Next program, Thursday August 27th: "CHANDRA LEKHA" (India, 1948, titled) and "STORM OVER BENGAL" (Republic, 1938) with Patricia Knowles, Rochelle Hudson.

August 20 1970

The Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

"PLEASURE CRUISE" (Fox, 1933) Directed by Frank Tuttle
Scenario by Guy Bolton from a story by Austin Aalan; Camera, Ernest Palmer;
Art Director, Gordon Willis; 7 reels

After it's endearing pictorial credits - with all those grand character faces smiling at us through a port-hole - and a saucy opening scene reminiscent of Lubitsch, "Pleasure Cruise" never quite takes off as one would hope. Or perhaps it just doesn't today; certainly the original reviews were very enthusiastic. It's a more familiar story now of course, another one of those variations on "The Guardian", though with its piquancy unadulterated since it is still a pre-Code production. It has never been revived nor shown on TV, so is in a sense a "lost" picture. We don't offer it in a sense of rediscovery, and suggest that you just sit back and enjoy watching the troupers at work. Even though not too much happens, what a pleasure it is to see Roland Young and Genevieve Tobin in starring roles again and giving it all the grace and elegance that they can muster, as if it were indeed an original Molinar-Frank Tuttle, always better at being an imitation Fritz Lang ("This Gun for Hire") than an imitation Lubitsch, is even less inspired than usual here, but Young and Tobin pull off a neat salvage operation.

"NIGHT NURSE" (Warner Brothers, 1931) Directed by William Wellman
Scenario by Oliver H.P. Garrett and Charles Kenyon from a story by Dora Macy; Camera, chick McGill; 7 reels

One of five gutty melodramas that Wellman made for Warners in '31 (the others, "Public Enemy", "Other Men's Women", "Star Witness", "Safe in Hell"), "Nurse" is frankly a rather sick and distasteful thriller with Wellman (like the Michael Powell of "Peeping Tom") rather revelling in its less attractive aspects. But it moves, and it's pre-Code with a vengeance: the villain is casually bumped off by the hero's gangland pals to make for a tidy and "uncompromised" climax, and the misses Blondell and Stanwyck seem to spend an inordinate amount of time getting in and out of uniform with much displaying of brief lingerie. Gable's dynamic performance as the villain makes one wonder anew why Warners didn't recognize either his values or his ability, while Ben Lyon - again - is such a pleasing and assured performer that it's hard to understand why his popularity wasn't much greater.

Wm. K. Eversen