"JIMMY AND SALLY" (Fox, 1933) Directed by James Tinling
Screenplay by Paul Schofield and Marguerite Roberts, additional dialogue by William Conselman; Camera: Joseph Valentine; Dance by Sammy Lee; 6 reels

"Jimmie and Sally" is a pleasant programmer and no more, and no undue importance should be attached to it because it is ostensibly a "lost" film, and one that hasn't been - and probably won't be - on television. Nevertheless, the mere fact that it is a virtually unknown film and is an enjoyable time-killer for an hour, gives it a certain amount of its own special charm. It's full of the typical complications and cliches of the Fox "B" product of the 30's, but it's also good-looking little film, and moves along briskly. However, one can well understand why Sally Eilers refused to do it, feeling (a) that her teaming with Dunn had been overdone (no pun intended) and (b) that it was too much of a routine "B" after the fairly important films that had preceded it. (Her performance in the most famous of these all, "Bad Girl", stands up extremely well today - but it's sad to relate that the film itself seems almost ludicrous now, the Borzage magic working in only one brief scene). Claire Trevor takes over from Eilers, and tends to make the feminine role by far the more prominent one - although Dunn's wishy-washy and rather boorish heroes of that period do tend to date rather badly today, and it is hardly his fault.

"DANTE'S INFERNO" (Fox, 1935) Directed by Harry Lachman
Produced by Sol M. Wurtzel; Screenplay by Philip Klein and Robert M. Yoest; Camera: Rudolph Maté; Special Effects, Fred Sersen and Ralph Hammetts; Sets for Inferno sequence designed by Willy Pogany; Musical score by Hugo Friedhofer, Samuel Kaylin, R.H. Bassett and Peter Brunelli; 9 reels

The last of Tracy's 20 pictures for Fox between 1930 and 1935, "Dante's Inferno" was also one of the best - and certainly the biggest. With the exception of Ford's "Up the River" and Howard's "The Power and the Glory" - and to a lesser extent, "Quick Millions" and "Face in the Sky" - most of them are disappointing both as films and as Tracy vehicles. "Dante's Inferno" however, makes no bones about being sheer hokum - the cliches, the contrived situations, the familiar lines of dialogue are all there - but it seems it all over with such showmanship and at times real artistry that audiences must have really felt that they'd had their money's worth. In the best tradition of the all-purpose mass-audience films of the 30's, there's something in it for everyone - action, sentiment, spectacle, low-grade corn and high-grade film-making. After a relatively slow beginning, the second half is all highlights - the well-done disaster in the amusement arcade (how one wishes amusement areas, outside of Disneyland, really had sideshows like this one!), the picturization of the inferno, and finally the great fire at sea. Throw in a poor, sketchy, almost unbelievable dance performed by Rita Hayworth - beautifully photographed and splendidly, rhythmically edited. The long inferno sequence is a model of the inspired collaboration between art directors and special effects specialists; at one time we thought that this marvellous highlight might have been at least partially lifted from the silent film of the 20's, but it's too consistent in its style - and too modern in its use of the camera, for that to be possible. The final holocaust at sea, using to the full Fox's standing liner sets ("Transatlantic"), was quite effortlessly wrapped up in the never-to-be-forgotten thrill sequence, but a bit too much in getting under way; one alert steward could have stopped it all before it started. But who cares? As soon as the first flame flickers up the first curtain, the panic is on, Naté tilts his camera, the special effects boys take over, and we're off on an exhilarating disaster sequence! Moreover, the film has the wit to finish as soon as it has shot its bolt; no long lugubrious wrap-ups here. Boy and girl get together again with the briefest of reunion lines while the flames are still dying down, and we're into the hand-bill! That superb actor Henry B. Walthall quite effiortlessly wraps up all the thematic elements of the film - not seen theatrically for at least 15 years, and very heavily out on TV (the great inferno sequences of course!) is quite complete, marred only by an occasional irritating sound-track scratch. But most of the time its noise vanishes beneath the overwhelming walls of the sinners and the roaring of flames!