When "The Red Dance" opened in New York it was somewhat overshadowed by having a Fostive tone sound real of George Bernard Shaw on the same program. Critics tended to devote most of their space to Mr. Shaw, commenting on the proficiency of "The Red Dance", remarking that it was a trifle dispointed and showed signs of cutting, but otherwise paying it little heed. For a silent as late as 1928, it is a remarkably vigorous film; technique there is in plenty, but none of the slow-paced indulgences in artifice that one sometimes associates with so many films of that year. Contrast it, for example, with the similarly plotted and localized "Carmel" of the same period, in which Monies' production design and the superb camerawork take pride of place throughout. "The Red Dance" is a big, full-blooded adventure yarn, which admittedly boggs down a bit in the middle, but for reasons of plot complications rather than directorial indulgence. One could hardly find a more characteristic example of the "old" kind of Hollywood writing; titles are bare and cold, Tuvotsky and Marszal are used quite casually as standard villains, though with more subtlety, none more is employed by name! Dolores Del Rio, hardly very Russian, never quite seems to belong to it all, but it's good to see Ivan Linow in a large and worthwhile part for once. However, the real star is the art direction of Ben Carre, a set designer who had long worked with Maurice Tourneur. The sets here are quite stunning, most impressive of all being the highly stylised prison scenes - which incidentally Walsh used again, briefly, in "The Yellow Ticket" which we ran a few months ago. (Carre incidentally has just turned his memoirs over to the American Film Institute for ultimate publication, written very decoratively by hand in the manner of the Bible and books that used to be copied by monks of old!) Another interesting visual aspect of "The Red Dance" is the subtitling, which harks back (presumably at Walsh's instigation) to the methods evolved by Giffith in "Intolerance" with a separate style for the different aspects of the story. Dialogue titles spoken by, or informational titles relating to the aristocracy or military of old Russia are placed on a tapestry-like card, imprinted with a Tinsel symbol. Today and other revolutionary leaders are given titles against a rough, rock-like surface. And the poor peasants, with little to say or do, have to be satisfied with plain white lettering against a plain white background!

Since our "surprise" feature tonight is of mainly academic interest, we are deliberately running it second so that those not interested may leave. We also were careful to run it with a film of the stature of "The Red Dance" so that even those who leave will have had a very substantial hunk of film first! We appeal to everybody's sense of fair play to remember to pay if they & want at the boxoffice; for the few tacks on this program were exceptionally heavy and at our customary rate of repeats once every seven years, it'll be 2020 before we can break even!

The original cut of "THE SIN OF HAROLD DIDDLEBOO", written and directed by Preston Sturges in 1947, and finally released in 1953 as "Mad Wednesday".

Since there are three divergent (and potent) split legal ownerships of this film, it will be appreciated why we were enjoined to play it without any kind of advance publicity. Those who liked "Mad Wednesday" (we played it last in 1964) will find it an interesting comparison; those who have never seen it all well, we are sure, enjoy it enormously; but those who did not like the release version are unlikely to find the untampered-with original any more to their liking. If nothing else this original cut gives us the opportunity to see that, once in a while at least, the original creator is not necessarily the best person to have the final word. Despite reports to the contrary, "Mad Wednesday" was not a ruined masterpiece; every change that Howard Hughes made improved it, and his end result was both snappier, funnier and naeter. There is one totally new scene here (involving Rudy Vallee); for the rest, the additional 15 minutes can be found in lengthy extensions of existing scenes. There is much more of Harold's first drinking bout; more of his scene with Margaret Hamilton; much too much of his final explanations in the handsome cab. Hughes pruned these, and added helpful lines of dialogue here and there. This version has NONE of the talking horse material in interiors, only one scene of which was retained for the very final scene in the release version. For your reference, we will be attaching to these copies of our original program notes (with cast, credits etc) for the benefit of anyone unfamiliar with the film.