We presume that by this time most of you are aware of the unavailability of "Smilin' Through." We have been announcing its cancellation since the end of the last series, but to anyone who was not aware of it until tonight, our apologies. In all probability, a print will not be available until early 1973, but we will certainly re-schedule it just as soon as possible.

"THE VOICE OF HOLLYWOOD" (Tiffany, 1929) One reel

Collectors of movie curiosities should be delighted with this one! The Voice of Hollywood must surely have been one of the most inept imitation "Screen Snapshots" series ever perpetrated. Allegedly providing the fans with their favorite stars on request, it was clearly limited to the has-beens (in Hollywood's eyes, if not in ours) and the nonentities. Awkwardly staged, under-rehearsed (if at all), the series provided most of the stars with an incredible vacuity of material (or more likely hoped they would provide their own), as though their mere presence, democratically joking or hoofing just like regular fellers, was enough in itself. Many of the m.c.s seemed downright disinterested, if not contemptuous, of what was going on. Yet the series does have a certain historical value: to save money and studio expenses, many of the items were shot at public events, premieres and so on, and perhaps because the series was too awful to get many bookings, the negatives were virtually unused - and, more than 40 years later, are still in pristine condition, offering exceptional picture and sound quality. No one short in the series is good enough to warrant ten minutes of our time, but I have taken interesting highlights from several - Almea Sample McPherson, Blanche Sweet, Barbara Kent, Buster Keaton, and best of all a visit by President and Mrs Coolidge to Hollywood. A bored-looking Mary Pickford greets them in a condescending manner that was probably encouraged by Coolidge's wide-eyed, dumb-wonder movie-fan attitude. Antonio Moreno offers the opinion that this is the most exciting event since his mother joined him in Hollywood, and as soon as Mr. Coolidge gets up the courage to speak to the microphone, we're whisked back to the studio and m.c. Jack Duffy! Since I have merely joined highlights from several films in this series, there will of course be virtually no continuity - but there wasn't much to begin with!

"THE PICTURES THAT ROVED" (Australian Commonwealth Film Unit, 1958)
Directed by Alan Anderson; Script and research, Joan Long; 4 reels

At best most of us in this country know the Australian cinema from its one acknowledged silent masterpiece ("The Sentimental Bloke"), by their artless, naive, but often quite lively actioners and broad comedies, and by Australian films made with Hollywood or Britain, the best of which was unquestionably Harry Watt's "The Overlanders." Because our knowledge of the Australian film is therefore slight at best, this exceedingly well-done coverage of that National cinema from 1896 through 1920 should be of unusual interest. (It has unfortunately had no worth-while distribution in this country, and is almost as unknown as the vast body of work that it covers). Certainly because one has to accept its information at face value, one can't disagree with opinions or quibble over facts. But it gives the impression of being not only a loving but also a reliable tribute to those early film-makers; it is sober, restrained in its claims, constantly backed by cross-references of names and dates, respectful and non-condescending in its treatment of the early primitives. All told, it's an ideal (and too rarely encountered) approach to such material, while the letter is in itself quite fascinating, not only for its uniquely national story material, but also for the coverage of many locations of an Australia that was undergoing fewer and slower "progressive" or mechanical changes than America. An interesting highlight shows Fred Niblo (the director of such American silents as "Pen Hur" and "Blood and Sand") as an actor and comedian, and the stills from the silent "The Story of the Kelly Gang" make interesting comparison with the 1970 " Ned Kelly". The only disappointment is the lack of showmanship in its climax, where veteran director Raymond Longford - Australia's own home-grown Griffith - vigorous and well-spoken at 85 - merely recites a brief and standardised optomistic wrap-up speech. One would have liked to see and hear a great deal more of him.

--- TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION ---

(Continued on p.2)
"S H E" (Rko Radio, 1935) Directed by Irving Pichel and Lansing C. Holden
Produced by Kerlan C. Cooper; screenplay by Ruth Rose from the novel
by H. Rider Haggard; Camera, J. Roy Hunt; Musical Score, Max Steiner;
Dance Direction, Hermes Pan; additional dialogue, Dudley Nichols; 10 rls
With Helen Gahagan, Randolph Scott, Nigel Bruce, Helen Mack, Noble Johnson,
Gustav von Seyffertitz, Lansing Hare, Samuel S. Hinds, Jim Thorpe.

Although by far the best of the half-dozen silent and sound versions of "She," this edition has gained a near-legendary reputation that it perhaps
doesn't wholly deserve, due no little to its long unavailability. The last
New York showings were some twenty years ago, and all prints from that
re-release have so totally vanished that even producer Cooper no longer
has a copy of the film. It was never an outstanding film - but it hasn't
dated, and it is as good as it ever was. Like the British "King Solomon's
Miners," "She" too was released, it's an adventure film that is rigorously studio-
bound. It aims at being stylised and exotic rather than realistic, and
thus works better when it gets to the mysterious lost city. There the
unreal but lavish sets (reminiscent of early-20's German in architecture,
with Lang's "Siegfried" coming especially to mind) work well in their own
particular context, unlike the mountain and glacial sequences which look
fake. There are of course many echoes of the same unit's "King Kong".
Similar lines of dialogue to stimulate interest in the adventure to come,
a roughly similar construction, re-use of some of the "scream" effects
from that film's equally dreamy score from Max Steiner (though curiously
it was re-used far less than Steiner's "Kongo" and "Dangerous Game" scores; snatches only from the score of "She" turned up
later in such unlikely films as "I Married a Communist") and even the old
"King Kong" gate is pressed into service again.

What it really lacks is showmanship - and this, curiously, is a flaw of a
lot of the follow-up "sensation" films that Schoedsack and Cooper made
together or individually after "Kongo." "Son of Kongo" was a lack-lustre
and a sequel, "The Last Days of Pompeii" distinguished only by some
of the supporting roles and by the skillful climactic holocaust by
Willis O'Brien. Only with "Hercy Joe Young" did they really hit their
stride again. "She" has the occasional Willis O'Brien "look" to it -
especially in the climactic chase through the volcanic caverns - but how
it would have benefitted from a giant spider or two lumbering out of the
darkness! Also, unlike "Kongo," it gets to the meat of its story too
quickly and too easily. The middle portion of the film rather bogs down
into protracted man-against-man/woman alterations, although salvaged in
due time by the visual splendour and the actionistic holocaust. Nor is the
film too well served by the rather stolid performance from Helen Gahagan,
who carved a rather more substantial niche for herself in the political
arena. Miss Gahagan certainly brings more dignity to the role than Betty
Blythe, star of two earlier versions, but it is still a performance
devoid of the essential magic. Edye Lamarr, at her prime (in terms of
royal beauty) in the late 30's, could probably have made the role work
better; Brigitte Helm of course, did make an almost identical role work
superbly well in "Sheeta Land" a few years earlier. The visual and
action elements of the film are certainly held up to a "prestige"
film of it rather than a full-blooded adventure - are so good that one
wishes they had been allowed to dominate more, and the editorial
scares administered more rigorously in the middle reels. But still, it's
good to have it back with us again, shortcomings notwithstanding.

Some of the "casual" dialogue tends to be the only really dated aspect.
The braver lines still have their old theatrical flavor. But Nigel Bruce's
acting as the native villager is wasted in a flurry death by the swimmers
is a little hard to take (how could anyone have confidence in the friendly
intentions of a leering Noble Johnson?) and Randolph Scott has one of the
underplayed lines of this sequence. While the drums reach a
crescendo, the natives giggle ominously, and the low-key lighting stresses
the fire and the waiting torture device, Scott murmurs "I don't like the
look of this!" - a line matched perhaps only by Raymond Massey's
utterance as he first glimpses The Old Germ House in the film of that name
- "It might be wiser to push on!"

Incidentally, one of Hermes Pan's sacrificial dance ensembles suffers from
the same near-misstep that almost sabotaged that elaborate overhead
chain-effect in Busby Berkeley's "By a "Stairfall" number - wherein a girl
swam left instead of right, realised it, and hastily got back into place,
saving a shot that would have been far too costly to re-shoot. Here, in an
elaborate ceremony, the priests dip their torches into the flame, hold them
aloft, and march off. One torch fails to light - the priest hesitates as
though contemplating a second try - but then marches off in perfect
rhythm, confidently holding his unlit torch before him!

--- Jr. K. Everson ---