

## Document Citation

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--- 10 minute intermission ---

"ARROWSMITH" (Sam Goldwyn-United Artists, 1931) Directed by John Ford  
Screenplay by Sidney Howard from the novel by Sinclair Lewis; Camera,  
Ray June; Music, Alfred Newman; Sets, Richard Day; 9 reels  
With Ronald Colman, Helen Hayes, Richard Bennett, Myrna Loy, A.E. Anson,  
Claude King, Russell Hopton, Alec B. Francis, Bert Roach, Charlotte Henry,  
James Marcus, DeWitt Jennings, Beulah Bondi, John Qualen, Adela Watson, Sidney  
McGrey, David Landau, Florence Britton, Lumsden Hare, Clarence Brooks, Ward  
Bond, Erville Alderson.

In 1931 "Arrowsmith" was a huge success, both critically and with the public. The reviews were unqualified raves, and the boxoffice response was enormous. Colman found himself riding the crest of a new and even greater wave of popularity, and John Ford - after seven interesting but variable and uneven talkie features - indisputably came to terms with the sound medium and maintained his re-established position thereafter. The Doctor hero was very much the fashion in the thirties, and the novels of Lewis, Cronin and Lloyd Douglas hugely popular. This fashion of course has gone, and many of the films resulting from it seem superficial today, but if "Arrowsmith" no longer seems an important movie, it is still a good one, and an astonishingly polished and fluid one for so early a date in the evolution of sound films. Too, it has more the look of a Goldwyn film than a Ford film (their later collaboration, "The Hurricane" was likewise more dominated by Goldwyn than by Ford) though there are many typical images and players that have come to be associated with Ford. He even indulges one of his favorite, perverse tricks of casting players that he has gone on record as detesting (e.g., Lumsden Hare) in roles that make them look pompous and foolish! Colman is perhaps a shade too assured as Arrowsmith, but it's a smooth performance that is good to look at and listen too. Helen Hayes, great as she may have been on stage, is here again mannered and artificial, and the best performance comes from Richard Bennett. Although an implied Colman-Loy affair was ultra ambiguous and decorous even in pre-Code 1931, it was considered censorable when the film was reissued in the 40's, and virtually all of Loy's already limited footage was cut. Most extant prints of this rarely shown film are of the cut version, but we have been able to obtain the full, unedited version for our showing this evening.

--- Wm. K. Everson ---

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