
The Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

October 30, 1978

CAT COLLEGE (MGM, 1941) A Pete Smith Speciality, directed by Joseph Newman; 1 reel
With Clyde Beatty
A pleasant little Pete Smith short, virtually straight-documentary, but with some obviously staged scenes and sarcastic commentary veering it in the direction of comedy.

SHOWN BY REQUEST (Crown Film Unit for the Central Office of Information, 1946)
Directed by Colin Dean; produced by Alexander Shaw; 2 reels
Although, on its own merits, a pretty drab and unexciting documentary, this is nevertheless of interest because of its subject matter - the reasons for, and methods of, maintaining a Governmental film distribution agency in Britain. And it is unwittingly amusing in its commentary on the bureaucracy (and probably costly inefficiency) of running such an organisation. The man who has the job of stamping each film either SD (sound) or SIL (silent) has a stamp for each individual letter rather than one stamp, and there appears to be only one typewriter in the entire organisation. Although not shown, most of the correspondence is probably done with quill pens! And after showing all the preparation necessary to get a film ready for distribution, the narrator's tone seems to think it unlikely that anyone will actually want it!

MEET KING JOE (MGM, 1950) Technicolor; 1 reel
An interesting Schary-regime MGM cartoon on the joys of being an American, the propagandist pill softened by some typical animated gagging. The Oriental stereotyping is somewhat surprising however, and some of the statistics a little suspect.

NAUGHTY GAL (Paramount, 1951) Written and directed by Aubrey Scotto; 1 reel
With Lillian Roth, Bobby Watson, Barton MacLane;
Virtually plotless and economical in the extreme, this Astoria-produced musical short is little more than an excuse for Lillian Roth to sing out three good numbers, which she does with her usual vivacity and style.

--- intermission ---

CARRY ON UP THE JUNGLE (Rank-General Film Distributors, 1969) Directed by Gerald Thomas; produced by Peter Rogers; Script, Talbot Rothwell; Camera, Ernest Stewart; Music, Eric Rogers; Art Direction, Vetchinsky; 9 reels; Color
With Sidney James, Frankie Howard, Charles Hawtrey, Joan Sims, Tommy Scott, Kenneth Connor, Bernard Bresslaw, Jacki Piper, Reuben Marlow, Valerie Leon.

"Jungle" was never released in this country, initially because of the incredibly "blue" material and its racist gags; now both might well pass muster, but whatever market this kind of thing once had outside of Britain now seems to be gone - rather fortunately. But as the most outrageous, raunchiest and perhaps most "definitive" carry on, it is certainly worth this one exposure -- a not inapt phrase perhaps. The earlier Carry Ons, in black-and-white, tended to be more carefully done and have a semblance of wit. Since they switched to color however, they have become merely slapped together collections of gags of increasing vulgarity and double entendre sexual gags which, to quote Oscar Wilde, are so doxy that there is no doubt at all! However, the shock values has a certain charm and faint echoes of the impurities of the British music hall, while there is a certain style in the timing (especially from Sid James) and ensemble camaraderie of the playing -- though it is wasted, and deserving of a better outlet. However, crude as "Jungle" may seem, reaches peaks of almost Noel Coward-like sophistication compared with the lower depths to which nudity-drenched British comedy has sunk since, viz such films as the "Confessions of..." series, "Up the Chastity Belt", and a new near-perfect series involving a Nurse Dixie, a mating of the "Doctor" stories (by Richard Gordon) with Radley Metziger!!! Let's not even think about such other contemporary British sex-comedies as "Let's Get Loaded" (a spy "satire"; the hero's name is laid or "Come Play With Me". The Carry Ons may not be up to Will Hay or the Crazy Gang but they're better than what we pass for comedy in Britain? --- WAF ---