Two unfamiliar John Fords

Horn Reckless (tex, 1930) Directed by John Ford; Associate Producer, James McGuinness; "Staged" by Andrew Bennison; screenplay by Dudley Nichols from the novel "Louis Beretti" by Donald Henderson Clarke; Assistant Director, Edward O'Fearna (Ford's brother); Camera, George Schneiderman; 3 reels


Ford himself (afflicted at the time with production supervisors who were convinced that the old-guard directors didn't understand the new medium of sound, which was then still in its infancy) and made it as a routine, obedient assignment. He claims to have really enjoyed only the non-dialogue sequences that he added during shooting: the lively slapstick of the troops' baseball game, and the war action scenes. Unquestionably, it is a lesser Ford. On the other hand, it is still recognisably Ford, an enormous improvement over his first sound feature, "The Black Watch", made the prior year, and despite its flaws still substantially better than such other 1930 Fox talkies as "Wild Company", "Renegades", "Scottland Yard", and "Such Men Are Dangerous". Apart from the stiffness of some of the dialogue scenes, its one basic flaw is inconsistency. Edmund Lowe, never given to much variety of accent or characterisation, is supplemented by an authentically-sounding Italian family, but plays Beretti on the same one-note level that he played Sgt. Quit and Chandu the Magician. The plot itself, involving World War One and gangsterism before and after, looks and plays much like a Walsh or a Hawks film, and might even have been intended for one of them originally. The inconsistency extends to key elements of the plot too. The mildly notorious Donald Henderson Clarke novels frequently ran into movie censorship problems, and the ending here is typical of the guiltless endings of so many crime films of the period (cf. "The Mouthpiece", etc.), implying the hero's death (the synopsis is quite explicit in saying that he dies) but playing it so ambiguously that the audience can interpret it as a happy ending if they so wish. Nevertheless it's an elaborately mounted film and, some of Dr. Bennison's dialogue "staging" apart, it's still quite a fast and absorbing picture, valuable as both a transition Ford and as an early gangster essay.

Ten Minute Intermission

Doctor Bull (Fox, 1933) Directed by John Ford; Scenario by Paul Green and Jane Storm from the novel "The Last Adam" by James Gould Cozzens; Music, Samuel Kaylin; Genres, George Schneiderman; 7 reels

With Will Rogers, Marian Marsh, Louise Dresser, Rochelle Hudson, Berton Churchill, Howard Kelly, Vera Allen, Tempe Pigott, Elizabeth Patterson, Ralph Morgan, Andy Devine, Norah Cecil, Patsy O'Flyrne, Effie Ellanor, Veda Buckland, Helen Freeman, Robert Parrish, St Jenks, Ethel Griffies, George Hambert, Mike Donlin, Claire McDowell, Dell Henderson, Sara Hadlen, Otis Harlan, Charles Middleton, Francis Ford.

Made right after "Pilgrimage", "Dr. Bull" is a perfect example of Ford's oft cited policy of following a major film with a smaller, relaxed, entirely personal one. Missing for many years, we always suspected that "Dr. Bull", the first of Ford's Will Rogers trilogy, would be the weakest - for the now-very-logical reason that the other two ("Judge Priest", "Steamboat Round the Bend") were so good that it could hardly hope to equal them. As it turns out, it is the least of the three, but the status is only relative. It's still a charming and interesting film, particularly successful in evoking its small-town Connecticut milieu and atmospheric all in its economy of doing so with a few decent shots via a series of lovely establishing shots right at the beginning. The first shot, incidentally - the train arriving at the country station - is one of the most stunningly convincing miniatures I've ever seen. The camera panning over the deserted station makes it look for all the world like a full-scale set; only a split-second wobble from the onrushing train suggests that it might be a model rather than the real thing. This is then confirmed by the rest of the scene - a total lack of extras, and a quick cut into a detail shot (train wheels) at just the moment when a real train would come, giving a hint of the passengers would alight. (The sounds of a train before it appears, and the steam floating off-more as it departs, further solidify the illusion of having seen the whole thing take place, instead of having it all suggested by toys and noises!) It's a beautifully smooth piece of trickery, and the scene is happily repeated later in the film for those who really want to study its mechanics.

The Dr. Bull of the novel was a bit more cranky and irritable. Will Rogers humanises him almost totally, yet the fact remains that a country doctor who can never be found when he's needed, and whose phone is never
Below you'll find a brief rundown on our Summer schedule; fuller details will be found in the Summer Bulletin which will appear soon. Though now available, I did not re-schedule "Love on the Run" since this will be shown in the immediate future at the Theatre 9C. Please also note that the Summer shows will be on a Wednesday this year, it was originally planned for a Thursday, mainly because I'll be teaching at Harvard this Summer and will be up there each Monday through Wednesday. However, Thursday proved to be a bad idea: the auditorium is booked that night, and the only alternative would have been the 5th Avenue Cinema venue - which would have limited audience attendance to half of our current accommodation. Too, it would have conflicted with the Museum of Modern Art's Thursday night showings. So Wednesday was the only alternative; this knocks out my participation in the series (other than what is still up; and this may well mean I take a pleasant Summer break for some of you in itself) James Monaco will take over however and introduce the programs, and possibly conduct discussions after some of them. We have some exciting things lined up for the Fall series, which starts on October 3, when we'll be trying out a format we've discussed occasionally and that I've long wanted to experiment with - playing a really good "B" movie (and there are plenty with genuine merit, both British and American) in support of the main film.

For this Summer, we have partially repeated our usual Summer policy of combining one requested repeat item with a related "new" film. Three of the programs are made up, the other three are totally "new".

1. June 18: Two polished, witty crime melodramas: "STATE'S ATTORNEY" with John Barrymore, Helen Twelvetrees; PERVERSE, directed by W.S. Van Dyke, with Warner Baxter, Myrna Loy.

2. June 25: Early Lawrence Olivier: FRIENDS AND LOVERS (1931) Possibly the worst film ever at the New School, yet a fascinating, florid and flavor-some one! Sadist Erich von Stroheim whips Lili Damita and Olivier and Adolphe Menjou via her scarred affections. Q PLANES (1936), also known as "Clouds Over Europe", a fast and funny espionage comedy thriller with Ralph Richardson stealing all the honors, and Valerie Hobson.

3. July 2: STOOGES HOLIDAY, the original Stooges film, with Moe Francis and Curly Howard, an extraordinarily opulent production directed by Michael Curtiz; THE EASTERN GENTLEMAN, a much-requested repeat, one of George Arliss' warmest and best films; funny and poignant, a marvel as showcase for him.

4. July 9: An evening of mystery with Edgar Wallace and Agatha Christie. THE FOUR JUST MEN, a pre-war British thriller that is more Hitchcockish than Christlike, but is one of the most enjoyable of the old intri ne-in-the-Balkans school; directed by the interesting Walter Forde, with Hugh Sinclair, Frank Lawton, Francis L. Sullivan and Anna Lee; AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, first and still easily the best of the now thrice-filmed "Ten Little Indians"; a stylishly directed (Rene Clair) comedy mystery with Walter Huston, Roland Young, Barry Fitzgerald, June Duprez, Louis Hayward.

5. July 16: "Haunted Spooks", a very lively silent Harold Lloyd 2-reeler; HOLLYWOOD'S MUSICAL HOODS, first public NY showing of a one-hour European tv documentary on the use of music in both silent and sound film; many good excerpts from key features, interviews with Arthur Kelso, Miklos Rozsa, David Raksin, etc; SPARRONS (1925) One of the very best Mary Pickford vehicles; plenty of comedy and sentiment, but lots of guts too. A very thrilling, with Gustav von Seyffertitz as the villain, William Beaudine directing, Tom Chatterton by three of Hollywood's finest - Charles Reher, Karl Struss and Hal Mohr.

6. July 23: An evening of Gothic mystery and melodrama. THE WOMAN IN WHITE, most ambitious of several screen versions of Wilkie Collins' classic tale, with Sydney Greenstreet, Alexis Smith, Eleanor Parker; and UNDER THE STARS, a fine adaptation of the novel considered to be Sheridan LeFanu's masterpiece; richly melodramatic, superbly designed and photographed; with Jean Simmons, Katrina Paxinou, Derek de Marney.