Monday next, May 7th: U.S. premiere of POT HUCK (1955), farce comedy-thriller w/ Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, Robertson Hare; and PICCADILLY JIM (1936) with Robert Montgomery, Madge Evans, Frank Morgan, Eric Blore, Billie Burke, Robert Benchley.

Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

MAN ABOUT TOWN (Fox, 1932) Directed by John Francis Dillon; screenplay by Leon Gordon from an original story by Denison Clift; Camera, James Wong Howe; 71 m

Incredibly, Warner Baxter made a mere three movies in 1932. Perhaps it's the cumulative effect of having so many weighed on us over the past few years, but one assumed he was sparing them at the rate of one a month! Since he was relatively at leisure in 1932, with "Six Hours to Live" as his only really notable picture, one has a right to expect a little more from "Man About Town". Considering the incredible intermingling of coincidences and complications, and the odd behavioural patterns of all concerned, with renewed love affairs and much espionage dirty work thrown in for good measure, "Man About Town" should be a very lively picture. It isn't. But it has a great cast of old favorites, some good camerawork by James Wong Howe, and a plot-line so bewildering that it becomes quite fascinating in its own way. It isn't much of a picture, but it's too much of an oddity not to drag out into the sunlight at least this once.

THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS (Rank-Contemporary-General Film Distributors, 1949) Directed by David Lean; produced by Ronald Neame; screenplay by Eric Ambler from the novel by R.G. Wells; Camera, Guy Green; Art Direction, John Bryan, Hopewell Ash; Music, Richard Addinsell; US release by Universal under the title "One Woman's Story" and cut to 86 mins; original length (tonight's print)195 m

(omitted from above credits: Adaptation from the Ambler screenplay by David Lean and Stanley Haynes).

Although less complicated, "The Passionate Friends" is almost as placid a film as its co-feature, though considerably better of course. One is tempted to term it "novelettish", but that would be a somewhat redundant description since it is based on a novel. Its interests are two-fold: one, it is a kind of reworking of Lean's "Brief Encounter" but on the Hollywood level: glossy, glamorous, expanded, full of handsome sets and location material in France. Secondly, superficial or not, it's a superbly well-made film, as meticulously crafted as all of the Lean-Leys. With films like "Grease" in our midst, it's a pleasure to see films where the cut matches! (Although "Fedora" is an exception, a beautifully crafted new film that is absolutely made for Huffmans!) Then too, it's a pleasure to sit back and watch such expert players delivering good lines with flawless diction -- especially Ann Todd, trying to cover up a minor domestic crisis, by fiddling with the book-case and complaining that Aristotle is in with Sherlock Holmes again.

I didn't get a chance to re-screen the film before tonight's showing, and my recollection is that there are a number of extremely interesting players in it not covered by the above cast list .... so those of you who like completeness in all things should have a pencil and notepad at the ready.

William K. Everson