KISS AND MAKE UP (Paramount, 1934) Directed by Harlan Thompson and Jean Negulesco; Produced by Emanuel Cohen; Screenplay by Harlan Thompson, George Marion Jr., Jane Hinton; Camera, Leon Shamroy; Songs by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger; based on the 1933 play "Kozmetika" by Istvan Bekeffi; With: Cary Grant (Dr. Maurice Lamer); Genevieve Tobin (Zoe Cohen); Helen Mack (Annie); Edward Everett Horton (Max Pascal); Mona Maris (Countess Rita); Rafael Storm (Rolando); Toby Wing (Consuelo Olvera); Dorothy Christy (Greta); Doris Lloyd (Madame Durant); Andre Beranger (valet); Milton Wallace (Nasharaja); Sam Ash (plumber); Henry Armetta (Banquet chairman); Rita Gould (Madame Dupont) and the Wampus Baby Stars of 1934, including Jean Carmen, Dorothy Drake, Jean Gale, Judith Allen, Ann Hovey, Ann Sheridan, Jacqueline Wells (Julie Bishop). 70 mins.

Although certainly not Cary Grant's first official starring role, "Kiss and Make Up" is very much his first starring vehicle. He and his personality are clearly expected to carry the whole show, and for the most part they do; boxoffice-wise he has little real assistance from the supporting cast. (Carole Lombard was originally slated for the Genevieve Tobin role). Based on a Hungarian play, it is very much Lubitsch territory, an element stressed by the fact that Tobin virtually replays her role from "One Hour With You". Directorial inexperience prevents it from realising its full potential, but it is bright, breezy, full of pleasant supporting players, and interesting art deco sets. The slapstick chase finale is the work of veteran 2nd unit director Ralph Ceder, who also handed the chase climax of the last two W.C. Fields comedies for Universal. Cary Grant, as the protagonist, (always a good substitute for Eric Rhodes) plays the same role in both films tonight, and would well fit. And would you think it - in "The Powers Girl"! And there's an interesting stylistic plagiarism from the subjective-camera opening of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" in the opening of this film. In a film about the subtleties of makeup, it's a little disconcerting to find Horton plastered with it, and Helen Mack being referred to in dialogue as a simple make-up-less girl when she too is coiffed and painted to the hilt.

Small character roles in a guileless, pleasing musical comedy of this type. Apparently there were minor censorship hassles and some retakes and added scenes but it's all quite seamless.

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Wise Girl (RKO Radio, 1937) Directed by Leigh Jason; Produced by Edward Kaufman; Executive Producer, Samuel Briskin; Story by Allan Scott and Charles Norman; Camera, Peverell Marley; 70 mins.

With Miriam Hopkins (Susan Fletcher); Ray Milland (John O'Halloran); Walter Abel (Stevie); Henry Stephenson (Fletcher sr); Alec Craig (Dermont O'Neill); Guinn Williams (Mike); Betty Philson (Joan); Marianna Sotulay (Katie); Margaret Dumont (Mrs Bell-Rivington); Jean de Briac (George); Ivan Lebedeff (Prince Michael); Rafael Storm (Prince Ivan); Gregory Gaye (Prince Lepold); Richard Lane (Tommy); Jack Rice (Edgar Dearing); Eddie Dunn, Maurice Cass.

Just as 1947 was the productivity peak of film noir, so coincidentally was 1937 the peak of Screwball Comedy. Not only were more of them made that year than in any other, but they included many of the genre's best - "Nothing Sacred" and "Easy Living" among them. With the genre, and its characters and cliches having become so standardised, it's not surprising that some good but not outstanding entries were all but forgotten. "Wise Girl" is one of them. Like its co-feature tonight, it must have made more of an impression with a better director. RKO certainly gave Leigh Jason his opportunities with this film and Stanwyck's "The Mad Miss Manton", he didn't let them down, but nor did he embellish his own directorial reputation, and was soon back where he belonged, doing slick "B"s and programmers. "Wise Girl" was originally intended for Cary Grant, and Ray Milland plays it very much in the Grant manner. (Though Milland's career preceded Grant's, his initial forte was as the likeable weakling; with Grant established, Milland's work seemed to parallel his more and more, with both turning to really serious roles in the 40's). The usual rich-vs-poor, manipulative elements of Screwball are given a few new twists here, especially in the motivation for Hopkins' masquerade as a small-town actress and the crazy Bohemian community slightly predates the screwball family of Capra's "You Can't Take It With You". Only in allowing sentiment to take over nearer the end, and especially in the trial scene, does the pace lag and the comic content begin to evaporate. But like it a identically-lengthed co-feature, it is too short for there to be much time wasted on complications, and it remains a loose-limbed, sprightly entertainment, far too good to be forgotten, and much better than, for instance, the earlier and more heralded Nobody's Wife in comedy. Incidentally, we hope New School attendees will not be offended by the high society slur on all those who live and work "below 14th Street".

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William K. Everson

Program ends approx. 10.10.

Discussion/Questions follow.