From the point of view of film history, the significance of tonight's double-
bill is two-fold. Both are films on which no negatives exist, and on which
no immediate preservation work is planned. While not major works, they are
enjoyable and representative ones, and to lose them would be a pity.
However, the sole surviving 35mm prints are deteriorating, as can be seen
from these recently made copies. Secondly, both films are extremely
interesting as representing the initial work of a relatively unknown
director, Harry Lachman, under a long-running contract that extended through
the early 40's, and took in some of Fox's British productions as well as
Charlie Chan "B" thrillers. American-born Lachman got his start in
Britain and France in the mid-20's, working initially under director Rex
Ingram as a painter and production designer. His work in the inferno scenes
of Ingram's "The Magician" (to be shown here next Fall) has recognizable
echoes in his own (and biggest) American film, "Dante's Inferno," which we
showed in a recent season. Lachman was never a major or even a consistent
director, although not without his moments, but his films are always
unpredictable, and these two first films for Fox are an auspicious start to
the major part of his career. I have been unable to trace any obituaries on
him, but if he is still alive, he would be in his early 90's today.

PADDY THE NEXT BEST THING (Fox, 1933) Directed by Harry Lachman
Scenario by Edwin Burke from the novel by Gertrude Page; Camera, John Seitz
Music: Louis De Francesco; Art Direction, Gordon Wiles; Settings, 
Power O'Harley; 75 minutes
With Janet Gaynor, Warner Baxter, Walter Connolly, Margaret Lindsay, Harvey
Stephens, Mary McCormick, J.M. Kerrigan, Fiske O'Hara, Claire McDowell, Merle
Tottenham, Roger Imhof, Trevor Bland, Joseph Crehan.

Despite being a romantic follow-up (one of many) to the successful Gaynor-
Baxter "Paddy Long Legs" of 1931, and having been originally written for
another era (there was a 1923 British version starring Mae Marsh), "Paddy"
is in many ways a typical depression-era movie. In a way, it reflects the
depression in an escapist, wishful-thinking, sense, by totally ignoring it.
Yet its Cinderella story has sunshine and optimism outweighing tears, and
everybody winding up happy and rich. The complications are minor ones, even
the characters who provide obstacles are likeable, and since it is set in
Ireland, and thus divorced from contemporary reality, its rags-to-riches
story doesn't seem like a sellout. More important today, it is a fine
example of the romantic, happy and frankly "pretty" movies that Hollywood
used to do so well. The score is a lovely-to-listen-to assembly of sentimental
Irish airs, and pictorially, under the guidance of John Seitz and Gordon
Wiles, it is often breathtaking if unreal -- a superb illustration of high-
grade art direction, set direction and camerawork, and especially of the
art of the glass-shot -- that all-but-abandoned device of painting foreground
or background scenery on to glass, which is placed over the camera lens and
smoothly welded with live action.

FACE IN THE SKY (Fox 1932, released January 1933) Director: Harry Lachman
Screenplay by Humphrey Pearson from a story by Myles Connolly; Dialogue
Director, William Collier; Camera, Lee Garmes; Musical Score, Hugo
Friedhofer; Sets, William Darling; 74 mins.
With Spencer Tracy, Marion Nixon, Stuart Erwin, Lila Lee, Sam Hardy, Sarah
Padden, Frank Mcclynn Jr., Russell Simpson, Billy Flatt, Guy Usher, Dale
Fuller, Ben Hall, S. Jenks, Vic PoteI, Frank Hagney, James Burke.

From its zany mock-documentary foreshadow to its curious genre change --
beginning as rural romantic melodrama, winding up as big city musical and
fantasy - "Face in the Sky" is at least unpredictable. It's also uneven,
perhaps one of the problems of giving a new director fragile Myles Connolly
material, and a dialogue coach and a heavy-weight cameraman to help him over
the rough spots. Lee Garmes, a superb cameraman, was also somewhat of a
specialist in co-directing (unofficially) when the nominal director was on
unfamiliar ground, and it looks as though occasionally Garmes took over
totally. There's an odd, low-key scene in a store featuring Dale Fuller, and
the camera insists on seeing the innocuous action through ever tighfer
and more sombre framings involving, if memory serves, a coffee-grinder -- all
of it suggestive of some dramatic climax that never materialises. Sometimes
the film is brisk and flowing, at other times relaxed and equally flowing,
yet in between there are episodes where the momentum is lost and the film
seems to be going nowhere. It's an oddity all right, but a charming and
often surprisingly strong, so we can readily forgive it its rough edges. It's
the 11th of Spencer Tracy's 19 films for Fox between 1930 and 1935, and
after having tried him out as a second-string Cagney, Fox here seem to be
experimenting with him in a Will Rogers vein!