Program For Tuesday May 11th, 7:30 p.m., at the Radio Writers' Guild (Room 315) 2 East 23rd St. NY

CHARLIE CHAPLIN - WILLIAM S. HART - JACKIE COogan - PEARL WHITE - THE KEYSTONE COPS - MACK SWAIN

in a program of rare early American films

"THE NAUTICAL THOUGHT" (1917) Mack Semett - Keystone. With Mack Swain, Bob Kortman, and the Cops - one reel - No detailed analysis is necessary, merely, on the grand old Mack Swain riots. This one is well up to standard, with a fine parade of gags both subtle and slapstick, and the inevitable hotch-potch of music. It's interesting to note that the villain, Bob Kortman, one of Ince's earliest players, is still going strong as an extra at Paramount!

"THE MAD LOVER" (1914) This epic has so far defied all attempts at identification - even Ted Huff was unable to trace its origin or its makers, and our date of 1914 is merely an appreciation. An interesting oddity, our print is a condensation of a longer feature which may well have been quite poor. But at one reel it moves too quickly for its defects to be too obvious, and remains an intriguing and diverting little subject. In a straight dramatic role, Pearl White is very lovely and shows considerably more restraint than she did in her later serial days.

"Mr. SENTIMENT HASKINS" (Released, Feb. 19, 1915) A Thomas H. Ince-Mary Bee production, written by C. Gardner Sullivan and directed by William S. Hart. Starring William S. Hart as Lou Handin; Rhea Mitchell as Priscilla Miller; J. Barnes Sherman as Jim Blake.

(This film was originally announced for our March 16th program, but not shown). Our print, which bears the title "Mr. Royal Flush", is a one reel condensation of a two-reeler originally titled "Mr. Suit Haskins". After Hart split with Ince, it was given yet another title - "The Marked Deck" - and released through M-G-M Productions (i.e., Lynch Enterprises), the pirate outfit sponsored by Triangle in an effort to ruin Hart. This they did by re-cutting and re-titling older Hart westerns and pushing them on the market as "new" films in direct competition with Hart's own current and more elaborate productions. It is a very typical early Hart, with stress on an accurate reconstruction of slang, on meticulous characterization and on a slow building of tension, rather than on any straightforward western action. It was directed by Hart himself, and contains one of his most typical chokes - one where he and the villain glare at each other silently, the camera remaining still from the heavy's face to Hart's even steamer visage. (For further information on Hart, see our notes on "Rumbleshoots" and "The Return of Draw Egan" of some months ago).

"SHOULDER ARMS" (Released, October 20, 1918) Written and directed by Charles Chaplin for First National. Starring Charlie Chaplin, with Edna Purviance (the French girl), Shirley Chaplin (the American serpent, and also the Kaiser), Harry Bergman (German officer, and American bartender), Albert Austin (American officer, German soldier), Tom Wilson (Rommam); Jack Wilson (Crown Prince).

"Shoulder Arms", as one of Chaplin's best films, deserves several pages of notes all to itself. It is unfortunate that we cannot devote such space to it, but we recommend a careful perusal of the chapter devoted to it in Ted Huff's book on Chaplin. Quoting in part from this chapter: .... "Shoulder Arms" is an unusual mixture of realism and fantasy, flavored with Chaplin's characteristic touches of slapstick, satire, irony and pathos .... without any bombast, flag-waving or stimulation of heroics (it) although a comedy provides a truer picture of World War One .... than mere ambitious apology of the period. It is Evelyn at war and, in the words of Jean Cocteau, "It proves life a dream". The picture influenced many other films. The nail scene, with its genuine pathos, was borrowed direct in "The Big Parade". Technically too, the picture was an advance over Chaplin's previous work .... there are advances in cutting, double exposure by split screen, iris effects, etc. Five reels were planned, but the picture was cut down to three". (Unquote)

It is certainly worth stressing that the three-reel print that we are showing is the most complete print that we have ever seen, due largely to the fact that it has been laboriously pieced together from 16mm prints, one of them a toned original, and the other a very good copy. Thus our print contains several scenes usually missing from this infrequently shown classic.

INTERMISSION

(Second thoughts on "The Mad Lover". To the best of our knowledge, it is not the title film of the same title of 1917. Certainly it appears to be earlier. If any members have any positive information, we'll be glad to hear it).

Next to Rin Tin Tin, Jackie Coogan was one of the greatest phenomena of the silent era and one of its biggest box-office attractions. This film, made immediately after his enormous success in "The Kid", proves - if nothing else - that Coogan didn't owe all his appeal and charm to Chaplin's handling. Here he is on his own, and what a little trouper he is - taking potshots, eloping, being manhandled and song and dance in his stride. The film quite shamelessly copies the basic plot-line of "The Kid", but manages to be quite inventive in its comedy content. The sequences of Coogan employing dubious tricky ruses to avoid a pursuing policeman are thoroughly delightful, and the whole film has a pleasing sentimentality which never once descends into mushiness. (One shudders at the mere recollection of Lionel Barrymore and Margaret O'Brien doing similar things in the forties!)

Here Coogan, at five, is at his best and most appealing. As he grew older he continued to make many films of course - for First National, Fox, Metro and Paramount - but his appeal, not surprisingly, diminished steadily until he was "retired" temporarily in the late twenties. A comeback via Paramount's "Tom Sawyer" in 1932 was short-lived. Marriage to Betty Grable, and in the late thirties, a role in a Hal Roach Tommy opus ("Sky Patrol") preceded another disappearance. Currently, nearly 40 and quite bald, Coogan can be seen as a warm-hearted heavy in "Outlaw Women" and as a mad scientist creating spider-women in "Mass of Lost Women" I. (In the late 40's, he had also made two co-starring comedies with Jackie Cooper at Monogram.)

English writer-director Victor Heerman, one of the co-directors of "My Boy" and himself once a child actor, guided Coogan through later vehicles too. An unusually prolific director, Heerman had entered the film industry with Kineocolor, and later directed for Samett, Selznick, Famous Players and others, as well as turning out many scripts. One of his biggest silent hits was "Rupert of Hentzau".

"MY BOY" is a fine original toned print, and highly enjoyable light entertainment.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS

May 26th.

LOR CHACEY in "THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME" - Complete version plus three fine shorts on movie history from Robert G. Youngson, including his latest production "Thrills from the Past", adapted from Alan Crossland's "In Old San Francisco" starring Warner Oland and Dolores Costello, and containing probably the MOST earthquake ever filmed!

June 2nd.

Our Long-promised orgy of German and French classics!

LESLIE RIEMERSHAUSEN in "THE BLUE LIGHT"
BRITTAY BERN, HENRY VICTOR, JULIE BERN in L'Herbier's "L'ARMEE"
LIEDE DE FUYT, VIDUSCHA GALDART & MARLENE HENDRICH in Arthur Robison's "MAINZ IESCH".
LUIS TURVER and LESLIE RIEMERSHAUSEN in Arnold Fanck's "THE SACRED MOUNTAIN".

There is just a chance that this latter show may have to be postponed by a week. Prints (on loan to us) and projector have to be brought up from The Deep South, and our benefactor cannot, at this time, guarantee that June 3rd will be in order. However, it does seem fairly definite, and if there should be a postponement, members will of course be notified well in advance. These are all first-class prints in mint condition, and this promises to be a really stand-out presentation.

COMMITTEE OF THE FILM SOCIETY: Charles Turner (Chairman); Herman G. Weinfeld; Robert G. Youngson; Richard Kraft; Warren G. Rothenberg; William K. Everson (Prog. Notes & Enquiries)