

DELTA KAPPA ALPHA AND THE DIVISION OF CINEMA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PRESENT:

# A Tribute to Michael Curtiz

*This was probably in  
1973, the year  
Requinstain & Rowett  
joined DKA.*



Curtiz, crew, and players on set of "The Desired Woman" (1927).





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and the Division of Cinema  
of the University of Southern California  
present:*

# A Tribute to Michael Curtiz

## Program

November 4 *	Passage to Marseilles The Unsuspected Doctor X Mystery of the Wax Museum
November 11 *	Tenderloin 20,000 Years in Sing Sing Jimmy the Gent Angels with Dirty Faces
November 18 *	Virginia City Santa Fe Trail The Adventures of Robin Hood The Sea Hawk
December 1	Casablanca†
December 2	This is the Army Mission to Moscow Black Fury Yankee Doodle Dandy
December 9	Mildred Pierce Life with Father Charge of the Light Brigade Dodge City
December 16	Captain Blood The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex Night and Day I'll See You in My Dreams

*If most of the showings  
were on Sunday (except for  
Casablanca) this was probably  
in 1973.*

*Wef.*

All performances will be held in room 108 of the Cinema Department. Matinees will start promptly at 1:00 p.m., evening shows at 7:30 p.m. A series of personal appearances by special guests is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. each Sunday. Because of limited seating capacity, admission will be on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to DKA members and USC cinema students. There is no admission charge.

\*If there are no conflicts in scheduling, these programs will be repeated in January. Dates will be announced.

†The gala performance of Casablanca will be held in room 133 of Founders Hall at 8:00 p.m., with special guests in attendance. Tickets for this event are free, but due to limited seating capacity, must be secured from the Cinema Department office (746-2235).

# A Most Prolific Director

by Arthur Knight

Only in very recent years, with the abrupt demise of Hollywood's studio system, has it become possible to speak realistically of style when discussing most American directors. Until less than a decade ago, the look of a film, the feel of a film, its texture — its style — was at least as much the product of the studio and its art department, its camera department, its sound department, its stable of writers, costume designers, composers and post-production people as it was the creation of an individual director. It was easier to describe the style of a studio — M-G-M, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, Warner Brothers — than the style of any of their contract directors. *Auteur* theorists could write knowingly of the stamp of the European director; at home, it was the stamp of the studio that counted.

What these theorists failed to note, in their dedication to the discovery of a consistent style in the directors elevated to their pantheon, was the incredible facility of most of our directors to function successfully in a wide variety of styles. Once John Ford had settled comfortably into a routine of large-scale Westerns, the *auteur* critics felt even more comfortable in relating his content to his style. Alfred Hitchcock, with his single-minded devotion to the thriller genre, was the perfect *auteur* hero. Similar, if lesser, consistencies have been discerned in the collected works of such disparate types as Robert Aldrich, Samuel Fuller, Howard Hawks, Nicholas Ray, even Otto Preminger, with token wreaths reverently placed at all the appropriate shrines.

It may seem a paradox, but to me the greatest glory of the many directors who performed successfully under the studio system that dominated the American industry for almost forty years is the simple fact that they were able to function in such a wide variety of styles and genres. Looking at it pragmatically, perhaps they had to do so for sheer survival. The director with only one string to his bow, like Tod Browning, was ultimately defeated by the system, despite his unequalled expertise in his chosen field. The studios demanded versatility. And from men like King Vidor, William Wellman, Raoul Walsh, Henry King, Mervyn Le Roy and Michael Curtiz, they obtained it beyond all reason. Not all of their pictures were great — but then, neither were all their scripts, or all their casts. When the stars were in proper conjunction, however, — when stars, scripts, production facilities and budgets all conjoined in common cause — they had the technical expertise and the innate sense of cinema to create memorable (and also profitable) movies.

This extended examination of the films of Michael Curtiz is not only long overdue, but also altogether appropriate for a film school such as USC Cinema. Enormously prolific in his native Hungary, and, later, in Austria, Curtiz was brought to Hollywood in 1926 by Warner Brothers, and in quick succession was asked to do a circus story, a tear jerker, a couple of melodramas, and a C.B. de Mille-style spectacular, *Noah's Ark* (with dialogue sequences). As a measure of his success, he remained at Warners for 28 years, and better than 90 pictures in every conceivable genre and style, and — despite a formidable language barrier — became one of the most American of American directors. (Arthur Mayer likes to tell of the time Curtiz dropped in to see a horror movie at his Rialto Theater and came out saying, "It was so scary it made the hair stand up on the edge of my seat.")

When musicals were the vogue, he did musicals — Al Jolson in *Mammy*, Frank Fay in *Under A Texas Moon* and, some years later, Jimmy Cagney in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and a war-time all-star cast in *This Is The Army*. When horror stories became the vogue, he



Curtiz and bit player during the shooting of *THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM*

contributed some of the best — *Doctor X*, *Mystery Of The Wax Museum*, *The Walking Dead*. Social significance was the Warner theme of the Thirties: Curtiz obliged with *Cabin In The Cotton*, *Twenty Thousand Years In Sing Sing*, *Black Fury*, *Angeles With Dirty Faces* and also directed some of the biggest of Warners' big Westerns: *Dodge City*, *Virginia City* and *Santa Fe Trail*. With the advent of World War II, War-

ners became the most militantly patriotic studio in Hollywood, abetted by such Curtiz wartime offerings as *Dive Bomber*, *Captain Of The Clouds*, the all-time star *Mission To Moscow*, *Passage To Marseilles* and, of course, *Casablanca*.

*Casablanca* is at once the quintessential Curtiz and Warner Brothers picture of its time (1943). Curtiz had worked successfully by then in every conceivable genre, including the romantic Errol Flynn swashbucklers — *Captain Blood*, *The Charge Of The Light Brigade*, *The Adventures Of Robin Hood*, *The Sea Hawk*. He had directed the heart-wrenching *Four Daughters*, and its sequels, *Daughters Courageous* and *Four Wives*. Meanwhile, Warners had made a star of Humphrey Bogart, and had developed such talented supporting players as Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, S.Z. Sakall and Helmut Dantine. Screenwriters Howard Koch and Julius and Philip Epstein had been under contract to Warners almost as long as Curtiz himself. It was one of those rare conjunctures where all the resources of a studio, all of the talents involved, seem to have been summoned for this one occasion. If any single film were ever needed to justify the studio system at its best, *Casablanca* would be that movie.

For Michael Curtiz, it was the apogee of a career — a film that won both critical and popular favor. Still ahead lay *Mildred Pierce*, illuminated by Joan Crawford's incandescent performance; *Night And Day*, a grandiose but inaccurate account of the life of Cole Porter; and the hugely successful *Life With Father*, with its ingratiating accenting of the values and virtues of an earlier America. But the decline was already in evidence, even before Curtiz left Warners. More and more of his films were second rate (*My Dream Is Yours*, *Bright Leaf*, *The Story Of Will Rogers*); some, like his disastrous 1953 remake of *The Jazz Singer*, were even secondhand.

While it might be tempting to suggest that Curtiz himself was running out of energy or inspiration, the fact that he did 16 more pictures in the next seven years would hardly substantiate this view. More pertinent, I should say, is the fact that Curtiz' decline corresponds precisely with the decline of the major studios as the controlling force in production. 20th Century-Fox called him in for *The Egyptian*, one of its first CinemaScope spectacles, and Paramount used him on *White Christmas*, the first of its Vista-Vision productions; both were obvious — and futile attempts to counter the inroads that television was making on the nation's box offices. It was perfectly logical for these major studios to summon the quintessential studio director for their projects — and just



Basil Rathbone and Errol Flynn in their classic screen duel from *ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD*

as logical that Curtiz was unable to save them.

For the tide toward independent production had already taken its turn. On every major lot, new independents were establishing their beachheads, challenging the monolithic structures that, for more than a quarter of a century, had dominated the American screen. And they brought with them new concepts of financing, new modes of distribution, an interest in the new technology and — above all — an appetite for new themes and approaches. Since many (if not indeed most) of these independent companies were formed by directors, or included directors, their films became increasingly personal and idiosyncratic perhaps too much so. Many feel today that the pendulum has swung too far, that most of today's movies have lost touch with that great mass audience that kept the studios churning out 52 pictures a year in their palmier days.

Viewing this wide-ranging Michael Curtiz retrospective, one can only sense that something terribly important has gone out of our films — not only the large-scale swashbucklings of *The Sea Hawk* and *Robin Hood*, not merely the romanticism of *Four Daughters* and *Casablanca*, but even the personalized, humanized realism of such pictures as *Cabin In The Cotton* and *Black Fury*. The much-maligned studio system, functioning at its best, produced some great films. And one of the greatest of the studio directors was Michael Curtiz. These pictures will prove it.

Sunday, November 4, 1:00 p.m.

## The Unsuspected



### THE UNSUSPECTED (1947)

Producer: Charles Hoffman  
Associate Producer: George Amy  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Story: Charlotte Armstrong  
Screenplay: Randal MacDougall  
Adaptation: Bess Meredyth  
Photography: Woody Bredell  
Film Editor: Frederick Richards  
Music: Franz Waxman  
Cast: Joan Caulfield, Claude Rains, Audrey Totter, Constance Bennett, Hurd Hatfield, Michael North, Fred Clark, Jack Lambert, Ray Walker, Harry Lewis, Nana Bryant, Walter Baldwin  
108 Minutes

In 1947 Michael Curtiz formed his own company and for the first time in his career tried functioning as both producer as well as director. Michael Curtiz Productions became more or less an independent unit on the Warners' lot, and their first film was this film noir murder-mystery, *The Unsuspected*. In it, Claude Rains stars as a wealthy, snobbish radio personality who in real life is carrying out the crimes he dramatizes on the air. Although his motive is never really made clear, he first dispenses with his secretary and then attempts one-by-one to blackmail and murder his friends and family. His most powerful tool is his disc-recorder which, along with hidden microphones, he uses to record and concoct incriminating conversations which aid his blackmailing schemes. Ultimately, of course, this device is responsible for his own demise when the hero (Michael North) discovers a recording of one of the murders.

A great deal of the film takes place in the usual film noir settings: smoke-filled nightclubs, rain-soaked streets, dark country roads, and an opulent mansion. In many respects, the film's story and style are a throwback to the days of Curtiz' career in the late 1920's and early 30's. The film exhibits a blatant preoccupation with wierd camera angles, gimmicky expressionistic lighting, and frequent outbursts of over-acting. As Claude Rains goes about his evil work, we see his shadow or reflection almost more than we see his face on camera. He appears silhouetted in doorways, and lurks around the darkened sets wearing black gloves and a wide brim hat. One sequence in the film shows a man looking out of a train window as the countryside speeds by. The camera zooms out through the window, into the image on the process screen, down a street and up into a hotel window. The final shot in the film shows a small figure of Rains tramping toward a mammoth prison gateway, from which emanate enormous long shadows which cross-hatch the entire picture. These types of images and camera tricks was what Curtiz was most noted for in his early days at Warner Brothers. Seeing *The Unsuspected* today, it seems as though Curtiz was perhaps paying tribute to, as well as making fun of, many of the dramatic devices he was fond of twenty years earlier.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, November 4, 3:00 p.m.

## Passage to Marseilles



### PASSAGE TO MARSEILLES (1944)

Producer: Hal Wallis  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
From the story by: James Nordhoff, James Norman Hall ("Sans Patrie")  
Screenplay: Casey Robinson, Jack Moffitt  
Photography: James Wong Howe  
Film Editor: Owen Marks  
Music: Max Steiner  
Cast: Humphrey Bogart, Claude Rains, Michele Morgan, Philip Dorn, Sydney Greenstreet, Helmut Dantine, Peter Lorre, George Tobias, John Loder, Victor Francen, Vladimir Sokoloff, Edward Cianelli, Corinna Mura, Konstantin Shayne, Louis Mercier, Monte Blue, Stephen Richards, Hans Conreid, Frederick Brunn, Billy Roy, Charles La Torre, Gerald Perreau  
110 Minutes

*Passage To Marseilles* is one of the best and most typical of the Warners' war films of the 1940's. It's full of action, heroics, patriotic music, and human sacrifice all intended to arouse and unify national feelings in time of war. Curtiz seemed to master every genre of film that was assigned to him, and this war film, even to this day, remains a sincere and powerful patriotic drama.

We are told in a series of flashbacks, and at one point by a flashback within a flashback, the story of five French escapees from Devil's Island and their struggle to return to their homeland to fight the Nazis. Each of them represents a different segment of society: one is a farmer, another a mechanic, a third is professional criminal, another a newspaper editor, and the fifth is a soldier. Although from different walks of life, they are bound together by a common feeling of intense patriotism, a trait which even transcends their status as criminals by the end of the picture. The generality achieved by these men being a slice of mankind is complimented by the setting, an oar freighter bound for Marseilles, and the remaining characters on board who represent all of the political viewpoints and personalities of the time. The ship becomes a mini-1944 world where many of the then-contemporary conflicts could be neatly placed into dramatic context.

The film's major weakness is perhaps the twisted plot structure. Not until the third reel of the picture is it made clear who the central character in the drama is to be. But, aside from this, the story moves with an incredible swiftness, continually re-emphasizing the glory of patriotic sacrifice through a multitude of dramatic situations. Every character, from the cabin boy to an aging convict is given a chance to make his plea for democracy and nationalism. Despite the propaganda, the displays of patriotic zeal in the film are done with an integrity which demonstrates Curtiz' supreme ability to take any subject matter and from it create a strong and believable drama.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, November 4, 7:30 p.m.

## Doctor X



### DOCTOR X (1932)

Based on a play by: Howard W. Comstock and Allen C. Miller  
Adaptation & Dialogue: Robert Tasker and Earl Baldwin  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Photography: Ray Rennahan and Richard Towers  
Supervisor: Hal Wallis  
Photographed by Technicolor Process  
Cast: Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray, Lee Tracy, Preston S. Foster, John Wray, Harry Beresford, Arthur Edmund Carewe, Leila Bennett, Robert Warwick, George Rosener, Willard Robertson, Mae Busch and Thomas Jackson  
80 Minutes

Warner Bros. was not a studio primarily specializing in horror films, but in 1932-33, it produced two of the finest and most grotesquely chilling films ever made in the genre. One was *Mystery Of The Wax Museum*, and the other was *Doctor X*. Made at almost the same time, in the same eerie Technicolor process, and with the same cast and crew, *Doctor X* is perhaps the more gruesome – but splendidly so! – of the two. In it Lionel Atwill plays a mad doctor working with the police to solve a series of brutal strangulations that occur under a full moon. The culprit has invented a grisly synthetic flesh-like paste which he smears all over himself before moving through dark, empty city streets. The crimes he commits and the way they are solved make for a knockout of a horror film even when seen today. A very rare film, *Doctor X* will reward those viewers lucky enough to find a screening of it somewhere.

Stephen W. Wood

Sunday, November 4, 9:00 p.m.

## The Mystery of the Wax Museum



### THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM (1933)

From the play by: Charles S. Belden  
Screen Play: Don Mullaly and Carl Erickson  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Photography: Ray Rennahan  
Supervisor: Henry Blanke  
Photography: Technicolor Process  
Cast: Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray, Glenda Farrell, Frank McHugh, Allen Vincent, Gavin Gordon, Holmes Herbert, Arthur Edward Carewe, DeWitt Jennings and Edwin Maxwell.  
88 Minutes

If it were nothing more than a first-rate horror chiller, *Mystery Of The Wax Museum* would deserve a strong place in the annals of film history. Having been considered irretrievably lost as late as 1970, this version is still rare and only seen infrequently today. The film deals with a wax museum sculptor who becomes a hideously disfigured madman after a fire and starts using live bodies for realism in his displays. If the plot sounds familiar, it's because the film was remade in 1953 as *House Of Wax*, with Vincent Price. The 1933 Michael Curtiz Technicolor original, besides being vastly superior, is set during the Depression; Glenda Farrell and Frank McHugh are a reporter and her news editor supplying the comic relief.

A good demonstration of the early two-strip Technicolor process used on several films in the Thirties, wax-like and almost drained of color, *Wax Museum* has countless scenes that were enhanced by its eerie, muted color and that even today would turn a tarantula white in fear: Madman Lionel Atwill stealing bodies out of a morgue at night; Atwill stalking unmasked in a dank cellar where Glenda Farrell is hiding from him; and the laboratory finale with a screaming Fay Wray (the same year as *King Kong*). In short, *Mystery Of The Wax Museum* is a legendary horror film masterpiece.

Stephen H. Wood

Sunday, November 11, 1:30 p.m.

## Tenderloin



### TENDERLOIN (Warner Brothers 1928)

Director: Michael Curtiz  
Photography: Hal Mohr  
Story: Melville Crossman (Darryll Zanuck)  
Screenplay: E.T. Lowe, Jr.  
Editor: Ralph Dawson  
Dialogue: Joseph Jackson and E.T. Lowe, Jr.  
Cast: Dolores Costello  
85 Minutes

Beginning with *Tenderloin*, vitaphone sequences were incorporated into the remainder of Curtiz' films. He struggled at first with the new changes brought on by sound technology. *Tenderloin*, a gangster story, was billed as "the first actual talking picture in which the characters speak their film roles." The total running time of the film was 85 minutes, with 15 minutes of that devoted to synchronized speech. The New York Times review of March 15, 1928, states that the audience laughed at the dialogue sequences; apparently the crudities of the new sound medium were all too evident. Undaunted, Curtiz in his next film, *The Gamblers* (1929), mounted the enormous soundproof camera on wheels, and, with limitations, began to overcome the immobility that the new sound film initially brought with it.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, November 11, 3:00 p.m.

## Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing



### TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS IN SING SING (1933)

From the book by Warden Lewis E. Lawes  
Adaptation: Courtenay Terrett and Robert Lord  
Photography: Barney McGill  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Supervisor: Ray Griffith  
Cast: Spencer Tracy, Bette Davis, Arthur Byron, Lyle Talbot, Grant Mitchell, Warren Hymer, Louis Calhern, Sheila Terry and Spencer Charters  
81 Minutes

Prison was one of Warner Brothers favorite settings in the Thirties, and this film is one of the better in the genre. The title refers to the sum total of time spent by men in Sing Sing. We get a cross section of residents there: Lyle Talbot is the cynical and aimless college graduate, Warren Hymer is the nice but dumb animalistic type, and Spencer Tracy as the lead is the arrogant gang leader who gradually reforms.

Long before he became linked with Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy played ruthless tough guys in several films, of which this one is probably the best. Based on a true-life warden's memoirs, the film still packs quite a wallop and was made as a hard-hitting social protest of prison conditions. Remade by Anatole Litvak in 1940 as *Castle On The Hudson*, with John Garfield and Pat O'Brien, the 1933 original has ten times the remake's energy, vitality, and freshness; in its fast pacing, good cast, short length, and competent story, it embodies everything good in the Warner programmer of that era.

Stephen H. Wood, Mike Mahdesian



Sunday, November 11, 7:30 p.m.

## Jimmy the Gent



### JIMMY THE GENT (1934)

From the story by: Laird Doyle and Ray Nazarro ("Heir Chaser")  
Screen Play: Bertram Milhauser  
Dialogue Director: Daniel Reed  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Photography: Ira Morgan  
Art Director: Esdras Hartley  
Film Editor: Tommy Richards  
Gowns: Orry-Kelly  
Supervisor: Robert Lord  
Cast: James Cagney, Bette Davis, Alice White, Allen Jenkins, Alan Dinehart, Arthur Hohl, Phillip Reed, Hobart Cavanaugh, Mayo Methot, Ralf Harolde, Philip Faversham and Nora Lane  
66 Minutes

This pleasant, bouncy comedy is typical of dozens of short "B" programmers Warners turned out in the 1930's to keep contract players like James Cagney and Bette Davis working between large "A" productions. In this one, Cagney is head of a racket that seeks out heirs to fortunes after the relatives have died. When Cagney starts making a handsome commission, rival Alan Dinehart enters onto the scene; the last half of the film is centered on the screwball rivalry between the two men. **Jimmy The Gent** is hardly great art, or even very inspired; yet it's a very agreeable, entertaining way to spend 66 minutes.

Stephen H. Wood

Sunday, November 11, 9:00 p.m.

## Angels with Dirty Faces



### ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES (1938)

Associate Producer: Sam Bischoff  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Story: Rowland Brown  
Adaptation: John Wexley, Warren Duff  
Photography: Sol Polito  
Film Editor: Owen Marks  
Cast: James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Humphrey Bogart, Ann Sheridan, George Bancroft, Billy Halop, Bobby Jordan, Leo Gorcey, Gabriel Dell, Huntz Hall, Bernard Punsley, Joe Downing, Edward Pawley, Adrian Morris, Frankie Burke, William Tracy, Marilyn Knowlden  
99 Minutes

If there is to be a classic Warner Brothers gangster film of the Thirties, then this is it. It is the culmination of all the Warners' gangster themes having all the elements: two boys are caught trespassing in a trainyard and while one escapes, the other is sent to reform school. The latter naturally grows up to be a front page hood (James Cagney) while the other becomes a priest (needless to say, played by Pat O'Brien). The kids (played humorously by The Dead End Kids) of course all idolize the hood much to the dismay of the priest. The girl next door who falls in love with the hood is played for the tenth time by **Ann Sheridan**. Finally we have the gangster and his crooked lawyer representing pure evil played by George Bancroft and Humphrey Bogart respectively. (Prior to **High Sierra**, Bogart was always just plain nasty.) The theme of course is that corruption turns poverty-stricken kids bad.

Yet with a rehash of all the decade's sociological cliches this film, dynamically directed by Curtiz, is the best of the genre. Curtiz uses his stock techniques of swift pacing and realism with expressionistic lighting to greatly heighten the mood and excitement already provided by the superb acting. This is one of Cagney's best and definitely the Dead End Kids' best.

Michael Mahdesian

Sunday, November 18, 1:00 p.m.

## Virginia City



### VIRGINIA CITY (Warner Brothers — 1940)

Producers: Jack Warner and Hal Wallis  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Screenplay: Robert Buckner  
Photography: Sol Polito  
Editor: George Amy  
Music: Max Steiner  
Cast: Errol Flynn, Miriam Hopkins, Randolph Scott, Alan Hale, Guinn Williams, Humphrey Bogart, Moroni Olson, Douglas Dumbrille, Frank McHugh, John Litel  
121 Minutes

*Virginia City* was in some respects intended as a sequel to *Dodge City*, but, in black and white, had less the epic stature of its predecessor. The story was set further back into the Civil War, where Union and Confederate forces waged guerilla warfare in the western territory. Strangely enough, Humphrey Bogart is featured as a Mexican bandit in this film, a role as odd as his Spanish accent.

The original script was written with the intention that Errol Flynn play the role that Randolph Scott eventually ended up playing. Apparently Curtiz objected that Flynn as the hero should be on the winning side and therefore could not play a southerner. Hence, Flynn was made a northerner and production proceeded.

The climax of the picture has Union and Confederate forces uniting together to defeat Bogart's small army, and the film ends with Abraham Lincoln (voice-over) proclaiming the peace and equality of all men, under God, indivisible . . . This reaffirmation of the benefits of democracy was common in the Warners' dramas immediately preceding World War II, and in a sense, became a subtle form of national propaganda.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, November 18, 3:00 p.m.

## Santa Fe Trail



### SANTA FE TRAIL (Warner Brothers — 1940)

Producers: Jack Warner and Hal Wallis  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Screenplay: Robert Buckner  
Photography: Sol Polito  
Editor: George Amy  
Music: Max Steiner  
Cast: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Raymond Massey, Ronald Reagan, Alan Hale, Guinn Williams, Van Heflin, Gene Reynolds, Henry O'Neill, John Litel, Moroni Olson  
110 Minutes

*Santa Fe Trail* has very little to do with its title, but rather depicts a semi-fictionalized account of the pre-Civil War exploits of cavalryman Jeb Stuart (Flynn) and abolitionist John Brown (Raymond Massey). History, as usual, is re-written at Warner Brothers. But they always come up with an exciting and skillfully staged drama. Curtiz' hard-hitting approach to the dramatization of physical action is particularly outstanding in this film for it provides the appropriate backdrop for the intensive character study of a violent and fanatical John Brown. The Massey character is the most serious and interesting part of the film, and expanding his own story might have made an excellent film by itself. In *Santa Fe Trail*, he functions chiefly as villain.

Max Steiner created a particularly enjoyable musical score for this film, full of bright and bouncing cavalry tunes and rhythmic marches. A great deal of this music was re-used in later Warner westerns and even surfaced on their tv shows in later years.

*Santa Fe Trail* was the last of the Curtiz-Flynn westerns, and Curtiz' last western until *The Hangman* (1959).

B.P. Burt, Jr.

# The Adventures of Robin Hood



## THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (Warner Brothers 1938) Technicolor

Directors: Michael Curtiz and William Keighley  
Producer: Hal Wallis  
Screenplay: Seton I. Miller and Norman Reilly Raine  
Photography: Tony Gaudio, Sol Polito and Howard Green  
Editor: Ralph Dawson  
Art Director: Carl Jules Weyl  
Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold  
Fencing Master: Fred Cavens  
Archery: Howard Hill  
Cast: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, Alan Hale, Eugene Pallette, Patric Knowles, Una O'Connor, Herbert Mundin, Harry Cording, Melville Cooper, Ian Hunter, Montagu Love  
102 Minutes

The basic theme of the romantic costume adventure is the defiance of established but corrupt authority by one dynamic individual who clearly has moral rights on his side. In these films the public found heroes far more redeeming than a Little Caesar or a Scarface, men that could stand up strong, and with a flash of their sword, thwart the evil around them. No character fits this description better than the legendary outlaw Robin Hood. No doubt, then, that in 1938 Warners was confident that the *Adventures Of Robin Hood* would be a smash success . . . and, of course, it was.

Originally planned in 1935 with Jimmy Cagney in the role of Robin, the project was retailored in 1938 with a big budget, Korngold music, Errol Flynn, and Technicolor. William Keighley was assigned to direct the picture, but was later replaced by Curtiz. Curtiz ended up directing all the interiors, and additional action to spice up Keighley's exteriors.

Shot in the improved 3-strip Technicolor process by Sol Polito and Tony Gaudio, Curtiz made effective use of the color palette to enhance atmosphere. The bright, crisp colors of the forest are in striking contrast to the drab browns and grays of the castle's dungeons. Robin, in bright green, struggles amidst a sea of grey forms when he escapes from the castle. When Maid Marion is on trial, the entire scene is washed with a cold blue aura, excepting for her small, warm figure in the center. Curtiz seemed to be in control of his visuals, be they in black and white or color.

The famous dueling sequence between Flynn and Basil Rathbone has always been a highlight of the picture. The screen duel was a specialty of Curtiz. He made full use of lighting, props, and shadows to create atmosphere, define space, and control the pace of the fight.

The *Adventures Of Robin Hood*, as well as the other Curtiz swash-bucklers, were not only a form of escapism but in subtle fashion functioned as a form of romantic patriotism. To the public, the bad guys in these films embodied in pure form much of the evil which can be felt but rarely pinpointed or suppressed in real life. The death of these celluloid villains at the hands of those dedicated to love and democracy comprised a form of fantasy retribution for the movie-going public.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

# The Sea Hawk



## THE SEA HAWK (Warner Brothers 1940)

Director: Michael Curtiz  
Producers: Jack Warner and Hal Wallis  
Screenplay: Seton I. Miller and Howard Koch  
Photography: Sol Polito  
Editor: George Amy  
Art Director: Anton Grot  
Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold  
Cast: Errol Flynn, Brenda Marshall, Alan Hale, Henry Daniell, Claude Rains, Flora Robson, Gilbert Rowland, Una O'Connor, Donald Crisp, Pedro De Cordoba, Harry Cording  
120 Minutes

*The Sea Hawk* was the last and quite possibly the best of the Warners-Curtiz-Flynn romantic costume adventures. Curtiz' visual style, and his mastery of pace, physical action, and atmosphere are all supreme elements in this beautifully directed motion picture.

Korngold's musical score is again an indispensable element of the film's overall effect. In a sense, one could "hum" the entire picture from beginning to end, for the music followed every bit of action, made the transitions, and enriched the mood of every scene.

A romantic symphony, the music in the film belongs to the Golden Age of movie music, and it would be difficult to imagine the film without it.

*Sea Hawk* showed an obvious awareness of the then-contemporary world situation, for its story parallels history at that exact moment. In the film, Britain is depicted as the last obstacle in Europe to dictatorial Spain (in 1580) which is planning to send an armada of warships across the channel to destroy England. The English queen and the Sea Hawks must decide how best to combat this threat. The Sea Hawks want to fight, but the queen remains passive and prefers to bargain with Spain. Obvious parallels in this film are made with the war in Europe in 1940, the Battle of Britain, and the Munich Pact. The United States was not in the war, yet, films such as *Sea Hawk* were obvious evidence of where our sentiments stood. Once the war came, no longer were the elements of national propaganda confined to the pseudo-historical realm of the romantic costume drama, but were expressed openly in all types of films.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

# Casablanca



## CASABLANCA (1943)

Producer: Hal B. Wallis  
 Director: Michael Curtiz  
 From the play by Murray Burnett, Joan Allison ("Everybody Comes to Rick's")  
 Screenplay: Julius J. & Phillip G. Epstein, Howard Koch  
 Music: Max Steiner  
 Photography: Arthur Edeson  
 Film Editor: Owen Marks  
 Cast: Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, S.Z. Sakall, Madeleine LeBeau, Dooley Wilson, Joy Page, John Qualen, Leonid Kinskey, Helmut Dantine, Curt Bois, Marcel Dalio, Corinna Mura, Ludwig Stossel, Ilka Grunning, Charles La Torre, Frank Puglia, Dan Seymour  
 102 Minutes

The 1943 Academy Award winner for the Best Picture and Best Screenplay, this Warner Bros. classic is a perfect example of a typical espionage melodrama transformed into an exquisite motion picture by a just-right cast and director. Released at an ideal time during World War Two, the film even then was hailed by critics.

"A rich, suave, exciting, and moving tale," applauded Bosley Crowther. His sentiments have been echoed by viewers ever since. The brilliant cast and story, and Curtiz' deft direction of life during crises and love under fire all have a timeless appeal. Indeed, "the fundamental things apply . . ."

Stephen H. Wood, Jim Hall

# This is the Army



## THIS IS THE ARMY (1943) Technicolor

Producer: Hal B. Wallis  
 Director: Michael Curtiz  
 From the story by Irving Berlin ("This Is The Army")  
 Screenplay: Casey Robinson, Capt. Claude Binyon  
 Photography: Bert Polito  
 Film Editor: George Amy  
 Music & Lyrics: Irving Berlin  
 Cast: Irving Berlin, George Murphy, Joan Leslie, George Tobias, Alan Hale, Charles Butterworth, Dolores Costello, Una Merkel, Stanley Ridges, Rosemary De Camp, Ruth Donnelly, Dorothy Peterson, Frances Langford, Gertrude Niesen, Kate Smith, Ilka Gruning, Lt. Ronald Reagan, Sgt. Joe Louis, Sgt. Tom D'Andrea, Sgt. Julie Oshins, Sgt. Robert Shanley, Cpl. Herbert Anderson, Sgt. Allan Anderson, Sgt. Ezra Stone, Sgt. James Burrell, Sgt. Ross Elliott, Sgt. Alan Manson, Sgt. John P. Mendes, Sgt. Earl Oxford, Sgt. Philip Truex, Cpl. James MacColl, Cpl. Ralph Magelsen, Cpl. Tileston Perry, Lt. Joe Cook, Jr., Pvt. Larry Weeks, the Allan Trio  
 121 Minutes

Of all the hyper-patriotic motion pictures to come out of Hollywood (and Warners) during the Second World War, **This Is The Army** has dated the least. It is still rousing, inspiring, and colorful. Although several big budget, star-studded musicals (including Warners' own **Thank Your Lucky Stars**) were produced by the studios that year as the entertainment industry's contribution to the war effort, Curtiz' film was the most successful due to a superiority of music and, of course, direction.

**This Is The Army** is the film version of Irving Berlin's stage show which one breathless reviewer called "the best show of a generation." The movie was received no less enthusiastically: "The freshest, the most endearing, the most rousing musical tribute to the American fighting man that has come out of World War II," wrote the *New York Times*' Theodore Strauss.

The story line, involving Ronald Reagan and George Murphy as two generations of soliders, was added to Berlin's stage show, but all of the theatre production's songs were retained, including "I Left My Heart At The Stage Door Canteen," the title song, and another World War II "standard," "The Army Made A Man Out Of Me." But by far the movie's most memorable musical moments are Kate Smith's immortal rendition of "God Bless America" and an appearance by Berlin himself to croon in a self-conscious tenor "Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning," a number from his World War I show **Yip-Yip-Yaphank!**

Jim Hall

Sunday, December 2, 3:00 p.m.

## Mission to Moscow



### MISSION TO MOSCOW (Warner Brothers 1943)

Director: Michael Curtiz  
Screenplay: Howard Koch, based upon the book by Joseph Davis, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia  
Photography: Bert Glennon  
Editor: Owen Marks  
Cast: Walter Huston, Ann Harding, Oscar Homolka, Richard Travis, Helmut Dantine, Victor Francen, George Tobias, Gene Lockhart, Eleanor Parker  
123 Minutes

Unlike the big war-time musicals or the heroic combat films, *Mission To Moscow* was a propaganda film of an entirely different nature. Based on Joseph E. Davis' controversial book by the same title, the film is a dramatization of Mr. Davis' two-year Ambassadorship to Russia. In the course of the narrative, it attempts to present the Soviets in a favorable light and to some extent sympathize with their political viewpoints. The point is made that the Russians, long before anyone else, recognized the danger of Naziism in Europe and took steps to combat it. The film also makes some daring criticism of the British Lord Chamberlain and the French and American isolationists. Never before had a Hollywood studio made a film so outspoken politically.

After the war, the film proved to be an embarrassment, and it was withdrawn from distribution. In 1947 its production was investigated by the House on Un-American Activities and in defense, Jack Warner stated that it had been made at the request of President Roosevelt to improve relations with our wartime ally. The film is interesting to see today, for it allows us a glimpse of our national feelings at a different time under different political circumstances.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, December 2, 7:30 p.m.

## Black Fury



### BLACK FURY (1935)

From the story by Judge M.A. Musmanno ("Jan Volkanik") and from the play by Harry R. Irving ("Bohunk")  
Screen Play: Abem Finkel and Carl Erickson  
Dialogue Director: Frank McDonald  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Photography: Byron Haskin  
Art Director: John Hughes  
Film Editor: Thomas Richards  
Supervisor: Robert Lord  
Cast: Paul Muni, Karen Morley, William Gargan, Barton MacLane, John T. Qualen, J. Carroll Naish, Vince Barnett, Tully Marshall, Henry O'Neill, Joe Crehan, Mae Marsh, Willard Robertson, Effie Ellsler, Wade Boteler  
92 Minutes

Curtiz, who could deftly direct any and all filmic genres, made his contribution to the famous Warners' social melodramas of the Thirties with *Black Fury*. Paul Muni, the studio's most prestigious and acclaimed contemporary actor, starred as the simple, foreign born coal miner, Joe Radek, who becomes a key figure in a Pennsylvania miners' strike. Battered about by opposing forces, he resolves to crusade for the perennial "little man," or in this case, the exploited workers, when his best friend is brutally (and as handled by Curtiz, chillingly) beaten to death by mine police.

The murder scene was based on an actual incident occurring in 1929, chronicled by Judge M.A. Musmanno, in "Jon Volkanik" - one of two stories dealing with trial of the policeman on which the film's screenplay was based.

This significant and thoroughly engrossing film was one of the first to focus attention on the plight of the miner, preceding John Ford's *How Green Was My Valley* and Sir Carol Reed's *The Stars Look Down* by several years. At the time, critics were impressed. Wrote Andre Sennwald in the *New York Times*: "*(Black Fury)* is a trenchant contribution to the sociological drama . . . the most notable American experiment in social drama since (King Vidor's) *Our Daily Bread*." Today, the film is considered one of the great experiments in social drama of all time.

Jim Hall

Sunday, December 2, 9:00 p.m.

## Yankee Doodle Dandy



### YANKEE DOODLE DANDY (1943)

Producers: Jack L. Warner, Hal B. Wallis  
Associate Producer: William Cagney  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Story: Robert Buckner  
Screenplay: Robert Buckner, Edmund Joseph  
Photography: James Wong Howe  
Film Editor: George Amy  
Music & Lyrics: George M. Cohan  
Cast: James Cagney, Joan Leslie, Walter Huston, Richard Whorf, Irene Manning, George Tobias, Rosemary de Camp, Jeanne Cagney, Frances Langford, George Barbier, S.Z. Sakall, Walter Catlett, Eddie Foy, Jr., Douglas Croft, Minor Watson, Chester Clute, Odette Myrtil, Patsy Lee Parsons, Capt. Jack Young  
126 Minutes

In 1942, Michael Curtiz directed a movie blockbuster at Warner Bros. that became one of that studio's finest films and all-time hits. Made for an obviously wartime audience, **Yankee Doodle Dandy** is an almost overwhelmingly energetic musical biography of song-and-dance man George M. Cohan. Though its production numbers have to sometimes be considered as products of a vanished era, they are nevertheless on a grand, monumental scale. James Cagney proves he could really sing and dance, as well as play tough guys expertly, as Cohan, and numbers of his like "You're A Grand Old Flag," "Give My Regards To Broadway," and the title song have to be among the most dynamic numbers ever put on film. Cagney's Oscar-winning knockout of a performance and the tremendous amount of energy the whole film gives off with repeated viewings make **Yankee Doodle Dandy** a true screen masterpiece.

Stephen H. Wood

Sunday, December 9, 1:00 p.m.

## Mildred Pierce



### MILDRED PIERCE (1945)

Producer: Jerry Wald  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Story: James M. Cain  
Screenplay: Ranald MacDougall  
Photography: Ernest Haller  
Film Editor: David Weisbart  
Music: Max Steiner  
Cast: Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, Eve Arden, Ann Blyth, Bruce Bennett, Lee Patrick, Moroni Olsen, Veda Ann Borg, Jo Anne Marlowe, Manart Kippen, George Tobias, Barbara Brown, Charles Trowbridge, John Compton, Butterfly McQueen, Chester Clute  
111 Minutes

James M. Cain was one of the most fascinating and perceptive mystery writers when it came to looking at the Southern California environment and life style. In 1945, Warner Bros. gave his novel **Mildred Pierce** a first-class treatment and created a true "film noir" masterpiece. In plot this is a tear jerker in which Joan Crawford plays a woman deserted by her first husband and viciously antagonized by her selfish daughter, for whom Joan sacrifices everything to keep the daughter happy. But plot is secondary to style here. Screenwriters Ranald MacDougall and Catherine Turney and Director Michael Curtiz beautifully capture the garish world of nighttime Los Angeles — the Pacific Ocean, the rainy city streets, and a milieu of greed and corruption. A must-see film.

Stephen H. Wood

Sunday, December 9, 3:00 p.m.

## Life with Father



### LIFE WITH FATHER (1947) Technicolor

Producer: Robert Buckner  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Story: Clarence Day  
Play: Howard Lindsay, Russel Crouse  
Screenplay: Donald Ogden Stewart  
Photography: Peverell Marley, William V. Skall  
Film Editor: George Amy  
Music: Max Steiner  
Cast: William Powell, Irene Dunne, Elizabeth Taylor, Edmund Gwenn, ZaSu Pitts, Jimmy Lydon, Moroni Olsen, Emma Dunn, Elisabeth Risdon, Derek Scott, Johnny Calkins, Martin Milner, Heather Wilde, Monte Blue, Mary Field, Queenie Leonard, Nancy Evans, Clara Blandick, Frank Elliott  
118 Minutes

Based on a play from the book by Clarence Day, this Curtiz film is full of the same charm and gentle pathos that was found in the original material. In *Life With Father*, the director has managed to recapture the atmosphere of the 1880's with all the richness of a *Currier and Ives* print. It is not so much a story as a compilation of little events which irritate father Day, portrayed by William Powell in one of his best remembered roles. Irene Dunne's performance of Vinnie Day perfectly compliments Powell's with just the right amount of charm, wit and exactness. Elizabeth Taylor, in one of her early roles, is very engaging as Mary Skinner. Curtiz has made certain that none of the essential comedy is overdrawn.

Peter Krikes

Sunday, December 9, 7:30 p.m.

## The Charge of the Light Brigade



### THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE (Warner Brothers 1936)

Director: Michael Curtiz  
2nd Unit: B. Reeves Eason  
Screenplay: Michael Jacoby and Rowland Leigh, from the poem by Alfred Tennyson  
Photography: Sol Polito and Fred Jackman  
Editor: George Amy  
Art Director: Jack Hughes  
Music: Max Steiner  
Producer: Hal B. Wallis  
Cast: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, David Niven, Nigel Bruce, C. Henry Gordon, Patric Knowles, Donald Crisp, Henry Stephenson, Robert Barrat  
116 Minutes

None of the Curtiz-Flynn romantic costume adventures were created with the intention of commenting on actual history. They were purely fictionalized stories based in quasi-historical settings, wherein the romanticized ideals too difficult to impose on a film set in a contemporary setting could be shown clearly and felt strongly. Such is the case with *Charge Of The Light Brigade*. Even though the film is based on an actual event, none of the characters, locations, or situations correspond to real history.

The structure of the Curtiz romantic costume adventures all follow the same pattern. Each of them is a string of battles separated by romantic interludes, with the basic conflict always rising until some ultimate violence at the end resolves all the problems. *Captain Blood*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and *The Sea Hawk* are essentially the same stories, with just changes of setting and isolated events. The *Charge Of The Light Brigade* involves quite a different story. The protagonist in this film, Geoffrey Vickers (Flynn), is filled with a great deal more inner conflict than *Captain Blood*, *Robin Hood*, or *The Sea Hawk*.

The most general description of any of Curtiz' work would place emphasis on movement and fast pace, two elements which are most vigorously demonstrated in the climactic charge. Beautifully tied together with Max Steiner's musical score, the charge remains a classic bit of filmmaking to this day. Curtiz would alternate mass images intercut with low-angle closeups of combatants fighting and dying in small groups. The cutting involved a style based upon the bracketing of some brief violent action into a single shot. These quick shots would then be strung together and intercut with the master scenes of the overall violence. The effect of this technique is a highly-charged and fast-paced form of excitement. Credit should be given as well to 2nd unit director B. Reeves Eason, who, with Curtiz, was responsible for staging some of the action.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, December 9, 9:30 p.m.

## Dodge City



### DODGE CITY (Warner Brothers 1939)

Technicolor

Director: Michael Curtiz

Producer: Robert Lord

Screenplay: Robert Buckner

Photography: Sol Polito

Editor: George Amy

Cast: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Bruce Cabot, Alan Hale, Guinn Williams, Victor Jory, Frank McHugh, Henry Travers, Ann Sheridan, Bill Lundigan

105 Minutes

The grade A western again became popular with the major Hollywood studios in the late 1930's, and Warners assigned Curtiz to direct **Dodge City** (1939). Like the swashbuckling dramas which preceded it, the film starred Errol Flynn and was a romantic adventure filled with swift-paced action and photographic grandeur.

Exchanging his sword for a six gun, Flynn seemed at home in the saddle, and no one seemed to be bothered by his British accent. Backed up by comical sidekicks Alan Hale and Guinn "big boy" Williams, the trio, along with Curtiz, went on to make two more big scale westerns: **Virginia City** (1940) and **The Santa Fe Trail** (1941).

Curtiz, as he did in preparation for all his varied film assignments, submerged himself in a study of western history until he was an expert on the subject. As a result of this, and other skillful efforts by the studio in location hunting and production design, the film became a uniquely-detailed and realistic appearing reconstruction of Kansas during the lawless cattle drive days.

The highlight of this film is the massive saloon brawl, the granddaddy of all western slugfests. The final chase and shoot-out on a burning train added a colorful finish but seemed somewhat anti-climactic after the saloon fight.

From a story standpoint, **Dodge City** is really no more than a glorified B western, but Warners added Technicolor, an impressive roster of contract players, and a fine score by Max Steiner. The resulting combination produced a handsome motion picture that is a delight to watch and hear.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, December 16, 1:00 p.m.

## Captain Blood



### CAPTAIN BLOOD (First National 1935)

Director: Michael Curtiz

Screenplay: Casey Robinson, based on the novel by Rafael Sabatini

Photography: Hal Mohr, Fred Jackman

Editor: George Amy

Art Director: Anton Grot

Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Cast: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, Lionel Atrill, Guy Kibbee, Henry Stephenson, Robert Barrat, Ross Alexander, J. Carroll Nash

119 Minutes

The financial successes of MGM's **Treasure Island** (1934) and **The Count Of Monte Cristo** (1934) revived Hollywood's interest in the swashbuckling romance. Not to be left out, Warners decided to produce **Captain Blood**, a property they had acquired from the old Vitagraph Company in the mid-1920's. Michael Curtiz was assigned the task of bringing this action-filled saga to the screen, and he found himself suddenly thrust from the grim harshness of the tragic social dramas, gangster pictures, and cynical mystery thrillers to pure-bred romanticism.

Robert Donat was originally to play the role of Peter Blood but contractual disagreements with the studio prevented him from accepting the role. Errol Flynn, then a complete unknown with practically no experience behind him, was plucked from the ranks of extras and tested by Curtiz. Warners took a gamble by choosing him and another unknown, Olivia de Havilland to play the leads, but the enormous success of the film assured them both of stardom and launched the cycle of swashbuckling dramas to follow.

**Captain Blood** was the first big-scale adventure picture that Warners had produced, and Curtiz for the next ten years was to be the top action director at the studio. His demand for realism, detail, and impact gave his action sequences an added excitement not to be found in the films of any other American studio of the period.

A major contribution to the film is the music score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, the first film score composed by the Austrian composer, and one which set the style for romantic scoring in the years to come.

B.P. Burt, Jr.



Sunday, December 16, 3:00 p.m.

# The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex



## THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX (Warner Brothers 1939) Technicolor

Producer: Hal Wallis  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
Screenplay: Norman R. Raine and Aeneas MacKenzie. Based upon the play *Elizabeth The Queen* by Maxwell Anderson  
Photography: Sol Polito and H. Howard Greene  
Editor: Owen Marks  
Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold  
Cast: Bette Davis, Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Donald Crisp, Henry Daniell, Vincent Price, Alan Hale, Henry Stephenson, Leo G. Carroll  
106 Minutes

The *Private Lives Of Elizabeth And Essex* was one of the few films Curtiz directed at Warners that was considered somewhat less than successful. This may seem strange, for the usual combination of talent was on hand: Curtiz, Sol Polito's Technicolor photography, Bette Davis, Flynn, and a fine score by Korngold. However, the script was adapted from a play and remained a stagey film with too much emphasis on dialogue. The outstanding feature of the film is Miss Davis' portrayal of an unstable and slightly neurotic Queen Elizabeth. She had requested that Laurence Olivier be given the role of Essex, but Errol Flynn was given the assignment and the problems began. First they quarreled over their billing in the title. From *Elizabeth The Queen*, the title became *The Knight And The Lady* and finally *The Private Lives Of Elizabeth And Essex*. Neither star had any affection for the other and Flynn's unhappiness was not concealed by his acting. Olivia de Havilland was demoted to a supporting role as a lady-in-waiting who suffers unrequited love for Essex and Alan Hale, Flynn's usual sidekick, became Tyrone, one of Essex's enemies. Aside from these departures from the usual format, the film was lavishly produced. Many of the sets, costumes, and cast were re-used soon after in *Sea Hawk*.

B.P. Burt, Jr.

Sunday, December 16, 7:30 p.m.

# Night and Day



## NIGHT AND DAY (Warner Brothers 1946) Technicolor

Producer: Arthur Schwartz  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
From the story by Charles Hoffman, Leo Townsend, William Bowers (Based on the career of Cole Porter)  
Screenplay: Charles Hoffman, Leo Townsend, William Bowers  
Adaptation: Jack Moffitt  
Photography: Feverell Marley, William V. Skall  
Film Editor: David Welsbart  
Songs: Cole Porter  
Music Adapted: Max Steiner  
Cast: Gary Grant, Alexis Smith, Monty Wooley, Ginny Simms, Jane Wyman, Eve Arden, Carlos Ramirez, Donald Woods, Mary Martin, Victor Francen, Alan Hale, Dorothy Malone, Tom D'Andrea, Selena Royle, Henry Stephenson, Paul Cavanagh, Sig Rumann, Milada Miadova, George Zoritch, Adam & Jayne De Gatan, Estelle Sloan, Clarence Muse, John Alvin, George Riley, Howard Freeman, Bobby Watson, John Pearson, Herman Bing  
128 Minutes

The tremendous appeal of Cole Porter, the man and his music, made that composer an inevitable subject for a film musical biography. But Curtiz had no intention of making another *Yankee Doodle Dandy* when he took on the job. Porter was the antithesis of Cohan. With a background of wealth and family social prominence, he naturally wrote songs of such wit, style, and sophistication that they were not popularly accepted at first, being too "highbrow."

Cary Grant was cast as the urbane composer. Alexis Smith became the romantic interest and an inspiration for many a song (the scene depicting the composing of "Night and Day" has to be a cliché classic of sorts. It is hysterically dated, with Grant even exclaiming "Wait! I think I've got it!" at one point. The film is filled with clichés too numerous and too blatant to attempt to overlook). Monty Wooley is delightful here playing himself, a real life friend of Porter. He is reminiscent of Oscar Levant, a factual compatriot of George Gershwin, in Warners' *Rhapsody In Blue* the year before.

Critic Thomas M. Pryor's assessment of *Night And Day* as "A generally pleasant show" is fitting indeed. The fashions and decor may be 1946, whatever period is being recreated, and any hint of Porter rarely penetrates Grant's indomitable facade, but no matter, Cole Porter's remarkable music surmounts all these objections.

Jim Hall

Sunday, December 16, 9:30 p.m.

## I'll See You in My Dreams



### I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS (Warner Bros., 1952)

Producer: Louis F. Edelman  
Director: Michael Curtiz  
From the story by Grace Kahn, Louis Edelman ("The Gus Kahn Story")  
Screenplay: Melville Shavelson, Jack Rose  
Photography: Ted McCord  
Film Editor: Owen Marks  
Musical Arrangements: LeRoy Prinz  
Cast: Doris Day, Danny Thomas, Frank Lovejoy, Patrice Wymore, James Gleason, Mary Wickes, Julie Oshins, Jim Backus, Minna Gombal, Harry Antrin.  
110 Minutes.

Curtiz' versatility as a director is in evidence in this musical biography of Gus Kahn. Since the Thirties, Warners garnered a reputation as makers of didactic biographies (Juarez, Pasteur, Zola, Dr. Ehrlich, etc.) and this film, though not part of that cycle, continues in the tradition of high studio craftsmanship of which Curtiz was a master.

It is in the staging of scenes which in other hands would have turned into common, unimaginative material, that Curtiz' hand is seen at work. The story is the standard Tin Pan Alley saga, tracing the protagonists' progress from the New York ghetto to the Hollywood mansion, and, though it is a compilation of cliches, even the most critical viewer will be enthralled by the ability of their execution. The Mel Shavelson and Jack Rose script is sprinkled with a good dose of wry humor, and it is a tribute to these men that they stay away from the corny sentimentality often found in Fifties musical biographies such as Columbia's *Eddy Duchin Story*.

The film marked the debut of Danny Thomas and was made during the first heyday of Doris Day's stardom. Upon seeing them in this film, one understands what their careers are based on.

Mario Beguiristain

# Michael

Mihaly Kertesz (Michael Curtiz) was born in Budapest, Hungary, on Christmas Eve 1888. Graduating from the Royal Theatrical Academy in 1912, little is known about his early career except that he began to work as an actor and production assistant for a variety of studios in Europe. At one time or another, he worked with such masters as Sjostrom and Stiller, and he acted in, and may have directed the first film produced in Hungary: *Me Es Holnap* (1912). His first commercial success as a director was *Bank Ban* in 1913. During World War I he shot and directed Red Cross Benefit Newsreels. After the war, he was busy directing films all over Europe: In Hungary, Austria, France, Norway, Sweden, Italy and England. During this time he also wrote sixty produced screenplays.

From 1919 to 1926, he directed 21 pictures for UFA. Undoubtedly, Curtiz contributed to, and was influenced by the classic German style of filmmaking as that country moved into its Golden Age of film in the early 1920's. Curtiz found himself directing lavish historical spectacles, such as *Sodom Und Gomorra* (1922). He developed a fine skill with many of the classic Germanic elements of filmmaking: expressionistic lighting, moving camera, and striking and effective camera angles. It was his mastery of these that eventually caught the eye of Hollywood, which at the time was fast becoming the melting pot of European filmmakers.

In 1924, Curtiz directed *Moon Of Israel* (Austria), a biblical spectacular dramatizing the life of Moses. The film was never released in this country due to the fact that Paramount did not desire competition with its own version, DeMille's *Ten Commandments*. Jack Warner, however, was doing some detective work on Curtiz and discovered that Paramount had a print of *Moon Of Israel* locked up in its vaults. He managed to screen the print and was so impressed with Curtiz' talent that he immediately offered him a contract to come and work at Warner Brothers. Thus began Michael Curtiz' career in the American motion picture industry.

Thirty-eight years old and already an established director in Europe, Curtiz began work on his first American film, *The Third Degree*, for Warner Brothers in 1927. Anxious to impress his employers and audience, the essential characteristics of the Curtiz style came across strongly in this first project. In particular, his use of the moving camera, expressionistic lighting effects to create atmosphere, striking closeups, and his unique ability to stage action sequences were the highlights of this rare film. His penchant for startling expressionistic effects resulted in one subjective shot of a bullet flying towards its victim. Many of his critics disdained his use of what they termed "cinematic stunts," but Warners responded by offering him a higher salary and a longer term contract. Curtiz proceeded to direct three more pictures in 1927. The third, *The Desired Woman*, was, strictly speaking, his last totally silent film.

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# Curtiz Biography 1888 - 1962

by B.P. Burt, Jr.

Beginning with **Tenderloin** (1928), vitaphone sequences were incorporated into the remainder of Curtiz' films. He struggled at first with the new changes brought on with sound technology. Undaunted, Curtiz in his next film, **The Gamblers** (1929), mounted the enormous soundproof camera on wheels, and with limitations, began to overcome the immobility that the new sound medium initially brought with it.

Of the nine films he directed between 1927 and 1930, Curtiz' biggest project was the lavish spectacle **Noah's Ark** (1929). The remaining films were, for the most part, all-talking and part-talking realistic melodramas and comedies starring Dolores Costello.

In 1930, Curtiz directed a minstrel drama called **Mammy** starring Al Jolson. Not only did the film have vitaphone sequences, but it also incorporated several segments shot in the two-strip Technicolor process, Curtiz' first experience with the color medium. From 1930 to 1932, Curtiz continued to direct back-stage dramas and light comedies. It is during this period that he gradually began to overcome the difficulties brought on by sound and he was finally able to restore to his films the one quintessential element of Curtiz' style - fast and furious action.

From 1932 to 1935, Curtiz directed a wide variety of subject matter. First of all, there were the films with social relevance: **Cabin In The Cotton** (1931) and **Twenty Thousand Years In Sing Sing** (1933), both starring Bette Davis. The former dramatized the conflict between plantation owners and tenant farmers, and the latter was a grim portrayal of the effects of prison life upon the individual. **The Key** (1934) dealt with the social conflicts in Ireland in the 1920's, and **Black Fury** (1935) concerned the plight of coal miners and worker-employer relationships.

During the period 1932 to 1935, Curtiz also directed two rather startling Technicolor horror films: **Doctor X** (1932) and **Mystery Of The Wax Museum** (1933). Both starred Lionel Atwill and Fay Wray, and were films full of impressive laboratory sets, wierd sound effects, and sadistic violence. It was in these films that Curtiz could most fully express his penchant for expressionistic lighting effects, violent action, and energetic pacing.

During this same period, Curtiz directed a series of detective films, such as **The Keyhole** (1933), **Private Detective 62** (1933), **The Kennel Murder Case** (1933), and **The Case Of The Curious Bride** (1935). These were swiftly-paced narratives, with Curtiz constantly forcing the pace with a multitude of moving camera shots, zip pans, straight cuts, and wipes.

In addition to the social dramas, horror films and mystery movies, Curtiz also directed women's pictures: (**Strange Love Of Molly Louvain**, 1932; **Female**, 1933), melodramas (**Mandalay**, 1934), and light comedies (**Goodbye Again**, 1933; **Little Big Shot**, 1933).

From 1935 to 1940, Curtiz made four romantic costume adventures: **Captain Blood** (1935), **The Charge Of The Light Brigade** (1936), **The Adventures Of Robin Hood** (1938), and **The Sea Hawk** (1940). The success of **Captain Blood** marked the beginning of Curtiz' period as the top director at Warners, a position he would hold throughout the rest of the Thirties and 1940's. He developed Errol Flynn into a major star, and after the swashbucklers, their association continued with three big-scale westerns: **Dodge City** (1939), **Virginia City** (1940), and **The Santa Fe Trail** (1940). In 1939, Curtiz directed an Academy Award-winning short, **The Sons Of Liberty**, a patriotic two-reeler starring Claude Rains.

Curtiz reached the peak of his career during the war years. He directed **Yankee Doodle Dandy** (1942), the Academy Award-winning musical biography of George M. Cohan, **This Is The Army** (1943), a flag-waving extravaganza which is one of the top-grossing pictures of all time, and **Casablanca** (1942), which won him the Academy Award for best director. He also directed **Mission To Moscow** (1943), a propoganda film intended to strengthen relationships with the Soviet Union, a political objective which after the war made the film the subject for considerable controversy. In 1945, Curtiz revived Joan Crawford's career with **Mildred Pierce**, a then-contemporary drama about the more tragic aspects of the American family. Curtiz turned around and in 1947 directed **Life With Father**, which romanticized the American family in all its gay-nineties glory.

In 1947, Curtiz realized a lifelong dream by becoming an independent producer. As head of Michael Curtiz Productions, he maintained autonomy but still released through Warner Brothers. With his new company, he produced and directed **The Unsuspected** (1947), **Romance On The High Seas** (1948), **My Dream Is Yours** (1949), and **Flamingo Road** (1949). Unfortunately, he ran into financial difficulty and sold his company back to Warners in 1949 and became a contract director again. He left Warners in 1953 and for the remainder of his career worked for a variety of studios. He directed Paramount's first Vista-Vision picture, **White Christmas**, in 1954. His remaining 15 films after leaving Warners are generally undistinguished but more-than-competent efforts. His last and 165th feature film was **The Commanderos** (1961). He died of cancer at the age of 74 in 1962. Suffice it to say, his influence in American filmmaking is incalculable. He was one of those rare "old masters" who was old as the film industry itself and, without doubt, contributed greatly to the course of film history.

# Michael Curtiz

## Filmography

### 1888 - 1962

*All films produced at Warner Bros. unless otherwise noted.*

- 1912—1926 Curtiz directs at least 62 films in Europe.
- 1924 Moon of Israel (Austria)
- 1926 Curtiz is brought to Hollywood by Jack Warner  
The Third Degree
- 1927 A Million Bid  
The Desired Woman  
Good Time Charlie
- 1928 Tenderloin  
Noah's Ark
- 1929 Hearts in Exile  
Glad Rag Doll  
Madonna of Avenue A  
The Gamblers
- 1930 Mammy  
Under a Texas Moon  
The Matrimonial Bed  
Bright Lights  
A Soldier's Plaything  
River's End
- 1931 Damon Des Meeres (German version of Moby Dick)  
God's Gift to Women  
The Mad Genius
- 1932 The Woman from Monte Carlo  
Alias the Doctor  
The Strange Love of Molly Louvain  
Doctor X  
Cabin in the Cotton
- 1933 Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing  
The Mystery of the Wax Museum  
The Keyhole  
Private Detective  
Goodbye Again  
The Kennel Murder Case  
Female



The Results of Mankind's Sins, as presented in NOAH'S ARK (1928)



Curtiz at Work at Warners in the Early 1930's



Richard Barthelmess and Bette Davis in CABIN IN THE COTTON (1933)



Basil Rathbone Gets the Point of ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (1938)



The Lane Sisters in the First of Their Successful Series of Light Melodramas, FOUR DAUGHTERS (1938)

- 1934 Mandalay  
British Agent  
Jimmy the Gent  
The Key
- 1935 Black Fury  
The Case of the Curious Bride  
Front Page Woman  
Little Big Shot  
Captain Blood
- 1936 The Walking Dead  
Charge of the Light Brigade
- 1937 Mountain Justice  
Stolen Holiday  
Kid Galahad  
The Perfect Specimen
- 1938 Gold is Where You Find It  
Adventures of Robin Hood  
Four Daughters  
Four's a Crowd  
Angels with Dirty Faces
- 1939 Dodge City  
Sons of Liberty (short)  
Daughters Courageous  
Four Wives  
Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex
- 1940 Virginia City  
The Sea Hawk  
The Santa Fe Trail
- 1941 The Sea Wolf  
Dive Bomber
- 1942 Captains of the Clouds  
Yankee Doodle Dandy



Lord Essex Returns Triumphantly to London in the PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX (1939)



Curtiz Directing Bette Davis in ELIZABETH AND ESSEX (1939)



Grand Scale Action in THE SEA HAWK (1940)



Location Shooting in Arizona for VIRGINIA CITY (1940)



James Cagney in YANKEE DOODLE DANDY (1942)



Curtiz Directing Olivia de Havilland and Henry O'Neill in SANTA FE TRAIL (1940)

- 1943 Casablanca  
Mission to Moscow  
This is the Army
- 1944 Passage to Marseilles  
Janie
- 1945 Mildred Pierce  
Roughly Speaking
- 1946 Night and Day
- 1947 Life with Father  
The Unsuspected
- 1948 Romance of the High Seas
- 1949 My Dream is Yours
- 1950 Young Man with a Horn  
Bright Leaf  
The Breaking Point
- 1951 Jim Thorpe – All American  
Force of Arms
- 1952 I'll See You in My Dreams  
The Story of Will Rogers
- 1953 The Jazz Singer  
Trouble Along the Way
- 1954 The Boys from Oklahoma  
The Egyptian (Fox)  
White Christmas (Paramount)
- 1955 Young at Heart  
We're no Angels (Paramount)
- 1956 The Scarlet Hour (Paramount)  
The Vagabond King (Paramount)  
The Best Things in Life are Free (Fox)
- 1957 The Helen Morgan Story
- 1958 The Proud Rebel (Buena Vista)  
King Creole (Paramount)
- 1959 The Hangman (Paramount)  
The Man in the Net (Mirisch/UA)
- 1960 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (MGA)  
A Breath of Scandal (Paramount)
- 1961 Francis of Assisi (Fox)  
The Comancheros (Fox)



Ingrid Bergman in a Typically Curtiz  
Expressionistic Environment CASABLANCA (1943)



Jane Wyman and Chorus in NIGHT AND DAY (1945)



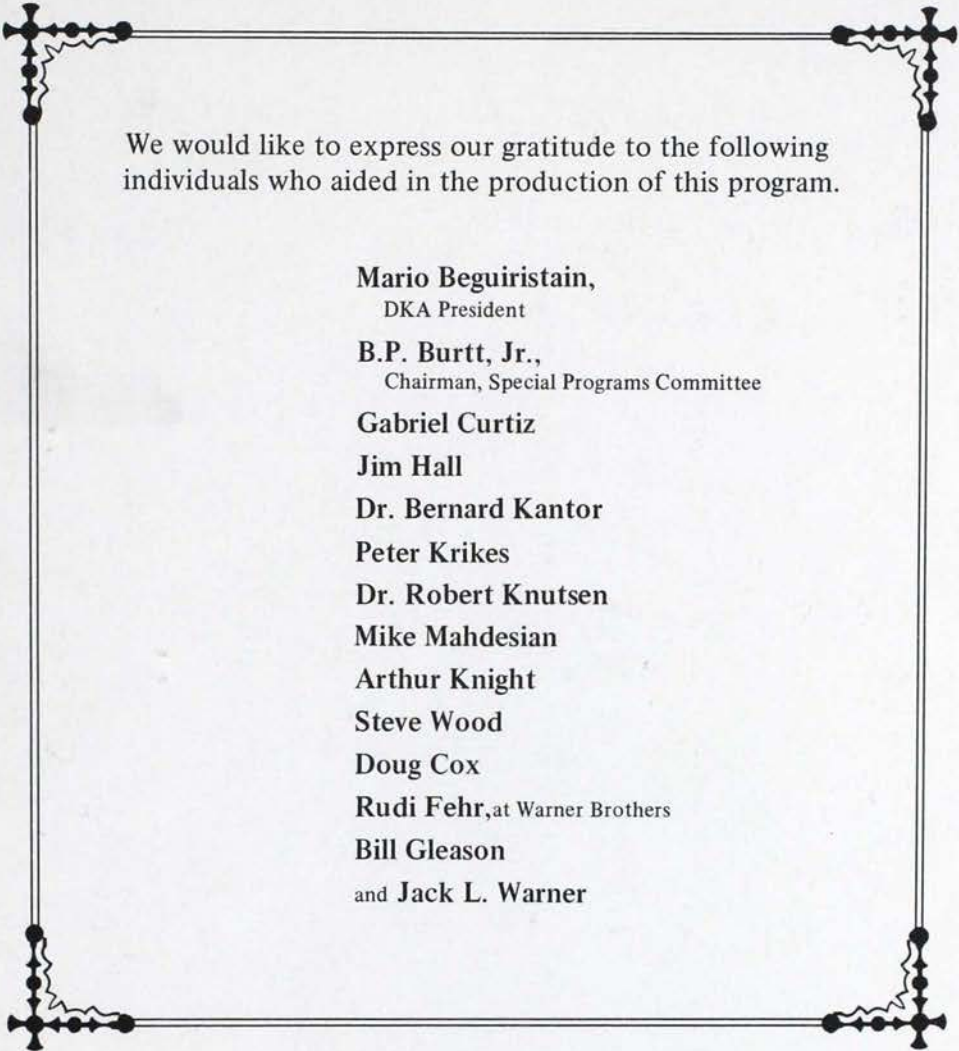
Curtiz and Some of the Cast of LIFE WITH FATHER (1947)



Jack Carson and Doris Day in  
ROMANCE ON THE HIGH SEAS (1948)



Athletic Burt Lancaster as  
JIM THORPE – ALL AMERICAN (1951)



We would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals who aided in the production of this program.

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