GLAMOUR BOY (Paramount, 1941) Directed by Ralph Murphy; Produced by Sol G. Siegel; Associate Producer, Colbert Clark; Camera, Daniel L. Fapp; Original Screenplay by Bradford Ropes and Val Burton, with additional dialogue by F. Hugh Herbert; songs by Frank Loesser and Victor Schertzinger. With: Jackie Cooper, Susanna Foster, Walter Abel, Darryl Hickman, Ann Gillis, William Demarest, Jackie Searle, Cecil B deMille, Edwin Heiser, David Bruce, William Wright, Charles D. Brown, Norma Varden, Leo Litaker, Maude Eburne, Olive Blakney, Trevor Bardette, George O'Conell, Douglas Wood, Maurice Gass, Billy Engle, Frank Jenks, Emmet Vogan, Spencer Charters, Robert Homans, Jack Shea, Tom Seltzer, Frank Coghlan Jr., Jean Wallace, Jack Perrin. 80 mins.

Like Billy Wilder's "Avanti!", "Glamour Boy" is a perfect example of a charming and thoroughly entertaining film lost under a meaningless and entirely inapt title, one that gives no indication at all whether of content or appeal. In England it was retitled "Hearts in Springtime", which does have a relationship to the plot and more importantly suggests the mood of the film. Possibly only because of that title, or perhaps because the release virtually was shadowed with Pearl Harbour when theatres did not much reshuffling of bookings, the film did not get a New York first-run.

Although not a big production, "Glamour Boy" has a nice feel to it, as though everyone concerned had a great deal of confidence in it. Since both the producer and his associates were newly arrived at Paramount to make "B" pictures (among them the very entertaining "Buy Me That Town") they had no delusions of grandeur, despite the facilities at Paramount which dwarfed their earlier Republic facilities. Nevertheless, what started out as a clearly economical picture - the studio itself serves as a background - seemed to acquit the status of a professional pretentiousness as it went along. Considering the re-arrangement, that a better director could have made a bigger hit out of this picture, but it might have lost some of its charm if made in the process. The plot revolves around the idea of a remake of that early 30's classic "Skippy" (which we ran some reasons back) and the former star being brought in to coach the new star. This provided an excellent role for Jackie Cooper, whose career was not exactly on the skids, but who was having trouble finding good roles. Added bonuses: the lordly presence of Cecil B deMille, reminding us once again how human and lovable all Hollywood big shots are, a goodly chuck of original "Skippy" footage, and the delightful suggestion that that chivalrous Jackie Searle grew up to be just as much of a stinker as an adult! Walter Abel's harassed executive became something of a cliché-role for him in the 40's and of course doesn't seem as fresh today, and the production is an admittedly contrived -- it's not wild enough to match the relative restraint of the rest of the film. But these are quibbles. It's one of the more interesting films from a director who was always promising to achieve major stature and never quite made it, but still turned out a solid little body of work for some 20 years. And of course, it's always good to see Susanna Foster, who likewise might have achieved far greater stardom were it not Deanna Durbin movies pre-empting her particular market. (Moving to Universal, where she was even more under Deanna's shadow, didn't help either.)

Ten Minute Intermission

HERE COMES THE NAVY (Warner Brothers, 1934) Directed by Lloyd Bacon; Story and Screenplay by Ben Markson and Earl Baldwin; Camera, Arthur Edeson; 86 mins. With: James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Gloria Stuart, Frank McHugh, Dorothy Tree, Robert Benchley, Will Rogers, Robert Armstrong, Guinn Williams, Maude Eburne, Sam McDaniel, Joseph Crehan, James Burke, Leo White, Miles Welsh, Snowflake, Howard Hickman, George Irving, Bill Elliott, Edward Earle, Emmet Vogan, Eddie Acuff, Eddie Patten, etc. Rather incredibly "Here Comes the Navy" was nominated for "Best Picture" in 1934, a year which also offered "Grand Hotel", "The Thin Man", "20th Century" and "Sister Kenny". Other greats, the Academy Award finally of course going to "It Happened One Night". Indirectly however, the nomination did tend to keep "Here Comes the Navy" off the market for years: the Warner distributors tripled the rental rates on any Oscar-nominated film, and nobody quite felt it was worth it. The distributors finally capitulated, and it's now back among the breezy if not very prestige-oriented Warner programmes where it belongs. Made under the title "Hey Sailor!" it isn't quite the epic that the formidable "Here Comes the Navy" title suggests. It's the first of the many Cagney-O'Brien co-starring, easy-going, fun, and not to be taken seriously. With O'Brien as Biff, Cagney as Cheety and Frank McHugh as Droopy, we all know exactly where we are and what to expect. All that is missing is Marjorie Reynolds, who would have been in it but for hospitalisation. The Warner orchestra was away at familiar themes, including some Busby Berkeley melodies (Cagney even hums a bar or two of one of these), but apart from being a snappy little action-comedy, the film does have considerable appeal as a romantic interest due to footage shot on the battlecruiser Arizona. Later sunk at Pearl Harbour, on the Yankee, at the dirigible field at Sunnyvale, and at other naval locations.

Program Ends: 10.30, followed by brief discussion. --- William K. Everson