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THE INFORMER

USA 1935. Directed by John Ford. Scenario by Dudley Nichols from the novel by Liam O'Flaherty; music by Max Steiner. With Victor McLaglen, Heather Angel, Preston Foster, Francis Ford, Robert Parrish, Arthur McLaglen. Set against the background of the Sinn Féin Rebellion in Dublin in 1922, *The Informer* is a tale of crime, betrayal, and punishment. Gypo Nolan, a brainless tough, betrays his friend Frankie to the police for £20 so that he may take his girl to America; the film illustrates his wild night out on the proceeds, the tortures of his conscience, his capture, trial, and death. Ford tells the story with direct simplicity, carrying the narrative smoothly and inevitably from episode to episode with the surest of touches. He relies to a striking extent on visual effects in place of dialogue, but when dialogue is used it is realistic and convincing, contrasting with the symbolism (the poster symbolising betrayal, darkness and fog symbolising Gypo's mental confusion, and so on) of the visuals. Summing up the intention of the film, Nichols (its writer) said: "Stylised symbolism was the key to the whole thing..I brought to the script, and Ford brought to the direction, everything I had learned and all that he knew. Never since have I been able to work so freely or experimentally." It is perhaps not surprising that a film made with such devotion to a completely unorthodox conception should have filled its producers with alarm, which for a while appeared justified when the film flopped badly at its New York opening. By the end of the year, however, it had acquired such a word-of-mouth reputation that it carried off four Academy Awards. Historically, it still stands as one of Ford's greatest works. (Note special hire charge: £5. 5s. 0d., no discount allowable).

35/16 8 Sd 88 mins AB