An "Archive Night" designation usually indicates that the films are perhaps of a fairly primitive quality, their interest and value more academic than entertainment oriented. Tonight's films don't really fall into that category. They are certainly not primitive, but fall rather into a grouping of worthwhile misfires. Because of the poor reputation of the American film (an unfair one, but an understandable one) and the non-reputation of the British film, they just never seem to be shown, and both deserve at least a periodic new lease on life. We suggest that you approach them, to coin a Dickensian phrase, a state of reticent expectations. You won't be overwhelmed certainly, but you may be pleasantly surprised.

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THE MORALS OF MARCUS (Julius Hagen Productions for Realmart, released by Gaumont-British, 1935) Directed by Miles Mander; Screenplay by Guy Bolton and Miles Mander from the play by W.J. Locke; Camera, Sidney Blythe; 76 mins.
With: Lupe Velez (Carlotta); Ian Hunter (Sir Marcus Ordeyne); Adrienne Allen (Judy Mainwaring); Noel Madison (Tony Pasquale); J.H. Roberts (Butler); Frank Atkinson (ship steward) and H.P. Maltby, Arnold Lucy, D.J. Williams, James Raglan, Johnny Nitt Agnes Inlay.

Producer Julius Hagen was a British independent who made commendably ambitious but usually old-fashioned movies. With the exception of the occasional special like "The Wandering Jew", they mainly fitted into the "B" market. However, once in a while he'd turn out a film considered well above the average, and a major studio would purchase it outright - as Gaumont-British did with this film. In Britain at least, it was considered a smart and somewhat risque little film and was well received. In America, it got a tepid reaction. Our print incidentally is of the full British version. It is not free of the charge of being old-fashioned. The play on which it was based opened on Broadway in 1907! A silent American version, "Morals", was made in 1921, with May McAvoy as Carlotta - and, quite coincidentally, was also made for a production subsidiary named Realmart! But while the American silent was played primarily as straight melodrama, this British version, which does not in any substantial way change the material, is much more as a piece. If one can't quite accept the idea of Lupe Velez as an Eastern harem girl, she is compensated by adding as much life to it that it hardly matters. It does tend to run out of steam a bit towards the end as it ties up all the plot strings, but it remains a pleasing film, though hardly as daring as it seemed in 1935! Actor Miles Mander was an infrequent director but an interesting one, often quite innovative, and even when dealing with primarily theatrical material, always concerned with pictorial compositions and camera movement. We plan to show his most ambitious film, the British silent "The First Degree" to-dusk next, but incidentally, a la Hitchcock, he usually gave himself good little bits in his own films; as of writing these notes, we haven't re-screened the print, but he's probably - and quite recognizably - there in a small part!

--- Ten Minute Intermission ---

I MET MY LOVE AGAIN (United Artists, 1937) Produced by Walter Wanger; Directed by Joshua Logan and Arthur Ripley; Screenplay by David Hertz from the novel "Summer Lightning" by Allen Coles; Camera, Hal Mohr; 77 mins.
With: Henry Fonda (Ives); Joan Bennett (Julie); Dame May Whitty (Aunt); Alan Marshal (Michael); Louise Platt (Brenda); Alan Baxter (Tony); Tim Holt (Budge); Dorothy斯坦 (Mrs Towner); Florence Lake (Carol); Genee Hall (Michael, the daughter); Alice Cavanna (Agatha); Henry Branden (French Artist); and William Benedict; Lester Dorr, Jack Rice, Mary McLaren.

Few major releases were given such a cold-shoulder reception by the critics, or were ignored by exhibitors, as was this curious little film from Walter Wanger. At the time, surrounded by so many high-powered and lushly produced love stories, it may of course have seemed a piece of romantic trivia that came dangerously close to being wholesome. The years haven't made it a better film, but it has a naive and an innocence that is rather pleasing today, while of course its light-weight cast, by '37 standards, seems much stronger today. It was also the feature directorial debuts for both Arthur Ripley (who had worked only as a scenarist and a director of short subjects) and Joshua Logan. They're a curious pair, both feeling their way, though the oddly black-haired and emotional Annabella is advance-guard for Ripley's later-exploited talents as a film noir director. Other off-beat elements in the film: Florence Lake, throwing her scenes off-balance by playing exactly as she did in her Edgar Kennedy comedies, Genee Hall, quite the most unlikeable child player since Jackie Kelk in "Born to Be Bad", and most of all Louise Platt being introduced and groomed with hair styles, lighting and acting manners that suggest, as much as possible that she was a duplicate of Katharine Hepburn, especially in her emotional scenes. She's established shots of the campus and one or two highway exteriors, the real world never seems to intrude on the studied artificiality of the sets. Whether it was a much longer film originally and edited down (to the exact length of its co-feature), or whether newcomers (to features at least) Ripley & Logan had problems getting even seven reels out of their material is a matter for conjecture. Clearly, a mistake, and its oblivion is commercially understandable, but one tends to treat it more like a late-starting youngster, and appreciate it more for its warmth than for its intellect.

Program Ends: 10:20. Discussion follows.

--- William K. Everson