Both of tonight's free-wheeling comedies are from the immediate post-Production Code period; comparison with the same stars' much rougher and rawer comedies of a year or two earlier is interesting and illuminating, but not as distressing as it might be. But with another couple of years, this kind of zany, irrevocable and sorely dubious comedy fare had all but disappeared from the American screen.

"hips higs hooyay" (Rko Radio, 1936) Directed by Mark Sandrich Written by Harry Ruby, Bert Kalmar, Edward Kauffman; music and lyrics by Ruby and Kalmar; Camera: David Abel; Dances staged by Dave Gould; edited by Basil Wrangoll; 7 reels. With Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey, Dorothy Lee, Thelma Todd, Bath Etting, George Hackett, Spencer Charters, James Moore, Matt Briggs, Lee Shumway, Dorothy Granger, Jean Carmen, Stanley Blystone, Bobby Watson.

We devoted some two pages of notes to the background and modus operandi of Wheeler & Woolsey when we ran "Half Shot at Sunrise" on April 13th last, so we won't re-cover the same ground. "Hips Higs Hooyay" is probably their best and certainly their slickest picture, and the one likely to be the most entertaining to non-Wheeler and Woolsey fans. Mark Sandrich gives it real production value and polish, the musical numbers ("Just Keep On Doing What You're Doing," "Let's Keep Romance Alive" etc) tuneful and zippy, and the girls lovely and as much undressed as possible. There are none of those long protracted Wheeler and Woolsey pun-filled dialogue routines, and a greater emphasis, especially towards the end, on the kind of insane slapping that W.C. Fields and the Marx Brothers so excelled in. Quite often, the dialogue has a Marxian flavor to it, and there is an unarguable logic to some of it — e.g., that there should be special insurance rates for undertakers, who have to live longer than other people in order to bury them! As usual, 90% of the team's talent seems wasted in Wheeler, who hoofs, dances and bounces passably, but Woolsey gets off a few good quips, and of course poor Dorothy Lee and stunning Thelma Todd couldn't be improved on as the feminine foils. Produced in late 1933, the film is early enough not to reflect the full impact of the new Production Code, and its near-nudity costuming and near-the-knuckle dialogue are still audacious and amusing.


After the forced and whiteathed "Every Day's a Holiday" and "Klondike Annie," one isn't inclined to be too optimistic of any post-Code Mae West vehicle. "Go West Young Man" was admittedly very funny, but it had an amusing script to beg in with and was less dependent on the West personality than the others. "Goin' to Town" therefore comes as a real surprise. True, it doesn't have the bawdy freedom of the earlier Wests, and pulls its punches occasionally, but nevertheless it is far more akin to "I'm No Angel" than to the anegmolo "Every Day's a Holiday." If the sexual quips are a little less blatant than before, then Mae works all the harder to make their innocence suggestive. And certainly there is no let-up — line follows line with such rapidity that it's hard to remember them all. Our personal favorite is when Ivan Lebedeff, repeating his old "Loves of Sunya" role, tells Mae: "For one kiss of those lips I'd give half my life," and Mae replies "Come back tomorrow, and I'll kiss you twice!" Alexander Hall ("Give Us This Night" with Swarthout, "Here Comes Mr. Jordan") is perhaps too stylish and tasteful a director for Mae. It all seems a little too elegant and polished, many scenes deliberately framed with too much symmetry, for Mae to be as much at home as she was with Lowell Sherman and Wesley Ruggles. But the only real weakness of the film is the last reel, when the plot suddenly comes to a grinding halt in a funny sense, and goes dramatic — not the raw, all-out, overblown dramatics of "She Done Him Wrong," but the kind of "wrap-up" dramatics contrived to tie up the story, and that give Mae nothing to do beyond be a spectator. The sequence also has a less

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