SIX HOURS TO LIVE (Fox, 1932) Directed by William Dieterle; scenario by Bradley King from the original story "Auf Wiedersehen" by Gordon Morris and Morton Berteaux; Camera, John Seitz; Music, Louis de Franceschi; 72 mins.

Despite many similar titles which might suggest familiarity, there is little likelihood that you have seen "Six Hours to Live" since its original release, unless you saw it at our last showing here in February of 1971. Since then it has been made available for tv, but in a package which, alas, has elicited little interest from tv buyers. It is the kind of worthwhile yet obscure film that has always been the basic raison d'etre for our film series. It has enough plot substance and production technique for a dozen movies, with a Germanic style that was still a loud echo from Murnau's years at, and influence on, the Fox studio in the late 20's. Perhaps it might benefit from a little more subtlety or plot selectivity, but in the face of such emotional and visual riches, it seems petty to nitpick one of six films that Dieterle directed in 1932, after making an auspicious debut as a director only the year before with "The Last Flight". It's the most Germanic of all of his early Hollywood films (he was of course a notable German actor in the 20's) perhaps because for the first time he has a thoroughly European theme to back up his romanticist-expressionist visuals. There's perhaps a notable influence from Fritz Lang, although it's a warmer film than any Lang's, and less nightmarish. "SIX HOURS TO LIVE" is a fitting name for tv, because a description to be kept since it overlaps into many genres, and even strays dangerously near soft opera at times. But science-fiction, with some elaborate laboratory scenes, is certainly a major motif. Curiously - perhaps as an offshoot of experimental work in rocketry, radio and television - science-fiction sub-plots found their way into a great many movies of the late 20's and early 30's. Photographically, "Six Hours to Live" is extremely handsome, while the production itself is surprisingly elaborate, using larger sets and bigger crowd scenes than a film of its modest boxoffice expectations would seem to have justified.

--- Ten Minute Intermission ---

THE UNHOLY GARDEN (United Artists-Sam Goldwyn, 1931) Produced and Directed by George Fitzmaurice; original story and screenplay by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur; Camera, George Barnes and Gregg Toland; Sets by Richard Day and Willy Pogány; Music, Alfred Newman; 108 mins.

We had planned to play this film in due time anyway, and it has been brought forward due to the temporary unavailability of "Gynara", which we'll get to later. It's perhaps a less "popular" film than "Gynara", but certainly a more offbeat one, and very rarely revived. Critical acclaim was divided at the time; there were those who felt that the Goldwyn production trimmings and the Colman personality automatically made it an outstanding film, while others felt that even those undeniable assets couldn't prevent the film from being somewhat of a waste of time. It was the last of almost a dozen films that Colman made with director Fitzmaurice, most of them larger-than-life romantic extravaganzas in the silent period.

After Colman's enormous personal success in 1929's "Bulldog Drummond", Goldwyn seemed to shunt him ("Arrowsmith" always excepted) from one "lovable romantic rogue" role to another. "Raffles" was an obvious follow-up, and "Condemned" and "The Unholy Garden" variants on the same character. Actually "The Unholy Garden" offers an astonishingly close parallel to "Pepe Le Moko"/"Algiers", although of course it pre-dates them both, and it also has some accidental similarities to Wellman's "Safe in Hell". Though its setting is restricted by directorial decisions, it looks at times like a stage derivation although it isn't, it does move quite well. The gallery of characters is rich and colorful, and it is never entirely predictable, coming up with quite an unexpected twist for the climax. Its interest today is perhaps largely academic, yet like all Goldwyn of the period it's a lush-looking production, and it's always a pleasure today to look at - and listen to - Ronald Colman.

--- Wm. K. Everson ---

As a partial antidote to the prevailing decorum in having Colman, Baxter and Boles on one program, we have added another Laurel & Hardy this evening. Usually we leave these as an unbidden surprise, but since tonight's print carries the TV title of "A Day at the Studio", we should identify it as being a good cut-down from the 1937 "Pick a Star", the cutdown consisting of all the Laurel & Hardy footage (and other scenes) in a romantic musical in which they were guest stars.

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