

Today's 1912-1927 pot-pourri of Griffith, Ince, Edison, Sennett et al is something of an experiment. Apart from our composite shows with a linking theme (Griffith and the Civil War, Serials, etc.) this is our first program composed entirely of short subjects. As we pointed out in our circular, it is mainly a matter of convenience, so that we can play off a number of items before we lose them. However, if the formula works and proves popular, we can repeat it on other occasions, as there is certainly no shortage of interesting one, two and three reelers. Advance indications from a few members are that they like the idea; but we'll see. Tonight's program is possibly a shade too long for maximum enjoyment; and we've aimed at overall variety rather than outstanding quality; but we think you'll enjoy it. Should reaction indicate that this sort of program can become a regular fixture, we will of course aim for slightly shorter compilations.

Two apologies: the notes for mailing, typed in far too great a hurry, contained a number of errors in dates -- only be a year in each case, but even so, errors, and quite inexcusable. You'll find the correct dates in these notes. And for some inexplicable reason, we referred to "The Kid" as a United Artists release. It was, of course, a First National picture.

The second apology concerns the (probable) quality of the musical scoring this evening. There were so many unexpected problems in assembling this show - at the last minute, three of the prints were found to be completely out of sequence, requiring a lengthy re-editing chore - that there was just no time to put in a scoring session in advance. Luckily, short subjects are easier to ad-lib music for than features. At least, we hope so. At any rate, we'll find out tonight! So please bear with us if, by accident, you get an agitato when you should get a minuet.

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Program (in order of screening)

THE SQUAW'S LOVE (Biograph, 1911) Directed by D.W. Griffith; starring Mabel Normand, with Alfred Paget, Claire McDowell, Kate Bruce, Dark Cloud. 1 reel

A really well-done early Griffith melodrama, this little Indian thriller, shot entirely out of doors in extremely well chosen locations, compares very favorably with far more elaborate essays along the same lines. The plot, involving romantic jealousies and inter-tribe intrigues, is frankly a little involved, and the lack of the original titles doesn't help to clarify matters any. However, it doesn't really matter too much who does what to whom; of far more importance is the well photographed and directed action. Mabel Normand makes a very lively heroine, doing all the athletics herself, and there's an interesting performance by one of the earliest movie indian actors - Dark Cloud - already in his sixties when this film was made.

THE WAY TO THE UNDERWORLD (Edison, 1913)
Episode 9 of "What Happened to Mary"; starring Mary Fuller, with Charles Ogle, William Wadsworth and Barry O'Moore. 1 reel

Like "The Perils of Pauline" linked by an overall theme about an inheritance swindle, "What Happened to Mary" was generally less melodramatic than the Pearl White film that followed. Generally Mary tended to use her brains rather than her brawn, and this particular episode, with its escape from a high window, has more melodrama than most of the other episodes that we've seen. It's a neat little film, bringing its immediate story-line to a

conclusion, while leaving the general theme still very much in the balance.

DIZZY HEIGHTS AND DARING HEARTS (Triangle-Keystone; produced 1915, released 1916) Produced by Mack Sennett, directed by Walter Wright; with Chester Conklin, Billy Mason, David Anderson, Cora Anderson, Nick Cogley.
Two Reels

Such rarities as "His Pitter Pill", "Teddy at the Throttle" and "Barney Oldfield's Race for Life" excepted, the pre-20's Sennett period was generally a pretty barren one - and a vastly over-rated one, especially by European critics who found a "poetry" in the Keystone knockabout farces that Sennett himself has been the first to disclaim. The surprising thing is that one almost never comes across what is considered a "typical" Sennett! The good Keystone Cops chases were few and far between, and the custard-pie slinging seems to have been almost non-existent, if the couple of hundred Sennetts that I have looked at over the past year are any criterion. However, "Dizzy Heights and Daring Hearts" is just what people have in mind when they use the phrase "typical Sennett comedy". It is fast, inventive, packed with speed and pep. It has crudity of execution and vulgarity of content, but that too is "typical" Sennett. This is certainly one of the best of the earlier keystones, by no means the equal of "His Bitter Pill", but far and away superior to the general run of often excruciatingly unfunny pre-1920 Sennetts.

FLASHING OARS (Universal, 1927) From "The Collegians" series; story by Carl Laemmle jr., directed by Wesley Ruggles; scenario by George Plympton and George Rogan; photographed by Ben Kline; titles by Gardner Bradford; with George Lewis, Dorothy Gulliver, Eddie Phillips, Hayden Stevenson, and Andy Devine and Grady Sutton as extras. 2 reels

Along with "The Leatherpushers" (a Reginald Denny series), "The Collegians" were tremendously popular two-reelers put out by Universal in the 20's. We've run several before, and are glad to add one more to the list. This time, freshman Benson (George Lewis - still active in "Zorro" on tv) pulls Calford through to victory once again, in a nice two-toned original print.

THE MAN WITH A PUNCH (Universal, 1920) 2 reels; produced by Edward Laemmle; story by W.C. Tuttle; scenario by Burl Armstrong; photographed by Alfred Lathem; starring HOOT GIBSON, with Dorothy Wood, Jim Corey, Ben Corbett, Charles Newton.

At a time when fast-action westerns were commonplace on the screen, Universal's gentle, humorous, and slowly paced Hoot Gibson two-reelers were quite refreshingly different. The formula worked well for Gibson, whose later features were constructed along the same lines. Today, admittedly, the slightness of story and lack of real action make them seem strangely pedestrian for westerns, but they do retain much of their old pleasant appeal, and Gibson's personality comes through well.

THE PRIDE OF PIKEVILLE (Mack Sennett-Pathe, 1927) Directed by Alf Goulding; photographed by St. Elmo Boyce; special camerawork by K.G. MacLean; supervised by J.A. Waldron; edited by William Hornbeck; story by Earl Rodney and Jefferson Moffitt; starring BEN TURPIN, with Andy Clyde, Ruth Taylor, Stanley Blystone, Vernon Dent.

Another in Turpin's series lampooning the Stroheim of "Foolish Wives" ("When a Man's a Prince" is perhaps the best-known in this group) is a strange mixture of wonderful gags (the pantomime with the fly, for example) and old and obvious ones (the hornet-nest routine - never a funny gag anyway, but a slapstick staple for years). Turpin's fooling is fine, and Ruth Taylor (who was here only a year away from "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes") is again so pretty and able a

comediienne that it remains a puzzle why she faded so quickly. Incidentally, this print is entirely bereft of titles, but we don't think you'll have any trouble following the plot, especially as all the inserts (letters, etc.) are in place.

THE SEA GHOST (Broncho-Ince, 1915) Produced by Thomas H. Ince, directed by Richard Stanton; written by Ince and G. Gardner Sullivan; photographed by Joseph August; starring Arthur Maude, Margaret Gibson, J.J. Dowling and J.P. Lockney. 2 reels

A vigorous and gutsy sea melodrama in the Jack London tradition, "The Sea Ghost" packs in a mutiny, a typhoon, the hero being set adrift in a sealed barrel, romance on a desert island, and ultimate retribution -- enough plot material for a full feature. Its story stretches coincidence a little too much perhaps, but it makes for lively entertainment, and is beautifully photographed by one of the best cameramen in the business, Joseph August. And it was all made for a little over a thousand dollars! Incidentally, this was one of the prints that had to be reassembled for our show; it literally had to be put together from scratch, and while the original order of everything seems to have been restored, we may have misplaced an odd scene or two. So if there's a jumpy piece of editing, please blame the Huff Society and not Mr. Ince.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO (France, app. 1926); starring Jean Angelo as Edmond Dantes, Lil Dagover as Mercedes, with Gaston Modot.
3 reels

We have never before presented any film at this society with so little data as to its origin, director etc. Frankly it was a case of being caught napping, with program-note-time rolling around and immediate identification through the reference books on hand not paying off. We'll issue some more statistical information on this film with our next set of notes, and will just say now that it appears to be middle or late twenties, and was apparently not released in this country. Our version is obviously but a fraction of the original, and is a 16mm blow-up from a British 9.5mm print. All things considering, the quality is quite good, and while obviously such a version cannot hope to do justice - dramatically, or pictorially - to the original, nevertheless within the 3-reel framework, the editing has been intelligently done. One would give much to see the original, for the camerawork occasionally has an intriguing mystical quality, and the production seems to have been on an extremely lavish scale. There are also interesting plot elements not present in other versions of this many-times filmed tale (there have been American, German, French, Mexican, Philippino, British versions -- and doubtless others too). Since it is a somewhat static tale, almost always told in the same way, freshness of approach via the stylish camerawork indicated here can make a tremendous amount of difference -- and this may well have been one of the more interesting versions of all.

Program Notes & Enquiries:

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Next program:

Wednesday October 29th., in room 9B

CHAPLIN PROGRAM: THE KID - THE GOLD RUSH (condensation) - RECREATION
