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5th YEAR

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1956

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TOP HAT

Rogers and Astaire at their peak in the 1935 musical that broke box-office records. It's such obvious and glorious trash, only a prig wouldn't enjoy it.

and

STAGE DOOR

Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Lucille Ball, Eve Arden, Ann Miller, Andrea Leeds, Gail Patrick, etc., in the 1937 version of the Kaufman-Hart play ("burning hearts and flashing wit"). They are involved with Adolphe Menjou, Constance Collier, etc. Director, Gregory La Cava.

Continuous from 1 P.M. Saturdays and Sundays

CHARLIE CHAPLIN in
SHOULDER ARMS

In 1918 Charlie Chaplin levelled a full comic barrage at the glamorous soldier-hero; he fought militarism in his own way by making it ridiculous. A precursor of his World War II film, **The Great Dictator**, **Shoulder Arms** does not suffer from the pretensions of the later film. As the misfit in the ranks he acts out a soldier's dreams of glory: singlehanded, he seizes an enemy squad, saves his buddy from a firing squad, rescues a French girl (Edna Purviance) from the classic fate-worse-than-death, and captures the Kaiser. Along the way he impersonates a tree—in what is probably the best extended sequence in the film. One of his first four-reelers, **Shoulder Arms** is remarkable for the sustained comic invention; nothing lachrymose slows it down. One of the most famous comedies ever made, it has been one of the most difficult to locate; it is not likely that it has been seen in this area for several decades.

and

THE MARX BROTHERS in
ROOM SERVICE

In film after film the Marx Brothers work within a Rube Goldberg-designed infernal machine, and they're the only ones who know how it operates. Situations proliferate, fission takes place again and again, and they are happy and indestructible through it all. In **Room Service** they are variously aided and abetted by the material of the Broadway comedy hit, adapted for the screen by Morrie Ryskind. They are bankrupt theatrical impressarios holed up in a hotel room with their stranded players, fighting off famine and creditors. Lucille Ball, Ann Miller, Frank Albertson, and Donald MacBride add to the frenzy. Directed by William Seiter, 1938.

SECRET PEOPLE

The use of violence for idealistic purposes is the theme of this gripping suspense story. Valentina Cortesa plays a refugee from totalitarianism who becomes involved in an underground movement in London; her revulsion and guilt when she employs brutal methods are contrasted with the attitude of her lover (Serge Reggiani), a hardened revolutionary. With Audrey Hepburn, Irene Worth. The expressive camera movements and editing techniques of the director, Thorold Dickinson, have been much discussed abroad. 1951.

and

ILLICIT INTERLUDE

(**Sommarlek**) The absurd, sensational English title did serious disservice to what is perhaps the finest film to come from Sweden—a sensitive, psychological study of the love of two adolescents, and of the effect of the boy's death on the girl, a young ballerina. With Maj-Britt Nilsson. Director, Ingmar Bergman. 1950.

DAY OF WRATH

The great Carl Dreyer is one of the few living giants of the screen; sometimes referred to as the Kafka of the cinema, he has made a handful of psychological masterpieces. Witchcraft and martyrdom are his themes—but his witches do not ride broomsticks; they ride the erotic fears of their persecutors. Sin in Dreyer's work has deeper dimensions than it has ever had in other films. It has been said that Dreyer's art begins to unfold just at the point where most other directors give up. In **Day of Wrath**, as in his earlier **Passion of Joan of Arc**, he carries the heroine to the limits of human feeling, to the extremes of isolation, fear, and torment. In 1623 the young second wife of an austere pastor desires his death because of her love for his son; when the pastor falls dead, she is tried as a witch. Magnificently staged and acted, **Day of Wrath** is perhaps the most complexly moving film of our time. Completed in 1943, but not shown outside Denmark until after the war.

with Eisenstein's **DAY OF THE DEAD**—a brilliant 20-minute section from the unfinished **Que Viva Mexico!**

WOMAN OF DOLWYN

Edith Evans, Emlyn Williams, and Richard Burton, three major contributions of Wales to the English theatre, appear together in this 1949 film set in Wales. Edith Evans gives one of the finest dramatic performances ever recorded, as a woman who inundates a village in order to conceal a murder committed by her son. Written and directed by Emlyn Williams.

and

THE PROMOTER

Alec Guinness brings a blithe air and a fine glow to the young man who rises from lowly clerk to town mayor—not through honesty and diligence but through devious and ingenious scheming. Along the primrose path he encounters three charming ladies: Glynis Johns as the baby-faced, husky-voiced dancing teacher, Valerie Hobson as the Countess of Chell, and Petula Clark as a very pretty girl. Eric Ambler did the adaptation from Arnold Bennett's **The Card**; Ronald Neame directed. 1952.

ROXIE HART

The Chicago of speakeasies, floozies, murders, and tabloids is a favorite subject for satirists, and they always manage to cast a loving look on their vanished target. Roxie Hart (Ginger Rogers) is the 1926 sensation of Chicago—a flapper on trial for her life, who has the time of her life while on trial. A 1942 comedy that gets better with the years, with Adolphe Menjou, George Montgomery, Lynne Overman, Phil Silvers, Sara Allgood. Script by Nunnally Johnson, direction by William Wellman.

and

HIS GIRL FRIDAY

The classic of all Chicago satires, **The Front Page** by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, deals with the competitive tactics of unscrupulous tabloid writers; done up in fine fast style in 1940 and rechristened **His Girl Friday**, it stars Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell, with Ralph Bellamy. Director, Howard Hawks.

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

For those who missed it in June, here it is again: Milestone's 1930 study of young German volunteers of World War I, and the disintegration of their romantic illusions in the misery of trench warfare. From Remarque's novel, with Lew Ayres and Louis Wolheim. Some of the performances haven't weathered well, but the film, particularly in the battle sequences, holds its own.

and

MURDERERS AMONG US

(**Die Moerder Sind Unter Uns**) The first production to be released in Berlin after the war—in 1946—this film offers a dramatic analysis of the conflicts in the minds of the German people. Though made in the East Zone, it was exhibited in all four occupation zones. Written and directed by Wolfgang Staudte, with Hildegard Neff (Best Performance of the Year—Locarno Film Festival) and Ernst Borchert.

D. W. Griffith's BIRTH OF A NATION

"Nobody had ever seen anything like it—and so far ahead of his time was Griffith, perhaps nobody ever will again."—LIFE. A milestone in the history of the film, **Birth of a Nation** introduced in 1915 a whole range of techniques that have now become the basic vocabulary of the cinema. Some of its content is, however, in grotesquely bad taste. Leaders of various organizations, such as the NAACP, with whom we have discussed the film, have agreed that there can be no possible harm in showing it in a place like the Cinema Guild, and that the crudity and naivete of the offending sections will speak for themselves. No children will, however, be admitted. Photographed by Billy Bitzer, with Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Henry B. Walthall, Robert Harron, Wallace Reid, Donald Crisp.

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THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Leading French and Italian directors show their skill; with Gerard Philipe, Michele Morgan, Francoise Rosay, Isa Miranda, Eduardo de Filippo, Viviane Romance. 1953.

PORT OF SHADOWS

(**Quai des Brumes**) The first (1938) of the three major collaborations of Marcel Carne, director, and Jacques Prevert, writer (**Daybreak** 1939, **Children of Paradise** 1944)—the films which helped to create the French cinematic style of adult, subtle handling of human relationships in an atmosphere of poetic fatalism. In **Port of Shadows** the central figure of the French film was created—the hopelessly rebellious hero, the decent man trapped by society: it was the opening of the Jean Gabin era. A man (Gabin) is running away from the police; he arrives at a dock-side backstreet looking for a ship in which to escape. He meets a girl, the exquisite, rain-coated Michele Morgan, and tries to free her from her disreputable guardian (Michel Simon) and his crony (Pierre Brasseur); he doesn't escape. The defeatism of the film was like a breath of fresh air to American filmgoers brought up on empty optimism.

SHOESHINE (Scuiscià)

"One of the great, simple, and unforgettable motion pictures."—**The New Yorker**. "... its beauty rests on its simple and impassioned use of the basic principles which most studios have abandoned or emasculated."—**Time**. Vittorio De Sica's tragic study of the corruption of innocence centers on two young shoeshine boys, surrounded by the apathy of post-war Rome, who sustain friendship and dreams. But their vision is too fragile, and when they are sent to prison for black-marketeering they are not strong enough to withstand the pressures of their cell-mates. They become enemies, and everything goes down. This is a film in which the director is intensely and compassionately involved, and the spectator, unless he is of stone, is caught up in that rare thing: a humane work of art. 1947.

René Clair's A NOUS LA LIBERTE

and

Jean Renoir's A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

We extend sincere apologies to the people who waited in line and could not get seats during the July showings of this program. If you are coming from any distance and plan to come on a week-end night, we suggest that you check with us by phone, so that you will not be kept waiting. **A Nous la Liberté** is, of course, the great 1931 satire on mechanization, with a score by Georges Auric. **A Day in the Country (Partie de Campagne)** is Renoir's short feature, based on a story by de Maupassant, which was made in 1938 and reached this country in 1951 as part of **The Ways of Love** package. It is a breath-takingly beautiful contrast of a mother and daughter reacting to their lovers.

LAURA

Everybody's favorite murder mystery—Gene Tierney is the corpse who ends up as the heroine, Clifton Webb and Vincent Price are her suitors, Dana Andrews is the hard-soft detective, and Judith Anderson is modishly contemptible. Otto Preminger produced and directed in 1944.

and

THE THIRTEENTH LETTER

Not so many people have seen this one, and it isn't quite so chic, but it's a nice, nasty murder mystery. It has Charles Boyer, Michael Rennie, and Linda Darnell pretending to be terrorized in a French-Canadian community. The backgrounds are authentic, but it's the suspense in the foreground that counts. Also directed by Otto Preminger, 1951. Adapted from Clouzot's film **Le Corbeau**.

LOVERS OF VERONA

(**Les Amants de Verone**) Two young understudies for the stars making a film of Romeo and Juliet fall in love and, as star-crossed as Shakespeare's lovers, they re-enact the drama. The sensuous and poetic elegance of the film is in strangely effective contrast with the seamy, vicious elements it encompasses—the aging film stars, the young girl's decadent, fascistic family. Serge Reggiani and Anouk Aimee are the lovers; Martine Carol, Pierre Brasseur, Marcel Dalio, Marianne Oswald, and Louis Salou have the other important parts. Jacques Prevert did the script, the direction is by Andre Cayatte. Photographed in Verona and Venice by Alekan. 1948.

TALES OF HOFFMANN

This choreographic spectacle, based on the Jacques Offenbach light opera, stars Moira Shearer, Leonide Massine, and Robert Helpmann in the dancing roles, with singers Robert Rounseville and Ann Ayars. Pamela Brown contributes her disconcerting presence; Sir Thomas Beecham conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; and the Sadler's Wells Chorus fills out the larger dance sequences. Following upon the success of **The Red Shoes**, producers Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger found themselves in a position to employ first-rank people in all the technical departments and to fulfill the most lavish appetites for musical, dancing, and dramatic talent. The decor and the color were used as integral parts of the film, to help create moods and to set the pace. The result is a long film, structured almost as a series of divertissements. There isn't much middle opinion about **Tales of Hoffman**; some filmgoers find it fascinating, and others loathe it—and both groups can make pretty good cases. 1951.

MAEDCHEN IN UNIFORM

The controversy has never let up since this classic of ambiguity was released in 1932. A sensitive young girl (Herieth Thiele) in a fashionable school for girls, is unhappy under the harsh, Prussian discipline; she flowers when a sympathetic, understanding teacher (Dorothea Wieck) gives her special consideration. The problem is that the consideration seems especially special. What's odd about the film is that the schoolteacher is not viewed as decadent or even naughty; she seems to be on the side of the angels, and yet, from where the audience sits, she looks unmistakably Lesbian. The film is already a legend, but for the sake of the record: it was voted the best film of the year by the New York press; and the New York World-Telegram, not content with that, called it "the year's ten best programs rolled into one." Directed by Leontine Sagen.

THE CAT PEOPLE

The psychoanalyst (Tom Conway) is explaining to his patient (Simone Simon) that her idea that she is turning into a member of the cat family is a fantasy, when she silences him with fang and talon. Such charming ironies in the American horror genre, dedicated for many years to gorillas, haunted houses, and disembodied arms, were the contribution of Val Lewton. For a brief period he revolutionized scare movies with suggestion, imaginative sound effects and camera angles. **The Cat People**, the most famous of his films, was made in 1942.

and

THE MAGNET

A wonderfully impertinent English joke at the expense of grown-ups for their tendency to over-sentimentalize children, with the best stuffy young psychoanalyst in films as one of the butts. Directed by Charles Frend, from an original script by T. E. B. Clarke (**Passport to Pimlico**, **The Lavender Hill Mob**, etc.). 1951.

THE RED INN

(**L'Auberge Rouge**) A monk hears confession from an innkeeper's wife, and she nonchalantly reveals that all guests who come to the inn are murdered. He sets about the task of getting the guests to leave, without violating the confessional. A macabre comedy (somewhat reminiscent of **Arsenic and Old Lace**) made in 1953 by Autant-Lara, with Fernandel as the monk, Francoise Rosay, Marie-Claire Olivia.

This film continues through Sunday, November 4.

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JAMES AGEE.

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