diversity. The latter two alone justify a reappraisal of his career.

Some of the films you may have seen, but most are very rare. I hope you also will appreciate these films as we see them together the way they were meant to be seen. Some of you may wonder why we would profile such an obscure name, but this theatre’s goal is not to play entertaining diversions, but to go beyond that. Dieterle’s films are the essence of cinema.

Besides the 22 film retrospective, we will have some special attractions I think you will get a kick out of. For Halloween, we offer a golden age double feature. To honor Veteran’s Day, we will remain on the home front for *Since You Went Away*. In December, we’ll be screening the ultra-rare *The Unholy Three*—Lon Chaney, Sr.’s last film and his only talkie. And finally, as we head into 2001, I thought we’d have some fun looking into the future with *Just Imagine*.

Till the credits roll,

Matthew C. Hoffman
July 8

**The Last Flight (1931)**

William Dieterle  
Warner/80 min.  
Cartoon: “Felix Whoos Whoopee” (1927)  
Otto Messmer

“Of concern to Jason Joy (of the Studio Relations Committee) were alcohol’s side effects: ‘The replies when each one of the men leaves the table and Nikki asks where he is going—‘To shave a horse,’ ‘To take a Chinese singing lesson’—contain a vulgar inference in that they convey the idea that the person in question has gone, or is going, to the toilet. We believe that this inference is likely to cause offense to many people.’ Dieterle answered: ‘The taste for treacle has passed.’” - Mark A. Veiria

French critic Jean Pierre Coursodon dubbed this, Dieterle’s first American talkie, not only his “best film of the period,” but “one of the most original Hollywood productions of the early thirties.” Richard Barthelmess and his three pals are “spent bullets” of the Great War. Upon their release, they go out for a night on the town in Paris and spend the rest of the film getting tight. Along the way, they find a mascot, Nikki (Helen Chandler), a frivolous young girl as lost as they. Based on John Monk Saunders’ *Single Lady*, the film version is a superior realization of Hemingway’s lost generation in *The Sun Also Rises*. The film is both funny and tragic, and very much ahead of its time. Following its release, a musical adaption called *Nikki* opened on Broadway to modest success with Douglass Montgomery, Fay Wray, and a little known Archie Leach. (Whatever happened to him?) With David Manners, Johnny Mack Brown, Elliott Nugent, and Walter Byron.

July 15

**Her Majesty, Love (1931)**

William Dieterle  
Warner/75 min.  
Cartoon: “Cracked Ice” (1938)  
Frank Tashlin

“There are dozens of clever touches, so good that one cannot but hope that some day Mr. Dieterle will be rewarded by a narrative more worthy of his artistry and fertile brain. Mr. W.C. Fields aroused a good deal of laughter as did Mr. Errol and Mr. Sterling.” - The New York Times

Marilyn Miller plays a common barmaid named Lia Toerrek. She is in love with Fred von Wellingen (played by Ben Lyon), the son of a wealthy, Berlin family. However, her uncouth, chocolate eclair-juggling father (W.C. Fields) complicates the courtship. Fred’s family then offers him a high position in the family business… as long as he doesn’t marry that girl! Meanwhile, Lia takes up with a baron (Leon Errol) but is miserable without Fred. Will the two lovers be reunited? This was Field’s only film role in a musical comedy. With Ford Sterling and Chester Conklin.
July 22

**MAN WANTED (1932)**

William Dieterle
Warner/60 min.
Cartoon: “He Was Her Man” (1940)
I. Freleng

“Apparently he was saved by friction between David (Manners) and Miss Francis, who had frequent temper tantrums and accused David, of all people, of being stealing... She was the only one of his leading ladies whom he ever spoke ill. One astute observer commented, ‘his scenes with Andy Devine seem to show more emotion than with Miss Francis.’” - Donald McMurphy

There’s nothing pretentious about this one—just a romantic comedy out to entertain. This fast-paced, self-confident film tells the story of a sophisticated couple who become tired of each other. The engaging Kay Francis stars as the wife while David Manners plays her secretary. Written by Charles Kenyon and Robert Lord. With Andy Devine, Una Merkel, Kenneth Thomson, and Claire Dodd. (The screenplay was originally called *Dangerous Brunette*.)

**GRAND SLAM (1933)**

William Dieterle
Warner/65 min.
Short: “No Census, No Feeling” (1940)
Del Lord (Three Stooges)

“The question posed in Grand Slam was: should husbands and wives be allowed to play in the same bridge game? And the answer was: yes, but only if they are insanely in love, though, at the same time, temporarily separated.” - Clive Hirschhorn

The over-alluring Loretta Young is the wife, and this satire explores the bridge craze that was sweeping the land at the time. Young plays a hat-check girl who becomes the wife of a bridge champion (Paul Lukas). Not quite a home run, but still an entertaining movie. Dieterle makes a rather unique use of slow motion/freeze frame towards the end. Written by David Boehm and Erwin Gelsey and based on the novel by B. Russell Herts. With a pre-“Torchy Blane” Glenda Farrell, Frank McHugh, Walter Byron, and Roscoe Karns.

August 5

**FEMALE (1933)**

William Dieterle/Michael Curtiz
Warner/60 min.
Cartoon: “Porky’s Super Service” (1939)
Ub Iwerks

“Ruth Chatterton and directors Michael Curtiz and William Dieterle invested Donald Henderson Clark’s routine story (play back by Gene Markey and Kathryna Scola) with a style and sense of humor it might otherwise not have had.” - Clive Hirschhorn

As with *The Last Flight*, there is something very much contemporary underlying this story of female identity. Ruth Chatterton, the star of Dieterle’s *The Crash*, is the president of the Drake Motor Car Company. She’s all business at work. She’s a super woman who’s not a bit domestic, seeing through yes-men and twirling the others around her finger. And she’s just as systematic when she’s home with her men. (Yes, that’s “Shanghai Lil” she plays.) But she meets her match in Thorne (played by George Brent, whom she married in real life). Brent is virtuous, but not in a romantic or preachy sort of way. "Is it old-fashioned to want to be decent?" asks he. Feminists will hate this film, but that doesn’t matter. This is a lavish, fun production done in an economical way. With Ruth Donnelly, Douglass Dumbrille, and Johnny Mack Brown and Gavin Gordon as two of her frustrated lovers.

August 12

**FOG OVER FRISCO (1934)**

William Dieterle
Warner/68 min.
Cartoon: “Bugs and Thugs” (1954)
I. Freleng

“Its speed is artificially created by pacing, wires, opticals, overlapping sound, camera movement, and placing of characters, and by its habit of never having time really to begin or end scenes.” - William K. Everson

Story concerns two society sisters; one of whom, Arlene (Bette Davis), hangs out in nightclubs and associates with riffraff, such as thug Jake Bello (Irving Pichel). The other one, Val (Margaret Lindsay), looks out for her adventurous sis and tries to protect the family name, but can she protect Arlene from Bello (and from the mastermind behind this mystery)? Whatever you do, don’t look in that rumble seat! It moves even faster than your typical Warners of the period, and the on-location footage in San Francisco is intriguing. With Donald Woods (the reporter), Hugh Herbert (the sidekick who wants “the futuristic look”), and Lyle Talbot (as Arlene’s fiancé). Remade as *Spy Ship* in 1942.
August 19

**MADAME DUBARRY (1934)**

William Dieterle
Warner/77 min.
Cartoon: "French Rarebit" (1951)
Robert McKimson

"... the Legion of Decency condemned it. The finished film retained more of its sex than it lost, but it now had a confusing plot and unsympathetic characters, not to mention a miscast Dolores Del Rio, Sol Polito's clinically flat fighting, and such distasteful scenes as the pudgy, puerile daughter (Maeve Adams) being shown pornographic engravings to prepare him for his wedding night. Madame Dubarry did poorly." - Mark A. Vieira

With films like Paramount's *Catherine the Great* and M.G.M.'s *Queen Christina* coming out, Warner Bros. felt it was the right time to do a lavish "historical" piece—but a rather risqué one at that. Dolores Del Rio plays the famous courtesan of Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV. She turns the palace court upside down, as when every grain of sugar in Paris is used to fulfill her sleigh-riding whim. Reginald Owen (as the King) has a lot of fun as he slowly loses his kingdom. Though this mini-epic was not a huge success with audiences at the time, it nevertheless emerges as an imaginative film that recounts DuBarry's escapades with carefree enthusiasm. She is merely doing France what France has been doing to her. A fine performance by Owen. With Victor Jory as d'Aiguillon and Osgood Perkins (the father of Anthony) as Richelieu. There had been a German silent film called *Madame DuBarry* directed by Ernst Lubitsch in 1919.

August 26

**THE FIREBIRD (1934)**

William Dieterle
Warner/75 min.
Short: "The Laurel & Hardy Murder Case" (1930)
James P. Parrott

"... the whole concoction, when stripped of its romantic setting, was a routine whodunit with no startling surprises—a case of schnitzel dressed as lamb."—Clive Hirschhorn

But there's some nice garnishing around this schnitzel. A fine cast of actors highlights this production, so we'll form our own opinions. Story is set in Vienna and is basically a mystery about the murder of a mine, Herman Brandt (Ricardo Cortez). Based on the play by Laszlo Zilany. With Verree Teasdale, Anita Louise, and one of Hollywood's best character actors, Lionel Atwill. (In case you are wondering, the film takes its title from Stravinski's "Firebird" — Herman's favorite piece.)

September 2

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (1935)**

Max Reinhardt/William Dieterle
Warner/117 min.
Short: "Shivering Shakespeare" (1930)
Anthony Mack (Our Gang)

"After three weeks of shooting, the production was almost shelved when it was discovered that designer Anton Grot's forest could barely be photographed. Grot's Expressionist creation consisted of trees composed of burlap coated with plaster of Paris, real leaves applied one at a time, and painted silver. The tree branches were so huge that the camera could only pick up small sections in one shot—and the forest ran over two sets." - William R. Meyer

A deft and entertaining treatment of the magical Shakespeare play about two couples in the midnight woods of Athens—and one of the most bizarrely cast films of the period. (Victor Jory as King of the Fairies?) European theatre director Max Reinhardt began the production, having staged a version at the Hollywood Bowl a year earlier. Dieterle was then brought in to co-direct (and help translate). Though it's a clash of styles—the American actors within this European vision of Shakespeare—it's a visual tour de force that was nominated for Best Picture. Over 85 miles of film was exposed in this attempt at respectability in the era of the Production Code. With the exception of Orson Welles, no director has done a better job with the Bard, turning the literary into the cinematic. Photography by Hal Mohr with music arranged by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Starring Mr. James Cagney (as Bottom, the rapscallion with the ass's head), Olivia de Havilland (in her feature film debut), Joe E. Brown, Hugh Herbert, and Mickey Rooney as Puck.

September 9

**DOCTOR SOCRATES (1935)**

William Dieterle
Warner/70 min.
Cartoon: "The Daffy Doc" (1938)
Bob Clampett

"Muni was a bit startled by his director's reliance on signs and portents. Dieterle, in the manner of a Prussian martinet, ordered the shooting of Dr. Socrates to begin precisely at 9:02 A.M., exactly on the morning of June 6, 1935, and not a second later. They would end precisely at 5:20 P.M. on July 15, a lucky day for both Dieterle and Muni." - Jerome Lawrence

Essentially a B-picture with an A star. (No offense to Barton MacLane.) Paul Muni plays a learned, Chicago surgeon who opens up a small town practice in Big Bend, which already has a doctor. However, he soon gets involved with a gang of criminals when Red Baston (MacLane) comes to him for help. The abusive Baston then sets his sights on hitchhiker Ann Dvorak, whom Doc has befriended. When she's kidnapped, Doc must come to the rescue... but how can he subdue the entire gang? Lively dialogue highlights this film based on the W.R. Burnett novel. Look for Muni reading about Louis Pasteur in the bookstore! Remade in 1938 as King of the Underworld.
September 16

**THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR (1936)**

William Dieterle
Warner/85 min.
Cartoon: “Calling Dr. Porky” (1940)
I. Freleng

“Trapped by Muni’s contract giving him script approval, the studio started the picture ‘with most of the executives in the front offices holding their noses.’ They gave Blanke, as produces, a pitifully small budget, $330,000—the lowest figure possible at the time for an A picture. Even Dieterle hated the script; Charlotte (Dieterle’s wife) was convinced that the studio was trying to ruin her husband’s career by assigning him to it. In short, Dieterle handled the screenplay with kid gloves, white.” - Jerome Lawrence

The finished product, however, turned out to be a well-realized “docudrama” that began a trend in Hollywood in regards to historical figures. Paul Muni, labeled a ham by some, gives an intelligent performance as the famed French scientist who combated disease. “Man meets microbe,” as Dieterle once said. Jack Warner didn’t want to make it, but Muni and Dieterle had the enthusiasm to prove him wrong. Muni won for Best Actor, and screenwriters Sheridan Gibney and Pierre Collings (a drug addict himself with interests in medicine) won for their screenplay. With Josephine Hutchinson, Anita Louise, and Donald Woods.

September 23

**THE WHITE ANGEL (1936)**

William Dieterle
Warner/91 min.
Short: “The Voice of the Nightingale” (1923)
Ladislas Starevich

“They picked on poor Kay Francis—ridiculed the way she talked, substituting w’s for r’s and generally treated her efforts as an emotional actress fairly cruelly. She was a stunner—tall and so brumette, so sleek and with such chic. She was always called a ‘best dressed woman’ and somehow she managed to live up to the title. There were those fans who went to a Kay Francis movie simply to see what the lady was wearing, and never mind the movie.” - Springer and Hamilton, They Had Faces Then

I don’t know how well dressed she’ll be in this not-too-successful biography of Florence Nightingale, but with Dieterle at the helm (again making a film about healers), we must mind the movie. Though suffering from a miscast star and historical inaccuracies, there are strong moments to be found, such as those set in the Crimea at the Scutari Hospital. Written by Mordaunt Shairp. With solid support from Ian Hunter, Donald Woods, Nigel Bruce, and Donald Crisp.

September 30

**SATAN MET A LADY (1936)**

William Dieterle
Warner/74 min.
Cartoon: “Porky’s Movie Mystery” (1939)
Bob Clampett

“So disconnected and lunatic are the picture’s ingredients, so irrelevant and monstrous its people, that it lives through it in a constant expectation of seeing a group of uniformed individuals appear suddenly from behind the furniture and take the entire cast into protective custody.” - Bosley Crowther

A zany remake of the 1931 The Maltese Falcon, but it would be another five years before the definitive version of the Dashiel Hammett novel would make it to the screen. After arriving in San Francisco, Detective Ted Shane (Warren William) encounters an Englishman (Arthur Treacher) who likes to ransack apartments and a lying blonde, Valerie Purvis (Bette Davis); both of whom are searching for a French horn loaded with jewels. Soon, the infamous Madame Banabas (Alison Skipworth) enters the picture and makes her own offer, telling Shane that Valerie had been one of her agents who had stolen the horn. Suspicion falls on Val, but who really has the man’s horn? Next to the Huston film, this is a dismal rough draft, but every film should be judged on its own terms without such comparisons. Still, the rather loopy story is merely played for laughs. The film does have its detractors, but we’ll talk about it after the show. With Maynard Holmes, Porter Hall, and Marie Wilson as Miss Margaroyd, Shane’s secretary.

October 7

**ANOTHER DAWN (1937)**

William Dieterle
Warner/73 min.
Cartoon: “Jungle Jitters” (1938)
I. Freleng

“Another Dawn was even more interesting, and not just because he co-starred in it with the beautiful Kay Francis. It was the first of a veritable flood of pictures to feature Errol Flynn wearing a contemporary military uniform, this time fighting for King George V in the Sahara desert. It is interesting to note that while Errol was being feted as the all-Hollywood boy, he seemed invariably to be cast as an English gentleman.” - Michael Freedland

Having a certain “faded charm,” this is a soap opera-style drama demonstrating how Dieterle’s talents were all over the map. He’s in the adventure genre with this tale of a British officer (Errol Flynn) who is stationed in Africa. Captain Roark becomes enamored by the beauty of Julia Ashton (Kay Francis), the wife of his commanding officer, played by Ian Hunter. The ethics of love are at the center of this triangle, but this was at a time when honor and decency still won out. Sandstorms, fights with Arabs, and another rousing score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold should keep you engaged. With Frieda Inescort, Herbert Mundin, and Billy Bevan.
October 14

**THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA (1937)**

William Dieterle
Warner/116 min.
Short: “The Hoosegow” (1929)
James Parrott (Laurel & Hardy)

“The job of director is, in my opinion, like that of a gardener, who
puts a stick here, to help a plant to grow straight, and cuts a branch there, that
the whole tree may thrive better and a good harvest result. Of course, this way of directing
requires intelligent actors. At this point I would like to mention Mr. Paul Muni, whom
I consider one of the most intelligent actors of our day. Imagine, Zola’s tremendous
scene in the courtroom was the first and only take! Contrary to common opinion, I
believe in first takes.” - William Dieterle. 1938

Quickly becoming the Man of a Thousand Historical Faces, Paul Muni disguises himself as the
celebrated writer. He eventually gets entangled in the case of Alfred Dreyfus, who was sent to
Devil’s Island for a crime he did not commit; he was an easy scapegoat and a Jew. Muni’s Zola
writes some controversial books before eventually becoming a fervent supporter of Dreyfus. The
issue of anti-Semitism inherent in the script reflected the social concerns of the Warner Bros.
studio. “The message of Zola,” Dieterle had said, “is that there are millions of people in the world
today like the persecuted Dreyfus, and there is not always a Zola.” Dieterle was nominated for
Best Director, but it did win for Best Picture as well as for Best Screenplay, With Joseph
Schildkraut (Best Supporting Actor), Gale Sondergaard, Gloria Holden, and Donald Crisp.

October 21

**JUAREZ (1939)**

William Dieterle
Warner/132 min.
Cartoon: “Mexican Joyride” (1947)
Arthur Davis (Daffy Duck)

“The rhythms of numerology and astrology guided his work. Although
he set initial shooting on Juarez for November 15, the celestial signs for
that evening seemed not right, so Dieterle made an insert shot of a poster being ripped from
a wall on October 29, when celestial signs were more promising. He took a similar bow to
numerology. As the title Juarez contained six letters, Dieterle hesitated to use the traditional,
‘Lights, camera, action’—all words with six letters—to start the cameras. Instead, he
shouted, ‘Here - we - go,’ words with more propitious numbers of letters.” - Paul J.
Vanderwood

An elaborate historical film which has (for better or worse) multiple perspectives. Maximilian von
Habsburg (Brian Aherne) is appointed as Emperor of Mexico, but the people decide to bejugated
under French authority and desire democracy in their country. This is exactly what Benito Juarez (Paul
Muni) has been fighting for. Maximilian is politically caught between Juarez (who is supported by
Abraham Lincoln) and Napoleon, who controls from afar. Bette Davis portrays Maximilian’s wife in
what becomes a memorable performance. Paul Muni again shows his versatility—a Warren star who
adapted to the part, not the other way around—but his insistence on his role being expanded accounts
for the off-balanced structure. In addition, the main figures of the story never meet, and it feels as though
you are watching two films. Nevertheless, this is an entertaining “message” film with a great cast
including Claude Rains as Napoleon III (who had tested for the part of Uralis), John Garfield (in a
ludicrous performance as Muni’s general) and Joseph Calleia. Shot by Tony Gaudio. Art direction by
Anton Grot, who made 3,643 sketches for the film.

October 28

**WHITE ZOMBIE (1932)**

Victor Halperin
American Securities Corporation/73 min.
Cartoon: “Betty Boop’s Halloween Party” (1933)
Dave Fleischer

“With its classic fairy tale roots, poetic visual
style, and commanding central performance by
Bela Lugosi, White Zombie’s status as a horror
classic is secure. Although the film is certainly important as the first zombie movie
made, it is also worthy of the ‘classic’ status frequently ascribed to it. The filmmakers
wisely let Bela take center stage, and Lugosi’s screen charisma is at its peak in White
Zombie. Next to his classic portrayal of Ygor in Son of Frankenstein, Murder Legendre
is perhaps Bela’s most fondly remembered performance.” — John Stoll

William K. Everson called it “one of the most satisfying films of its period.” This is my candidate
for the best non-Universal horror film of the 1930s (though it was filmed on the Universal lot),
and the one film that is most like a Romantic dream. Bela Lugosi (in Jack Pierce’s makeup)
portrays Murder Legendre, the sinister, Haitian plantation owner who rules over a zombie army.
Though John Harron and Madge Bellamy are adequate as the young newlyweds, it is Robert
Frazer who gives a strong, highly theatrical performance as Beaumont—the tormented lover who
seeks out the aid of Legendre. From sets to music to cinematography (shot by Arthur Martinelli)
this is an underappreciated masterpiece. With Joseph Cawthorne as the missionary in need of a match.

**I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943)**

Jacques Tourneur
RKO/68 min.

“Tourneur preferred I Walked With a Zombie to
Cat People and frequently cited it as one of his
favorite films. Of all Tourneur’s films, I Walked
With a Zombie goes farthest in the direction of
pure cinematic poetry and the use of sounds and images purely for their ‘power of
suggestion,’ a power enhanced by the film’s narrative strategies, whose persistent
riddles, enigmas, and contradictions force the viewer to give up the attempt to read
the narrative in a linear way.” - Chris Fujiwara

Frances Dee is a Canadian nurse who travels to the Caribbean to take care of Tom Conway’s sick
wife, portrayed by Christine Gordon. But is it illness or a voodoo curse? Val Lewton produced this
“West Indian version of Jane Eyre,” which went into production two months after Cat People
wrapped. This is a far more complex film than the above, but equally beautiful in its own way
with its suggestive horror and its atmosphere (heightened by the calypso music). Script was
written by Ardell Wray and Curt Siodmak. With James Ellison and Edith Barrett.
November 4

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME
(1939)

William Dieterle
RKO/177 min.
Cartoon: “The Ugly Duckling” (1939)
J. Cutting (Disney)

"... the tension on the soundstage was unbearable. The scene in which Quasimodo rings the bell for Esmeralda, high in the bell tower... was supposed to be a kind of love scene between those two, but it developed into something so powerful, that everybody including myself forgot that we were shooting a film. Something super-dimensional happened at that moment, so that I forgot to call ‘cut’ according to custom.” - William Dieterle

One of the few times a remake surpasses the original. With more of the complexity of the Victor Hugo novel restored, we get a richer picture of medieval life on the doorstep of Enlightenment. As with so many films of that year, Hunchback shows the Hollywood filmmaking process at its height. Now at RKO, Dieterle seems freed from the Warner restraints, and the use of camera and lighting seem throwbacks to what he had learned in the German silent cinema. The excellent cast includes Charles Laughton as the bellringer, Maureen O'Hara as Esmeralda, and Cedric Hardwicke, Edmund O'Brien, Thomas Mitchell, and Harry Davenport. Photography by Joseph H. August. Art direction by Van Nest Polglase.

November 18

DR. EHRlich’S MAGIC BULLET (1940)

William Dieterle
Warner/103 min.
Short: “Calling All Curs” (1939)
Jules White (Three Stooges)

"... Dieterle returned to biography, this time depicting the life of one of his countrymen. Perhaps this was an effort to illustrate a humanistic German during a time when the entire nation of Germany took on the quality of a monster. The life of the man who discovered a treatment for syphilis makes for a drama of integrity, subtlety, and extreme emotional power.” - William R. Meyer

As with Emile Zola, this story (written by John Huston, Norman Barnside, and Heinz Herald—and based on the notes of Ehrlich’s widow) deals implicitly with anti-Semitism. Ehrlich is a Jew who must also struggle in a world of bureaucracy. Edward G. Robinson enters the biopic cycle by playing the famed scientist (who discusses the topic of venereal disease at the dinner table!). But Robinson makes Ehrlich a genuinely caring human being, as when he administers the diphtheria vaccine to all the children. Pare Lorentz called it “a superb motion picture,” and it’s certainly one of the strongest of all Dieterle’s orderlies, direct biographies—and one of the last for him at Warner Bros. With Ruth Gordon as Frau Ehrlich, Otto Kruger as Robinson’s rival, Dr. von Behring, and Donald Crisp and Maria Ouspenskaya. Photographed by James Wong Howe.

November 11

SINCE YOU WENT AWAY
(1944)

John Cromwell
United Artists/172 min.
Cartoon: “Private SNAFU: The Home Front” (1943)
Frank Tashlin

“Producer-writer David O. Selznick’s rosy view of the homefront is a transition film that stands somewhere between the gentle heroics of Mrs. Miniver and the uncomfortable realities of The Best Years of Our Lives. The moves are undistinguishable... but the picture is still delightful. Well acted mostly and handsomely produced, it is Golden Age Hollywood storytelling at its most lavish.” - Mike Mayo

Designed as inspiration, and very much sentimental—but what is wrong with sentimentality?—this is a salute to the “Unconquerable Fortress: the American Home.” Claudett Colbert waits for word of her husband while continuing to run a home for her daughters—the lovely Jennifer Jones and Shirley Temple (who proves she could make the move to more mature roles). Joseph Cotten is a returning soldier who brings hope, sadness, and romantic tension back with him. This is an episodic film with several grand moments, including the famous farewell on the train platform. Strong supporting roles for Agnes Moorehead and Monty Woolley, who was nominated for Best Supporting Actor for playing the boarder, Col. Smollett. Max Steiner won for Best Musical Score. Also starring Guy Madison, Lionel Barrymore, and Robert Walker (who was at the time married to Jennifer Jones).

November 25

A DISPATCH FROM REUTERS
(1940)

William Dieterle
Warner/90 min.
Short: “Dutiful But Dumb” (1941)
Del Lord (Three Stooges)

“Perhaps A Dispatch From Reuters, along with the following statement, was a reaction from William Dieterle regarding the seriousness of his production: “One thing that has bothered me about our films probably cannot be blamed on Hollywood at all, but on the whole nation. That is the reluctance to take a stand for fear of that dreaded accusation, ‘propaganda!’ But until December 7, anyway, the people in this country branded any talk of ideas as stuffy. You could quote neither history nor the Bible without being suspected of an ax to grind. As if we should be ashamed of grinding axes in the first place! What good is a dull one?”” - William R. Meyer

Besides being one of the few films where Edward G. has a love interest, this is one of the few Dieterle biopics that has a lighter tone. This is the story of Paul Julius Reuter (Robinson), the founder of an international news service in Europe who, like Dr. Ehrlich, takes chances, proves the opposition wrong, and has the courage to show the world there is a more efficient way of doing things. The climax of the film—news of Lincoln’s assassination—is one of the more energetic moments. This was Dieterle’s swan song at Warner Brothers before leaving to form William Dieterle Productions. With Edna Best, Eddie Albert, Albert Basserman, Otto Kruger, Gene Lockhart, and Nigel Bruce. Photographed by James Wong Howe.
**December 2**

**ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY (1941)**
William Dieterle
RKO/106 min.
Cartoon: “Ducking the Devil” (1957)
Bob McKimson (Daffy Duck)

“A soul, a soul is nothing. Can you see it, smell it, touch it? No. Think of it—this soul—your soul—a nothing, against seven whole years of good luck! You will have money and all that money can buy.” — Walter Huston as Mr. Scratch

Dieterle’s first film after leaving Warner Bros. proved to be his masterpiece — the pinnacle of his career. It is evident he had more control at RKO, and this expressionistic film, based on the Stephen Vincent Benet short story, “The Devil and Daniel Webster,” demonstrates what a master Dieterle was of mise-en-scene. Set in New England, this is the tale of how one farmer, Jabez Stone (James Craig) becomes seduced by the evils of money. In a moment of weakness, he makes a casual remark about how he would sell his soul to the devil — a wish eventually brought to fruition. In time, though, he regrets what he had said and asks for the help of Statesman Daniel Webster (expertly played by Edward Arnold). Webster must then defend Jabez in an eerie trial against the forces of darkness. This is a thought-provoking, haunting film that wonderfully captures the atmosphere of 1840s rural America. It’s interesting that Dieterle had originally thought of doing a Washington Irving story prior to this. Now that would’ve been a Sleepy Hollow worth seeing! — With Anne Shirley (as Jabez’s wife), Simone Simon (as Scratch’s seductive agent), and Jane Darwell, Gene Lockhart, and H.B. Warner. Photographed by Joseph August with music by Bernard Herrmann (who won an Oscar).

**December 9**

**LOVE LETTERS (1945)**
William Dieterle
Paramount/101 min.
Short: “Love Business” (1931)
Robert McGowan (Our Gang)

“She (Jennifer Jones) is absolutely sensational in Love Letters, as is Cotten and Gullap also reports the tremendous rise in Cotten’s popularity. Having had the foresight to benefit from Duel in the Sun, we specified that Love Letters had to be released not later than August.” — David O. Selznick

Before being brought in to replace King Vidor on Duel in the Sun, Dieterle made this absorbing melodrama for Selznick. During World War II, Joseph Cotten writes letters for his buddy (Robert Scully) to Virginia Remington, played by Jennifer Jones. She believes Scully wrote them and so marries him. But what follows is an intricate story of murder and suspense, all compounded by her loss of memory after her husband is murdered! The normally bland Joseph Cotten gives a good performance (matched by that of the Oscar-nominated Jones). Her quality of otherworldliness works to her advantage as an unmissable. The plot may be ridiculous to some, but its complexity makes for an enjoyable night at the movies — especially for the ladies. Written by Ayn Rand and based on the novel Pity My Simplicity. Oscar-nominated title song by Victor Young. With Ann Richards, Gladys Cooper, Anita Louise, and Cecil Kellaway in a nice supporting role.

**December 16**

**ELEPHANT WALK (1954)**
William Dieterle
Paramount/103 min.
Cartoon: “Hobo Bobo” (1947)
Robert McKimson

“Elephant Walk wrapped in late May 1953, at a cost close to $3 million and with a net effect that proved grievously disappointing. The film is truly an eye-popper to behold. The settings, both interiors and exteriors, are stunning and are superbly photographed. The costumes, particularly one off-the-shoulder Grecian affair which Edith Head got up for Elizabeth, are dazzling.” — Dick Sheppard

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr, had sold this property to Paramount after trying to produce it at M.G.M. with Deborah Kerr starring. As Paramount, Vivien Leigh was signed, but was replaced by Elizabeth Taylor when Leigh suffered a nervous breakdown. This is the story of a young, rather conservative girl (Taylor) who marries a wealthy Ceylon tea grower (with a father complex, played by Peter Finch), and makes an attempt to adjust to his rather bizarre lifestyle, such as playing polo on a bicycle while drunk! She is surrounded by men on the estate, with Dana Andrews playing the loyal foreman. The elephant stampedes is one of the highlights in this, our last Dieterle film — shot beautifully in Technicolor by Loyal Griggs. With Abraham Sofaer. Music by Franz Waxman.

**December 23**

**THE UNHOLY THREE (1930)**
Jack Conway
M.G.M./74 min.
Cartoon: “The Night Before Christmas” (1933)
W. Jackson (Disney)

“With the talking version of this film, Chaney proved he could now use his voice as well as facial and body gestures to convey emotions. Lon still used his face and body to make his characters work and with the addition of his voice, everything blended into a harmonious mixture that allowed Chaney, unlike some other silent screen actors, to make a very smooth transition to talking pictures.” — Michael F. Blake

Not a Christmas film per se, but the story is set on Christmas Eve night. It’s almost a shot-for-shot remake of the 1925 Tod Browning silent film about three sideshow performers who use a pet shop as a front for their criminal activities. Echo the ventriloquist (Lon Chaney, Sr.) becomes Mrs. O’Grady. Harry Earles is the diabolical (and almost unintelligible) midget, and Ivan Linow is the strong man who is afraid of the caged gorilla! But this film’s value rests solely with Chaney — his last film — and shows the actor as auteur. With the rather naive Elliott Nugent (who co-wrote) and Lila Lee.
**JUST IMAGINE (1930)**

David Butler  
Fox/102 min.  
Cartoon: "Futuritzy" (1928) Otto Messmer  
(Felix the Cat)

"...Just Imagine seems flat as a board when seen on television... The presence of an audience, though, ignites some of the original spark... So Just Imagine is a uncommon piece, a curious mix of the drab and the fantastic, a stab at unaccustomed material ever before the likes of The Rocky Horror Show, and it could only have been made at one time in the history of film." - Richard Barrios

Though it's a celluloid antique with failed attempts at humor, this is perhaps the weirdest film you will ever see here—a sci-fi/musical/comedy. Seventy years ago, people were dreaming of immense skyscrapers and monoplanes and trips to Mars, and what do we have today? The Internet. Story is set in 1980. Actor El Brendel awakes like Rip Van Winkle to find a futuristic, Art Deco society where everyone has a number instead of a name. J-21 (John Garrick) is the romantic lead who must prove he is worthy of Maureen O'Sullivan; happiness must be earned. The sets and model work by Stephen Gooson (who later won an Oscar for *Lost Horizon*) and Ralph Hammeras are far more impressive than any film that relies on cartoonish, digital effects today. And look for the greatest rocketship in cinema—six years before Flash Gordon used it! With Frank Albertson, Hobart Bosworth, Joyzelle, and Misha Auer as the mysterious stranger who approaches the discouraged J-21.

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Who is William Dieterle? That is the question all of Chicago is asking. William Dieterle (born July 15th, 1893) had been an actor/director in Germany, having worked for Max Reinhardt, Paul Leni, & F.W. Murnau. In 1930, Hollywood invited him to America, where he was at his best within the studio system. Though his intelligent romance *Jewel Robbery* (1932) rivals Ernst Lubitsch’s work, Dieterle did not leave his personal imprint on film to the same degree as Lubitsch. Besides the above film that starred William Powell, Dieterle also made 1932’s *Scarlet Dawn* starring Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., 1948’s *Portrait of Jennie* with Jennifer Jones, and 1950’s *Dark City* with Charlton Heston, to name a few. Many of his films during the crisis in Europe seem personal, for they deal with injustice and intolerance—problems he felt strongly about. He once ruminated over escape versus message and profit versus art, but artists can be successful, Dieterle proved it. Towards the end of his life, he returned home to Germany and to the stage. His career as a director had lasted from 1923 until 1960. William Dieterle died in 1972 on December 9th.

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I would like to thank Scott Marks for making all this possible. His dedication to the art of cinema should be an inspiration to us all. Thanks must also go to Pete Fazio (and LaSalle Bank) for their hard work keeping the theatre going, and to Lee Gerstein for his advice and enthusiasm. And where would we be without Chicago’s best popcorn popper, Matt. Thanks to Mom and Dad (my audience contacts) and to my research team of Anthony, Dick, and “The Movie Geeks.” But above all, I want to thank YOU, the regulars, for supporting us. Without the likes of Bob, Gene, George, John, Phil, Tom, Murray (wherever you may be) and all the other familiar faces who are here every week, there would be no theatre. Thank you.
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