

THE THEODORE HUFT MEMORIAL FILM SOCIETY

Wednesday evening July 8th., 7:30 p.m. sharp, at 106 East 41st Street (Room 327)

A PROGRAM OF IMPORTANT AMERICAN FILMS

"THE COVERED WAGON" (1923) Famous Players-Lasky. Directed by JAMES CRUZE
Scenario by Jack Cunningham, from the novel by Emerson Hough. Photographed by Karl Brown.
Edited by Dorothy Arzner.

Will Bendon	J. Warren Kerrigan	Holly Wingate	Lois Wilson
Sam Woodhill	Alan Hale	Mr. Wingate	Charles Ogle
Mrs Wingate	Ethel Wales	Jackson	Ernest Torrence
Jim Bridger	Tully Marshall	Kit Carson	Guy Cliver
Jed Wingate	Johnny Fox		

20 years after "The Great Train Robbery", this film smashed across the screens of the nation, setting a new standard of film making, establishing the outdoor epic as an exciting film entertainment, and foreshadowing the school of documentary film which had been introduced the year before by Flaherty's "Nanook of the North". The first of the big western epics, it was followed a year later by Ford's "The Iron Horse" and by many others. The novel had been acquired as a vehicle for one of the studio's feminine stars; when previous commitments prevented her acceptance, it found its way into the hands of Cruze who cast it with relatively unknown players willing to go on location miles from communication and comfort. After the film's release, the leads were able to command their own salaries and choose their own roles. (Locations for the film: Snake Valley, Nevada; the buffalo hunt shot at Antelope Island in Great Salt Lake; the snow scenes at Sonora, California).

Cruze, born Jess Cruz Besan, barnstormed across the U.S. as a stock company actor, and eventually found his way into films, appearing as the star of one of the most famous serials ever made, "The Million Dollar Mystery" (1914). He wrote scripts for many actors (one of Will Rogers' first films, "One Glorious Day", was written by Cruze) as well as directing, and had directed literally hundreds of films before "THE COVERED WAGON". He teamed with Fatty Arbuckle on Arbuckle's most famous feature comedies until the unfortunate scandal. Two of their films, "Via Fast Freight" and "Skirt Shy" were never released. Catapulted to fame by "THE COVERED WAGON", Cruze was selected as one of the best American directors in 1926, was the highest paid director in the world in 1927 (\$7000 a week); directed the worst major film epic ("Old Ironsides" in 1926); "The Fighting Coward" (1924) a hilarious comedy of Southern aristocracy (which we hope to screen for members in the near future), the superb satire "Hollywood" (1923) in which he used a brief appearance of Fatty Arbuckle for poignant dramatic effect. He also directed his friend Von Stroheim and Betty Compson (Cruze's wife at the time) in their first talkie, "The Great Gabbo". After the advent of sound and the dissolve of his marriage, Cruze slowly lost his great reputation for epic and comedy.

During this period his best film was "I Cover the Waterfront" (1933), although he also made a tentative but worth-while return to the epic with "Sutter's Gold" (1936) at Universal, which was certainly the biggest of all his talkie subjects. His last films were made for Republic in 1938 - good, routine action melodramas ("The Wrong Road", "Come on Leathernecks"). He died in 1942 and now, despite his pioneer work, is rarely mentioned among the important American directors.

Karl Brown, the cameraman, had been an assistant cameraman with D.W. Griffith from 1914 until 1920. Subsequently he graduated to writing and directing, some of his more recent subjects being pot-boilers of the calibre of "The Chicago Kid" and "The Man They Couldn't Hang". Paramount incidentally, are currently preparing a wide-screen technicolor remake of "The Covered Wagon", to be directed by Michael Curtiz. Almost completely forgotten today is the fact that, a year after the release of "The Covered Wagon", Paramount produced a sequel - "North of '36", in which Lois Wilson and Ernest Torrence repeated their original roles, and Jack Holt assumed the Kerrigan role. (It was directed by Irving Willat, not by Cruze).

"SPILLS AND CHILLS"

The second film in our Bob Youngson Festival, "Spills and Chills" was nominated for an Academy Award in 1949. Bob is well up to form in this fast-paced parade of catastrophe, disaster and harrowing misadventure, which records the work of Hollywood stunt men. Wagons career over cliffs, cars triumphantly smash each other into obliteration, and a man is dragged along at breakneck speed behind a wagon while the narrator jubilantly stresses that it is a man and not a dummy! Rin Tin Tin is featured quite prominently in the footage, a seldom equalled record of carnage and violence which Bob has culled from silent as well as sound features.

Continued overleaf

Two rarely seen Chaplin films:

"A DOG'S LIFE"

Released by First National, April 14 1918.
Written and directed by Charles Chaplin, photographed by
Rollie Totherch; Assistant Director: Chuck Riesner

With Edna Purviance (dancer); Tom Wilson (the cop); Sidney Chaplin (owner of food wagon); Albert Austin (crook); Henry Bergman (bum, and fat lady); Chuck Riesner (clerk, and drummer); Billy White (cafe owner); James T. Kelley (bum).

At that time, Chaplin's best comedy to date. Less caricature, more realism. The pathos is stressed more than ever in Charlie's attempts to lead a free independent existence.

"PAY DAY"

Released by First National, April 2 1922.
Written and directed by Charles Chaplin, photographed by Rollie Totherch.

With Phyllis Allen (Charlie's wife); Mack Swain (the foreman); Edna Purviance (the foreman's daughter); Sidney Chaplin (friend); Henry Bergman, Allen Garcia.

This picture is also in the Mutual tradition, but with a more realistic story and background. It shows sympathy for the lot of the working man without any serious social overtones.
