April 11 1967

Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

ONE RAINY AFTERNOON (United Artists, 1936) Directed by Rowland V. Lee
A Mary Pickford-Jesse Lasky production; screenplay by Stephen M. Avery and Mary France; based on a play by Arnold Pressburger and Rene Pujal; musical director, Alfred Newman; lyrics by Preston Sturges, Jack Stern, Harry Tobias; camera, Peverell Marley; 8 reels.

With Francis Lederer, Ida Lupino, Roland Young, Hugh Herbert, Erik Rhodes, Missche Auer, Joseph Cawthorne, Countess Liev de Naegirt, Donald Meek, Georgia Caine, Murray Kinnell, Silly Malyon, Richard Carle, Phylis Barry, Lois January, Seger Ellis, Margaret Warrner, Jack Mulhall, Harry Myers, and the following silent players as extras: Jean Acker, Alfredo Valentino, Katherine Perry, George Perilott, Francis Powers, Edward Elby, Mary McLaren, Kathleen Key, Florence Hanning, Florence Turner, Naomi Childers, Rosemary Theby, Vola Vale, Vera Steadman, Donald Reed, Anne Schaeffer, Eric Mayne.

With the possible (and probable) exception of the long unseen "Zoo in Budapest", Rowland V. Lee never created a great or particularly personal movie, but he was unusually adept at imitating the styles of others. In horror films, he patterned himself after James Whale; here the mood and the inspiration is that of Ernst Lubitsch. "One Rainy Afternoon" is never quite as clever as it obviously thinks it is, nor does it match the effortless charm of the earlier Lubitsch-Chevalier films that so obviously tries to copy — due largely one feels to the rather hard and forced "charm" of Mr. Lederer. However, imitating Lubitsch was an occupational disease in Hollywood of the 30's, and this film succeeds rather more than most, and spectacularly better than Lewis Milestone's "Paris in Spring". It is the sort of casual, "friendly" film of the period that one can still enjoy in a relaxed manner; the music is gay and catchy, the action fast-paced, and the cast full of pleasant people, most of whom have now passed on or are no longer active. The great array of silent players, used as extras, proves hard to spot however. Harry Myers and Jack Mulhall have good bits, but the others are largely lost in the skating rink and courtroom scenes, and one can't help feeling that Mary could have done rather better by them. I saw "One Rainy Afternoon" as a child — on a rainy afternoon — and the combination of movie title, inclement weather and much footage inside a movie theatre proved to a childish mind to be the kind of movie "magic" that produced permanent and nostalgic memories. But it is surprising, whether the memories be adult or childish, how many of these slight programmers of the 30's - made with no intention of creating anything other than mild diversion and light entertainment - do stand up well remembered with affection, and do stand up as well as entertainment. "One Rainy Afternoon" certainly falls into this category.

"CENTRAL AIRPORT" (WB-First National, 1933) Directed by William Wellman
Screenplay by Rian James and James Seymour from the story "Hawk's Mate" by Jack Hoffitt; Camera: Sid Hickox; Special Effects, Fred Jackman; Edited by James Morley; 7 reels.


One of no less than eight predominantly melodramatic works that William Wellman turned out in 1933, "Central Airport" can obviously make no claims to being anything more than an unambitious programmer. Similar in spirit and plot to John Ford's "Air Mail" of the year before, it's fairly formulaised (for the period), yet still not entirely predictable. The aerial stuff dominates of course, and is such an expert mixture of the real thing, excellent stunt work and first-class miniatures and special effects, that it gives the whole film a production gloss that mere programmers would not be able to afford for very much longer. It's fast, slick, brittle, with no time for any dull spots — and too many interesting faces to look at even if there were. James Murray, in one scene, has exactly the kind of voice that one would expect, both of his personally and of the hero of "The Coward", and Richard Barthelmess is as quietly impressive as always. Effective use is made of "Remembering" as a repeating theme, and all told "Central Airport" is a most enjoyable and expert little film of its type.

Huffians may enjoy reading the new mystery novel "Swing Low Sweet Harriet" by George Baxt, scenarist of "Circus of Horrors", "Burn Witch Burn" and others, and himself a part-time Huffian. This book was inspired by his visit to our "Show Girl in Hollywood" evening, and while you may have trouble recognising yourself, you'll have no trouble recognising your friends and neighbors. All lawsuits to George Baxt please, and not to the Huff Society. (N.B., the murder victim is the film society president and projectionist — I haven't read far enough yet to discover the identity of the killer!!)

——— Wm. K. Eversom ————