A Program of Silent Comedy. Piano accompaniment arranged and played by STUART ODEMAN

OPEN ALL NIGHT (Paramount, 1924) Directed by Paul Bern; scenario by Willis Goldbeck from stories by Paul Morand; Camera, Bert Glennen; 70 min app., With: Roland Goulard (Jean Marais); Madeleine Davel (Goudal); George Duvernois (Jean Marais); Raymond Griffith (Iger); Maurice Flynn (Petit Mathieu); Gale Henry (Isabelle); Jack Giddings ( Von de Hoven); Charles Puffy (Bibendus) and Reed Howes, Gladys Brockwell, Hymunski Hyman, Joe Murphy.

Although a fascinating rediscovery, "Open All Night" is perhaps of major value in an academic sense. Paul Bern's career has always been a mysterious one, his name frequently cropping up on art-for-art's-sake projects in the late 20's (the John Barrymore "Beloved Rogue" for example). Obviously he had good ideas and good intentions, but few concrete examples were left for us to study, and most of them sank into the sea of notoriety that surrounded his marriage to Jean Marais and his subsequent suicide. "Open All Night" seems to place him as an interesting but rather erratic and undisciplined director, not really in command of his material. However it is of great interest as the first (currently extant) sophisticated Boulevard comedy to come out after Lubitsch's "The Marriage Circle" and to illustrate quite graphically the influence of that film. It also shows how much of "The Marriage Circle" was pure Lubitsch. Bern wrote the scenario for "The Marriage Circle" and Lubitsch brought it to life. However, Bern is unable to bring as much life to this similar scenario, and despite the title one never has the sense that this is all taking place over a compressed period of time. Even though there aren't that many characters, it is difficult to keep track of them and their motives. While full of amusing moments and characters, it doesn't really hang together. Mal St. Clair and Monte Bell may have been less artisitc than Bern, but they were better directors and their own pseudo-Lubitsch films in the wake of "The Marriage Circle" were better than "Open All Night" (some of which was shot in Paris) does have charm, sophistication and surprises. After all, wife-swapping was not exactly a common-place theme for 1924 movies! Goudal and Dana both seem somewhat swamped by the males, despite Goudal's glamer treatment and excessive makeup. Menju again reminds us what a superbly subtle pantomist he could be, adding so much to often blandly written scenes. Raymond Griffith's performance was poorly received by critics but probably because the role itself was so closely identical. Griffith has some fine moments and, as always, given an opportunity, totally takes over. (His running gag about being the new Sheikh had more point then, with Valentie temporarily off the screen). He has the best single gag in the film, the climactic wrap-up to his role before the film reverts to Menju and Dana for a typical Lubitsch finish. While the film is certainly most valuable as a study piece, it is certainly amusing and diverting though its mixture of sophisticated, sex, comedic pantomime and racial stereotyping is to say the least, uneven. Because of the shrunken and deteriorated condition of the original, the print made from it is unavoidably soft and lacking in really sharp focus. The further back you sit, the better it will look.

— Ten Minute Intermission —

IRENE (First National, 1926) Directed by Alfred E. Green; Scenario by Rex Taylor, Continuity by June Mathis, titles by George Marion jr., from the original musical comedy by James Montgomery. Camera Ted McCord; Comedy construction, Mervyn LeRoy; 90 mins.
With Colleen Moore (Irene O'Dare); Lloyd Hughes (Donald Marshall); George K. Arthur (Madame Lucy); Charles Murray (Fa O'Dare); Kate Price (Ma O'Dare); Ida Darling (Mrs Warren Marshall); Eva Novak (Eleanor Hadley); Edward Earle (Larry Hadley); Lawrence Wheat (Bob Harrison); Maryon Aye (Helen Cheston); Bess Flowers (Jane Gilmore); Lydia Yeamans Titus (Mrs Cheston); Cora Mayce (Mrs Gilmore)

After the interesting but misfire "Twinkletoes" last season, it's good to get back to a thoroughly typical Colleen Moore comedy, based (as was, though less successfully, the Anna Neagle remake of 1940) on the highly successful theatrical show of the same title. Actually, like so many Colleen Moore vehicles of the period, it's a bit over-produced and over-long and would benefit from being a bit shorter, as was "Orchids and Ermine", one of her very best. But she knew what audiences wanted, and it's a good audience film. The comedy inserts are more beguiling than the overall plot and its supporting cast and they (especially the laughter) getting the biggest laugh response of the entire film. Lloyd Hughes, handsome but bland, made a useful (and not very competitive) leading man for Moore, and she used him more than once. The fashion parade sequence was originally VERY effective two-color Technicolor; the color in this print, net very good to begin with, has faded further with the years, so please do not in any way regard it as representative of what the color looked like, but merely an indication of where the color was used.

William K. Everson

A postscript to the notes on "Open All Night", Paul Morand, who wrote the stories from which the scenario was adapted, was also the author of 1927's "La Place A Trois Pas" shown last month in the Museum of Modern Art's French cycle.

Program Ends approx. 10.30., followed by brief discussion period.