THE DEVIL'S IN LOVE (Fox, 1933) Directed by William Dieterle; screenplay by Howard Estabrook from an original story by Harry Hervey; Camera, Hal Mohr; 7 rl With Victor Jory, Loretta Young, Vivienne Osborne, David Manners, C. Henry Gordon, Bela Lugosi, Herbert Mundin, J. Carroll Naish, Emile Chautard.

Dieterle, a handsome German actor of the 20's, came to Hollywood in the transition to sound period to star in German versions of American films, and also to direct some of them. He was quickly promoted to a regular contract director status at Warners, and with incredible ease adapted himself to conditions there, turning out expert and thoroughly American thrillers and comedies. Concurrently, he was also making films at Fox, some of them - like "Six Hours to Live" - being so thoroughly romantic and Germanic in the old tradition of UFA and Lang, that it seemed almost as though the two studios had been able to effect a split-personality director! We've already shown several of the best Dieterle films of this period, from "The Last Flight" and "Six Hours To Live" to "Fox Over Frisco"; neither of tonight's films represent the best Dieterle, but there's one from each company, and both serve to underscore his versatility.

"The Devil's In Love" is a programmer, pure and simple: the names of Dieterle and Loretta Young perhaps give it an implied importance which was not intended at the time. In a plot sense, it is fairly formulaised, though Harry Hervey - author of "Shanghai Express" - gives it some typically exotic touches. However, Dieterle and cameraman Hal Mohr give it some exciting visual flair; one shot of a rocks and a snow covered hillside looks for all the world like something from Lang's "Destiny"! And predictable or not, it takes minimum time to zip through its cliches, is well-mounted, and is nicely played. One of its more surprising elements is the unhilled appearance of Bela Lugosi in a small but key role, in which his distinctive voice heralds his appearance before he is actually seen. Lugosi's mismanaged career at this juncture has always been something of an enigma: a big name after "Dracula", star of three major films in 1932, and in 1933 accepting leads in quickies, small parts in bigger films, and, as here, a role completely without credit that isn't even listed in many of his biographies.

-- Ten Minute Intermission --

GRAND SLAM (Warner Brothers, 1933) Directed by William Dieterle; screenplay by David Boehm and Erwin Gelsey from an original by B. Russell Hertz; Camera, Sid Hickox; 7 reels

With Paul Lukas, Loretta Young, Frank McHugh, Helen Vinson, Glenda Farrell, Walter Byron, Ferdinand Gottschalk, Joseph Cawthorne, Paul Porcelli, Mary Doran, Lucien Prival, Tom Dugan, Maurice Black, Lee Moren, Ruthelma Stevens, Emma Dunn, Reginald Barlow, Henry Bradley, Charles Lane, Davey Robinson, Nora Lane, Marjorie Gateson, George Cooper, Dewitt Jennings, Gino Corrado, Frank Darien, Paul Hurst, Jimmie Conlin.

Although it has no great reputation and has never been revived, "Grand Slam" is remembered by the discerning (several of whom have asked us to play it) as an unusually subtle and witty picture. Admittedly, it would have seemed more so in 1933 when the bridge craze gave it added topicality, and when the filmic results of such an unlikely premise seemed more remarkable. On the whole though, it stands up remarkably well: there are no belly-laughs, but it is consistently amusing, witty and even suspenseful. Moreover - no pun intended - it doesn't overplay its hand, and keeps its satiric narrative to a brief running time. Further, it is not dated; not only is bridge still an overly-popular pastime, but it doesn't take too many mental manipulations to juxtapose the whole story into the context of the (brief) chess-craze that swept the country following the Spasky-Fischer matches. Knowledge of bridge is a prerequisite either, although it may add to the fun a little.

Paul Lukas (as in Whale's "My Candlelight") proves to be an adept light comedian and gives the film a point of view - perhaps Dieterle's - of a bored European looking on with amused indulgence at American idiocy. On the other hand, the basic material could have gone in other directions equally well: one can well imagine Lee Tracy in the same role, playing it as a wise-cracking charlatan.

The musical score gets maximum usage out of the Busy Berkeley number "You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me" as background music. A final apologetic note: our bulletin listings gave Randolph Scott as one of the supporting players in the film. He's not in it, but is listed in some reference sources. Since it was many years since we'd seen the film, we believed those sources rather than memory.

William E. Everson

Next Friday: Two early Cagneys: "Other Men's Women" (1931, dir: William Wellman) with Mary Astor, Joan Blondell, Grant Withers, Regis Toomey, Fred Kohler; and "The Frisco Kid" (1935, dir: Lloyd Bacon) with Margaret Lindsay, Lili Damita, Ricardo Cortez.