

Document Citation

Title	American madness
Author(s)	
Source	<i>London Film Festival</i>
Date	2005 Oct 29
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	American madness, Capra, Frank, 1932

American Madness

BOOK - Oct 29 - 12:30 Odeon West End / Screen 2 [[map](#)] [[add to my planner](#)]



Anyone who still doubts the luminosity attainable in cinema's black and white heyday need only sit in front of this eye-popping new print of Frank Capra's neglected early classic and watch the opening shots, when a glistening steel bank vault is ritually opened for morning business. Dazzlingly restored by the brilliant Grover Crisp at Sony (from sources including worn original negatives, a print from the *bfi* and, crucially, a copy rescued from the LA Parks Dept. used for outdoor screenings), this is the first film by its director which can be called truly Capraesque: a modern, populist fairy story of smalltown America in which an improbably philanthropic, 'New Deal'-style banker (Walter Huston) with 'a cheerful trust in men' experiences a double crisis in Depression-era USA - a panic-induced run on his bank and the threatened failure of his marriage. (It has been suggested that the character was based on actual banker and Columbia financier, A.H. Giannini, an active supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt famous for giving loans to the struggling poor.) A happy ending? You betcha! - but this particular pocketful of miracles has all the pace, humour and optimism of Capra at his most beguiling. Pace particularly: by his own admission, Capra contrived a sense of urgency by quickening the photography, 'jumping' performers in and out of the heart of scenes, cutting out dissolves, and overlapping the dialogue. The effect is exhilarating, disarming and as cinematically entertaining as only Capra can be.

Clyde Jeavons

Directed by	Frank Capra
Written by	Robert Riskin
With	Walter Huston, Pat O'Brien, Kay Johnson
Country	USA
Year of Production	1932
Running Time	77 minutes
Sponsored by	<u>TCM</u>

http://www.lff.org.uk/films_print.php?FilmID=603