THE NEW SCHOOL
FILM SERIES 54: Program #7
October 10, 1936
A program of Silent Comedy and Action

Piano Score arranged and played by STUART ODERMAN

DOCTOR JACK (Hal Roach-Pathe, 1922) Directed by Fred Newmeyer; Story by Jean Havez, Hal Roach and Sam Taylor, with additional scripting by Thomas Crizer; Camera: Walter Lundin; 60 mins.

With: Harold Lloyd (Dr. Jackson); Mildred Davis (Miss Haskell); John Prince (Her father); Eric Mayne (Dr. Ludwig von Saulsberg); C. Norman Hammond (Lawyer Jamison); Anna Townsend (Mrs. Jamison); Mickey Daniels (Boy patient); Jackie Condon (his pal); Charles Stevenson (asylum guard); Richard Daniels, William Gillespie.

"Dr. Jack" is one of the least-known and least revived of the early Lloyd features, though oddly enough it was reissued theatrically in Europe in the 50's to considerable success. Lloyd moved into full-length features cautiously but systematically, keeping his running times short and snappy until he was sure of his format. Dr. Jack was his third feature, actually a minute or so shorter than his previous "Grandma's Boy", and a well-received, unexpectedly successful film. However, with his next film, "Safety Last", Lloyd hit his stride, and from that point on his films were both longer and much more self-assured. Even though a little uneven, "Dr. Jack" is an important film in that it was the first Lloyd vehicle designed as a feature (the previous two, "A Sailor-Made Man" and "Grandma's Boy" were developed out of what were intended to be shorter films) and also in that it offers a change of pace in the Lloyd character. Here he is already as successful as he was later, but his efforts are directed at helping the girl rather than proving himself. As with many Lloyd films, much of the charm and many of the most pleasing (if less spectacular) gags are concentrated in the first half. Actually the plot proper doesn't really get going until the second climax and the sudden acceleration of pace then makes it seem like a climax and more like an entirely different film. However, this was a problem that Lloyd had solved beautifully by the similarly structured "Safety Last".

Lloyd will show "Dr. Jack" as a little forced when seen without an audience, but should work very well with an audience. An added factor in the film's success at the time was that the Christian Science movement got behind the film and endorsed it, delighting that Roach and Lloyd were "preaching" their cause. Actually such was not their intent and the thought had never occurred to them, but they were delighted not to reject an endorsement that could help their film at the boxoffice.

Ten Minute Interval

DON Q, SON OF ZORRO (Elton Corporation-United Artists, 1925) Directed by Donald Crisp; scenario by Jack Cunningham from "Don Q's Love Story by Hesketh Frichard and Rafe Frichard; Camera: Henry Sharp; Art Directors, Edward Lancaster; Aest. Art Directors, Anton Grot, Francesco Cugat, Harry Oliver, Harold Miles; Special Effects, Ned Mann; 108 minutes.

With Douglas Fairbanks sr (Don Cesar and Zorro, his father); Mary Astor (Dolores); Warner Oland (The Archduke); Donald Crisp (Don Sebastian); Jean Hersholt (Don Fabrique); Jack MacDonald (General de Muro); Stella de Larti (The Queen); Albert MacQuarrie (Colonel Matsado); Lottie Pickford (Lola); Charles Stevens (Robledo); Tote du Crow (Bernado); Martha Franklin (The Duenna); Juliette Belanger (dancer); Roy Coulson (her admirer); Enrique Alonso (Ramón).

Although Fairbanks has never fallen out of fashion or favor, his films (apart from "The Thief of Bagdad") seem to be revived all too rarely. Perhaps this is partly due to two factors. Although Johnston McCulley did write a sequel to "The Mark of Zorro" (including, incidentally, many of the elements purely of Fairbanksian devising, such as the carving of a "Z" on to his opponent's clothes - or flesh) this particular sequel was based on an unrelated story that could be grafted, quite happily, on to the Zorro character. It was the fourth of Doug's big blockbuster swashbucklers, and the last to be quite so long. "The Black Pirate" and "The Gauchito" which followed cut back by several reels, and benefited considerably from being more tightly adapted to the original, which came as a virtual climax to Doug's modern comedies - it had their spirit of fun, yet foreshadowed the more ambitious swashbucklers which its surprise success dictated. While much effervescence was lost when Doug moved into bigger pictures, much was gained too in terms of carefully researched decor, magnificent photography and superb art direction. Our print is a beautifully maintained reduction from the original 35mm negative, and even if it were not as good as the original (and it isn't) that's the sheet on which he's been with its pictorial beauty intact, its sets and glass shots in crystal clear focus and not seen as fuzzy dupes. For the rest, tho' a little protracted (and Crisp, a better actor than director, does treat it in too leisurely a fashion at times), it offers delightful comedy (often of an unexpected nature), the expected acrobatic action, and a wonderful cast of old favorites.

Program Ends approx. 10:40 followed by brief discussion period.

For those who weren't here for the first 2 programs, a reminder that the distributors have withdrawn the films announced for our Nov. 21 program, and we have substituted TWO AGAINST THE WORLD (1932, Constance Bennett) and THE BIG SHOT (1942, Bogart, Irene Manning, Susan Peters).