Tonight's two films set one another off rather nicely in that one is a typical brash "show" in the Gold-Diggers tradition, while the other is sentimental "popular highbrow light operetta. Neither are major films or even notable rediscoveries, and frankly would not justify the involved mechanics (and expense) of getting them back later. On the other hand, they are certainly interesting and entertaining enough to warrant this quick and scarcely-announced showing while they are in town. We apologize to members who may not hear about the show until too late - and to those who have been taken out of circulation by the Huff Society for two nights in a row - but it was a case of tonight or never.

"GIVE US THIS NIGHT" (Paramount, 1936) Directed by Alexander Hall
Produced by William LeBaron; Original story by Jacques Beckrach;
screenplay by Edwin Justus Mayer, Lynn Starling; Music and lyrics by Erich Wolfgang Korngold and Oscar Hammerstein II; Art Direction by Hans Dreier, Roland Anderson; Camera: Victor Milner; 7 reels


Alexander Hall is an interesting and tasteful director ("Miss Fane's Baby is Stolen", "Pursuit of Happiness", "Exclusive") who has made good pictures and profitable pictures, and has generally gotten a little more out of his scripts and players than most other directors (on his same lesser plateau) would have done, yet never managed to click with one really top film.

"Give Us This Night" starts off beautifully - lyric seascapes, some extraordinarily handsome sets - and one hopes for a minute that perhaps a second-string "Love Me Tonight" is in the works. It isn't. But what emerges in a really pleasant and enjoyable example of those schmatzy musical romances of the thirties which tried to sell "highbrow" music by the popular expedient of using the easiest-to-take classical music wrapped up in a standard boy-meets-girl plot. Hall manages to overcome most of the hurdles very nicely; contractual comedy players put in for unnecessary comedy (Benny Bartlett) are quickly shunted aside; annoying plot cliche[s are disposed of as soon as they arise. One is left with the pleasing elements of the musical stars, some handsome newsprint work. A tanker of Marx-Brothers clips, which hovers between fun, suspense and music in a rather uncertain fashion but at least keeps on the move. Unusual care seems to have been taken in selecting the extras; most of the faces are quite unfamiliar.

- Intermission -

"SITTING PRETTY" (Paramount, 1933) Directed by Harry Joe Brown
Screenplay by S. J. Perelman, Jack McGowan and Lou Breslow from an original story by Nina Wilcox Putnam; Dance Director, Larry Cabellos; music and lyrics by Mac Gordon, Harry Beale; camera: Milton Kramer; 8 reels (this print, 7 reels)


Like "Give Us This Night", "Sitting Pretty" doesn't quite keep up the pace of its opening sequence -- an amusing spoof of the song-writing game, which includes a very Jewish-looking singer warbling "Killarney"! It maintains a fast if standardised pace until the mid-way point where the lively "Good Morning Glory" number (complete with silhouette[ned] nudes) puts on an appearance. Then the pace peaks rather rapidly towards the climax of the large-scale (and infamously sexy) production number "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?". It's done in the Busby Berkeley manner, but without the framing "story" that gave his patterns unity. Indeed, there is very little connection between the song and the terribly covered bosoms and bottoms -- not that it really matters! Paramount's original neg on this film is no more, and their 35mm preservation print (which i screened a few years back) was already then missing a big chunk. Since then apparently more has gone, including a Marx Brothers-like sequence in which the song-writers dream up a sequence for star Thelma Todd that leaves her clad only in lingerie. (It reads better than it plays, although it was one of the film's better comedy sequences). About a reel and a third is missing at the midway point now; this is now the longest version extant.

-- W. K. Stevenson --