A reminder: The Warner Baxter/Naige Evans film "Grand Canary," the showing of which was marred last season by faulty sound, will be repeated next week after the regular (short) program finishes, from approx. 9.50 to 11.00 p.m.  

THE NEW SCHOOL  
FILM SERIES 42, Program #2  
June 23, 1932  

BEAUTY AND THE BOSS (Warner Brothers, 1932) Directed by Roy Del Ruth  
Screenplay by Joseph Jackson from the play "The Church Mouse" by Ladislaus Fodor and Paul Frank; Camera, Barney McGill; Art Director, Anton Grot; 66 mins.  

Despite its snappy Warner title, "Beauty and the Boss" remains a quite faithful adaptation of the play "The Church Mouse", which at one time was a staple among Summer Stock companies, and provided a useful vehicle for (among others) Mary Pickford. Warners remake it only two years later, as "The Church Mouse", as one of their British films - doubtless assuming they would release it only in Britain. But it turned out so well that they did indeed release it over here, thus putting a remake on the market in literally record time. We read the British one some years back, and they make a most interesting comparison, each one being sufficiently different in style that each had its own advantages. Tonight's original is shorter and more elaborate, retains its Continental locale, and is somewhat sexier in its use of lingerie-clad females on the prowl. Warren William (inexplicably billed third) is certainly more of a rout than his British (pale) equivalent, who was at worst (or best) a philanderer. On the other hand, despite being adapted to a British milieu, the British remake had more of a Continental, almost Czernyian flavor; it was a little more serious (surprisingly so for a British film of that period) and because of the added running time was able to be a little more subtle in its character establishment. Oddly enough though, the shorter Hollywood original spends more time on dialogue exploiting - and explaining - the meaning of the title. It's hard to choose between the two feminine leads.  

Laura LaPlante was graceful and charming in the remake, making it a very pleasing wonder why such an excellent actress and comedian wasn't given more to do, and sometimes in her long speeches one is more impressed by her ability to remember extremely lengthy one-take sections of dialogue than by the skill with which they are delivered. In the scene where she is transformed from an ugly duckling to an evening-gowned beauty she takes her glamour entirely for granted, whereas LaPlante conveyed also a sense of wonder and self-delight. But these are minor quibbles: at this early stage in her career, Marsh was constantly being cast opposite actresses like LaPlante and Greer Garson and delivered a hard-working and usually far-better performance than one had a right to expect from such a newcomer. She certainly holds her own here, and is such an attractive player one can certainly forgive her minor shortcomings in scenes that are just a little too demanding. Although talkative, the film is fast paced, and the humor helped along by grand supporting performances from (in particular) Charles Butterworth and Frederick Kerr, while Mary Doran (who turned up in ten films in 1932) is so attractive and appealing that one can multiply as we get older: Although never a great director, Roy Del Ruth was probably at his peak in 1932, the year he also made "Blessed Event". Although short, the film has a lot of class, and is helped measurably by the impressive art-deco sets by Anton Grot, and...  

MARY STEVENS, M.D. (Warner Brothers, 1932) Directed by Lloyd Bacon, assisted by William Keighley; Screenplay by Rian James from an original story by Virginia Kellogg; Camera, Sid Hickox; 72 mins.  

In 1932 Kay Francis had made eight movies, and four of them were among her personal best - "Cynara", "Trouble in Paradise", "Jewel Robbery" and "One Way Passage". If she never quite regained that artistic peak, certainly her box-office stature was still growing, and in line with her new stature, she made slightly fewer films in 1932 - a mere five. "Mary Stevens M.D." isn't one of her major '32 releases, but it is a thoroughly typical one, as the title suggests, a blend of melodrama and soap opera. The initial suspicion that it may turn into a feminine sex try-out is immediately quashed when women doctors are soon dispelled, and as the story progresses that its soap opera leanings have been too gentle, in its closing reels it begins to forge its chains-of-circumstance with links of unfired steel. And though this is still a pre-Code movie, Miss Frances has to pay for her one sexual indiscretion with reels of post-Code suffering - including a becoming "Bride of Frankenstein" grey streak in her coiffure which fortuitously vanishes when all the problems are resolved. This is one of those cases where criticism would be made it seem like the author was too weak a hero to justify all the suffering; but this kind of film, expertly made for a predetermined audience, should really be above criticism. Enjoy it for what it is, and try to overlook the illogic of any husband, even Lyle Talbot, being bored with a wife like Thelma Todd!  

Program ends 10.06., followed by discussion  
— William K. Everson —