"HOLD THAT GO-ED" (20th Century Fox, 1939) Directed by George Marshall
Producer: Darryl F. Zanuck; Asoco Producer: David Hempstead; screenplay
by Earl Tunberg, Don Ettlinger, Jack Yellen; cameraman: Robert Flanagan;
music and lyrics: Mack Gordon, Harry Revel, Lew Pollack, Lew Brown;
Sidney Clare, Jule Styne, Nicholas Castle. 8 reels.
With John Barrymore, George Murphy, Marjorie Weaver, Joan Davis, Jack Haley,
George Barbier, Ruth Terry, Donald Meek, Johnny Downs, Paul Hurst, Guilmar
Williams, Brewster Tuva, Frank Solly, William Benedict, Charles Wilson,
Glenn Morris, Dora Clement, Russell Hicks, Fred Kohler Jr., Ruth Warren,
Forbes Murray, Harry Hayden, Glen Bevan, John Dilson, John Elliott, Frank
Jaquemot, Stan Laidlaw, Harold Goodwin, Tom Chatterton, Stanley Andrews,
Douglas Evans, Larry Steve.

Considering the appallingly inept and uninformatve title, the production
company, the cast (Barrymore excepted) and the year, "Hold That Go-Ed" is
surprisingly good and often quite pungent comedy. Everything would seem to be
against it. It is the kind of film that, by the late thirties, was usually
being done badly and boringly, a collection of weak cliches, weaker songs,
feetle comedy and dull contract players who had nothing better to do. It is
also the period of Barrymore's decline. Yet the worst that one expects never
materializes; true, it's no "20th Century", or even a "True Confession", but
it doesn't sell Barrymore short. It neither uses his name for "prestige"
only nor wastes and/or lampoons him. He's there throughout with a dominant
role, and has genuinely funny material with his lampoon of a political
charlatan. The names that one dreads in Fox films of the period -- Joan
Davis and Jack Haley in particular -- have both better, and less, material
than usual. The complications aren't overcome, the plot keeps moving along
quickly, and there are lots of old friends in the supporting cast to keep it
interesting -- though one has to look quickly to catch Glenn Morris, the
Olympic decathlon champ and one-time Tarzan, here reduced to an extra in a
couple of crowd scenes! Some of the dialogue has quite a bit of punch --
E.g., "The American public will tolerate bad government but never bad
sportsmanship" -- and all told it's quite a jolly romp, providing one expects
fairly little. Then one can sit back and marvel at how much better it is than
"Million Dollar Legs" (the second one), "College Swing", "Thrill of a
Lifetime" and almost all of the other collegiate films of the period.

"Spirit of '43" (Walt Disney, 1943)

A rather timely Disney propaganda short, and an interesting illustration of
how ultra-aggressive propaganda can become out-of-date frighteningly quickly.
A minor change in narration could turn this into highly effective anti-U.S.
propaganda today!

"THE STRANGE LOVE OF MOLLY LOUVAIN" (Wls-First National, 1932) Directed by
Michael Curtiz; screenplay by Erwin Gelsey & Browne Holmes from a story
by Maurice Wilkins; cameraman: Robert Currie
With Ann Dvorak, Joe Liles, Leslie Fenton, Richard Cromwell, Guy Kibbee,
Frank McHugh, Charles Middleton, Evelyn Knapp, C. Henry Gordon, Mary Doran,
Harry Beresford, Willard Robertson, Harold Waldridge, William Burress, Claire
McDowell, Maurice Black, Ben Alexander, Dick Grauer, Donald Dillaway, Hank
Mann, Louise Beavers, Edmund Breese, J. Farrell McDonald, Dick Purcell,
George Reeves, George Chandler, Salmer Jackson, Charles Wilson, Smil Folland,
Wade Boteler, Pat Moore, Eddie Fetherstone, Thomas Jackson.

If it were needed, the little-known and neglected "The Strange Love of Molly
Louvain" is another reminder of what a versatile and dynamic director Michael
Curtiz was, especially in the early 30's. The only film really designed as a
vehicle for Ann Dvorak, it's a reminder too of what a fine little actress she
could be when given the chance -- as she is here, especially in the closing
sequences. It's no disgrace that once again Lee Tracy steals every scene he's
in, and wraps up the whole proceedings so effortlessly. Dvorak is fine --
but Tracy is great. As a thorough heel, without even the usual Warner formula
saving-graces, he creates such a dynamic screen character that even the latest
reformation seems thoroughly logical and motivating. Tracy apart, the
film is a lightning-paced, Ben Hecht-styled melodrama, full of irreverence,
bite and ironic humour, with frequently overlapping dialogue adding to the
already frenetic pace. Authentic street exteriors are brilliantly intercut
with studio replicas -- one of the smoothest examples of such work that we've
seen -- and many of the old standing Warner sets (including the dance hall
from "Taxi" & "2 Seconds") are brought into play. An exciting, impressive and
moving piece of filmic drama, it's a thorough vindication of the "factory"
policy that seemed to rule Warners right through the 30's. It's a Warner
"product" all the way -- and how I wish we had such efficient "product" on
the market today.------------------------------------------------------------------Wm. E. Eversen

NEXT TUESDAY: "L'ARGANT" (1929); "FAIRBANKS" "THE IRON MASK" (1929)