Not all "lost" films are necessarily masterpieces, nor even worthy - except academically - of rediscovery. Some, it must be admitted, deserve their obscurity. Ideally, all films should be preserved, though not necessarily shown. Existence and availability are the key factors. Since the film exists at least in part to rediscover and re-show as many interesting old films as possible, we sometimes have a problem. Neither of tonight's films are particularly important individually; but in tandem they form a unit. Both are from the same period, with the same star; both are totally different in content and style; one is pre-Production Code, the other quite obviously immediately post-Production Code. Thus they do offer sufficient historical (and, one hopes) entertainment value to justify their revival; moreover, because of their common denominators, the audience for one is also the audience for the other. A number of "lost" (and "found") Spencer Tracy vehicles fall into this category too, and will probably comprise at least one program in the not too distant future. Another similarity tonight: both films are largely missing due to later remakes.

"Bought" (Warner Brothers, 1931) Directed by Archie Mayo; scenario by Raymond Griffith and Charles Kenyon from "Jackdaw's Strut" by Harriet Henry; Art Director, Edras Hartley; Camera, Ray June; 7 reels
With Constance Bennett, Richard Bennett, Ben Lyon, Dorothy Peterson, Ray Milland, Maude Eburne, Clara Blandick, Doris Lloyd, Mae Madison, Arthur Stuart Hull, Eddie Nugent, Paul Porcasi, Eddie Kane.

"Bought" was never released to tv, and has been missing for many years because it was sold for remakes that never materialised. The latter isn't actually too surprising; the film belongs so much to its time and the then-prevalent "confession" cycle, of which Constance Bennett was the leading (and highest-paid) practitioner, that any remake would have to be so changed and updated as to make the original virtually unrecognisable. It's a good, typical example of its type, a little novelettish perhaps in some of its plot contrivances, but conversely quite realistic in its physical detail, and in its utilisation of a selfish and far-from-sympathetic heroine. It's a physically rather dark film, although this element is perhaps over-stressed by our print, a reversal copy made from the only surviving negative. Because of the shrinkage, there is occasionally a little harshness in the sound and distortion in the music, although actually the musical score, as in most '31 releases, is quite sparse. Ben Lyon reminds us again what a pleasing, assured player he was, and Ray Milland reminds us too that - in the movies at least - playboys from Newport are a worthless lot. (Another cliché dusted off is that of running off to Philadelphia to give birth to an illegitimate child)

Constance Bennett, too often overlooked, proves once again that her enormous appeal was well-founded, while her father, Richard Bennett (seen a couple of weeks ago) gives another excellent performance, hampered a bit this time by far too much facial makeup, and a role which skirts the issue of racial prejudice.

- - 10 minute intermission - -

MOULIN ROUGE (20th Century-United Artists, 1933; rel: 1934) Directed by Sidney Lanfield; Screenplay by Numaally Johnson and Henry Lehman; Camera, Charles Rosher; Art Direction, Richard Day; Musical Director, Alfred Newman; 7 reels NY premiere: Rivoli Theatre, February '34.
With Constance Bennett, Franconetti Tone, Polillo Carminatti, Helen Westley, Andrew Tombach, Russ Brown, Bob Cavanaugh, George Renavert, Ivan Lebedeff, Fuzzy Knight, Stanley Blystone, Irene Ware, Richard Carle, Larry Steers, Russ Colombo, The Boswell Sisters.

With its own storyspringing from "The Guardsman", being paralleled by Chervaller's "Folies Bergere" and copied indirectly by such films as "Mystery Cruise" and "Two Faced Woman" with Garbo, "Moulin Rouge" (a very misleading title) now probably seems much more familiar than it did in 1934. Shirley MacLaine's 1962 "My Geisha" was an uncredited but suspiciously exact remake.

It's a lavish production, cheerfully designed and photographed, breezy and entertaining - but never more than that, and never to the extent that its budget leads one to expect. Made during the transitional period of its Production Code, it looks as though it has been a good deal watered down; the only sequence it lacks is an S-reeler, yet there's only a very tight 63 reels of footage there. Sexual scenes are present, motivations often unexplained, and the wrap-up line a real casenorial interpolation. Something clearly went wrong with the final big production number too - "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams"; two thirds of the way through they keep cutting away from it, and fragmenting it. Nevertheless, it's a slick film with much to enjoy: Rosher's adroit dual-role photography, Bennett's vivacity, a Newman score in which one can recognise themes from many of his later scores, Russ Colombo (not at his best, and hardly justifying here his curious cult status even today), Helen Westley in her debut role, and the fun of trying to identify all the Russell Markert dancers. - Wm.K.Everson