

Son of Universal: More Rediscovered Gems from the Laemmle Years

May 5–16, 2017

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

Screening Schedule

Young Desire. 1930. USA. Directed by Lewis D. Collins. Screenplay by Winifred Reeve, from a play by William R. Doyle. With Mary Nolan, William Janney, Mae Busch. Another of Hollywood's tragic blondes, Mary Nolan was a Ziegfeld Girl who fled to Germany in the wake of a scandal, where she changed her name to "Imogene Robertson" and appeared in 17 films before returning to the US and landing a 1928 contract with Universal. Though addicted to drugs and difficult to work with, Nolan was a memorably haunted presence in a handful of films, including this early sound melodrama in which she stars as a carnival hoochie-coochie dancer who dreams of quitting the trade and marrying a rich young man. The film's startling conclusion anticipates Nolan's own unhappy fate. 35mm. 68 min.

Friday, May 5, 5:00 p.m., T2

Sunday, May 14, 4:30 p.m., T2

Outside the Law. 1930. USA. Directed by Tod Browning. Screenplay by Browning, Garret Fort. With Edward G. Robinson, Mary Nolan, Owen Moore. Tod Browning returned to Universal to direct this early sound remake of his 1920 Lon Chaney vehicle, this time with Edward G. Robinson in a pre-*Little Caesar* role as a cigar-chomping gangster who tries to muscle in on a bank robbery planned by an up-and-coming crook (Owen Moore) and his affectless moll (Mary Nolan, top-billed). Browning's lowlife predilections come into rich conflict with middle-class propriety when Moore and Nolan go into hiding, disguised as a pair of young newlyweds. This is arguably a more personal film than Browning's next assignment for Universal, *Dracula*. 35mm. 70 min.

Friday, May 5, 7:00 p.m., T2

Sunday, May 14, 2:30 p.m., T2

Universal Shorts, Program One. Universal, like other studios, released dozens of one- and two-reel shorts every year to support feature programs. However, none of their over 300 shorts were ever rereleased or sold to television or home markets. For the very first time since their initial release over eight decades ago, MoMA and Universal are pleased to present, in new prints from the vaults, a total of 11 of these long-unseen gems, in two programs. HD video. Program approx. 100 min. **Introduced by Ron Hutchinson, Founder, the Vitaphone Project.**

I Know Everybody and Everybody's Racket. 1933. USA. Directed by Monte Brice. With Walter Winchell, Ruth Etting, Paul Whiteman

School for Swing. 1936. USA. Directed by Milton Schwarzwald. With Sylvia Froos, Bert Gordon

Rolling Along. 1930. USA. Directed by Albert Ray. With Charlie Murray, George Sidney

Television Highlights. 1936. USA. Directed by Milton Schwarzwald. With Henny Youngman

Hunting Trouble. 1933. USA. Directed by James W. Horne. With Shaw and Lee, Louise Fazenda

The Big Benefit. 1933. USA. Directed by Lynn Shores. With Bill Robinson, Mayer and Evans

Saturday, May 6, 4:00 p.m., T2

Wednesday, May 10, 7:00 p.m., T1

Sensation Seekers. 1927. USA. Written and directed by Lois Weber, from a story by Ernest Pascal. With Billie Dove, Raymond Bloomer, Huntley Gordon. Once again, MoMA is proud to host Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks Orchestra. This time they're performing a newly arranged jazz score for the world premiere of Universal's new digital restoration of *Sensation Seekers*, an important late film by the most celebrated female director of the silent era, Lois Weber. Filming her own original screenplay, Weber relates a classic Jazz Age tale of flaming youth, centered on the scandal-prone Long Island socialite "Egypt" Hagen (Billie Dove) and her redemptive relationship with a sympathetic clergyman (Raymond Bloomer). Frenzied dancing in roadhouse speakeasies alternates with chastely passionate soul-searching, leading to a slam-bang finish aboard a storm-tossed yacht. DCP. 70 min.

Saturday, May 6, 7:30 p.m., T1

Tuesday, May 9, 7:00 p.m., T1

Universal Shorts, Program Two. Universal, like other studios, released dozens of one- and two-reel shorts every year to support feature programs. However, none of their over 300 shorts were ever rereleased or sold to television or home markets. For the very first time since their initial release over eight decades ago, MoMA and Universal are pleased to present, in new prints from the vaults, a total of 11 of these long-unseen gems, in two programs. HD video. Program approx. 100 min. **Introduced by Ron Hutchinson, Founder, the Vitaphone Project.**

Flippen's Frolics. 1936. USA. Directed by Milton Schwarzwald. With J. C. Flippen, Baby Rose Marie

Your Technocracy and Mine. 1933. USA. Screenplay by Robert Benchley. With Benchley

Hollywood Trouble. 1935. USA. Directed by Jack Townley. With The Thaliens

Ed Sullivan's Headliners. 1934. USA. Directed by Milton Schwarzwald. With Ed Sullivan, Ben Pollack, Block and Sully

Good Time Henry. 1934. USA. Directed by James W. Horne. With Henry Armetta

Sunday, May 7, 2:30 p.m., T1

Monday, May 15, 7:00 p.m., T1

Ladies Must Love. 1933. USA. Directed by E. A. Dupont. Screenplay by Robert Harris, William Huribut, John Francis Larkin. With June Knight, Sally O'Neil, Dorothy Burgess, Mary Carlisle. Three Broadway gold-diggers (O'Neil, Burgess, and Carlisle) sign a contract to share their ill-gotten gains, and trick their more morally upstanding roommate, the sparkling June Knight, into signing it as well—and then try to enforce it when Knight falls for a Park Avenue playboy (Neil Hamilton). German director E. A. Dupont (*Variety*) brings more than a touch of Weimar cynicism to this thoroughly pre-Code tale. At one point, the down-on-their-luck roommates go to work as "hostesses" in a "nightclub" operated by one "Madame Fifi" (Maude Eburne), where their duties clearly entail more than checking coats. 35mm. 70 min.

Sunday, May 7, 5:30 p.m., T1

Friday, May 12, 5:00 p.m., T1

Sea Spoilers. 1936. USA. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. Screenplay by George Waggner, Dorrell McGowan, Stuart E. McGowan. With John Wayne, Nan Grey, William Bakewell, Fuzzy Knight. Relegated to B-grade Westerns after the failure of his big-budget debut *The Big Trail*, John Wayne began the climb back to "A" status with a little-known series of Universal programmers produced by Paul Malvern. Directed by Poverty Row stalwart Frank R. Strayer, *Sea Spoilers* was the first of Wayne's Universal efforts. In this breezy, high-seas adventure set off the Alaskan coast, Coast Guard commander Wayne searches for his fiancée (Nan Grey), who has been kidnapped by seal poachers. 35mm. 63 min.

Monday, May 8, 4:00 p.m., T2

Million Dollar Ransom. 1934. USA. Directed by Murray Roth. Screenplay by William R. Lipman, Ben Ryan, from a story by Damon Runyon. With Edward Arnold, Mary Carlisle, Phillips Holmes. Star-poor Universal promoted the burly character actor Edward Arnold to leading man with this Damon Runyon Broadway tale, and the studio found its faith rewarded with Arnold's engaging performance as a reformed bootlegger drawn back into the underworld. Phillips Holmes is the Park Avenue playboy who hires Arnold to stage his own kidnapping, taking the opportunity to fall in love with Arnold's innocent daughter (Mary Carlisle). Horror fans will recognize the elaborate, expressionistic black-mass set from Edgar G. Ulmer's *The Black Cat*, repurposed here as a nightspot appropriately named "The Angle Club." 35mm. 67 min.

Tuesday, May 9, 5:00 p.m., T1

Saturday, May 13, 4:00 p.m., T1

Don't Bet on Love. 1933. USA. Directed by Murray Roth. Screenplay by Roth, Howard E. Rogers, Ben Ryan. Multitalented Murray Roth had a resume that included writing lyrics for George Gershwin, writing scripts for Fox and Warners (including the first "all-talking" picture, *Lights of New York*), and several years as the "Director in Chief" of Warner Bros.'s Brooklyn studios, where he directed countless Vitaphone shorts starring Broadway headliners. Promoted to features by Carl Laemmle, Jr., Roth debuted with this tough-minded romantic drama, with Lew Ayres as a Manhattan plumber's son addicted to horse racing, and Ginger Rogers, still fighting her way out of the chorus, as his perennially disappointed fiancée. 62 min.

Wednesday, May 10, 5:00 p.m., T1

Saturday, May 13, 2:30 p.m., T1

Destination Unknown. 1932. USA. Directed by Tay Garnett. Screenplay by Tom Buckingham. With Pat O'Brien, Ralph Bellamy, Betty Compson. Of all the early Depression-era movies about mysterious, divine influences intervening to save American society, Tay Garnett's 1932 film is at once the most sordid and most stylish. Garnett and his frequent writing partner Tom Buckingham (*Her Man*) imagine the nation as a rumrunning ship adrift in a dead calm, its desperate crew (lead by Alan Hale) held at bay by a heartless gangster (Pat O'Brien) who controls the dwindling fresh water supply. But there is one passenger on board whose name does not appear on the manifest: The Stowaway, played in an otherworldly aura by Ralph Bellamy. The film was shot largely on an actual yacht suspended by cables on a soundstage, with the camera mounted on the giant crane built for Universal's Broadway. 35mm. 66 min.

Friday, May 12, 7:00 p.m., T1

Monday, May 15, 5:00 p.m., T1

Chinatown Squad. 1935. USA. Directed by Murray Roth. Screenplay by Dore Schary, Lawrence G. Blochman, Ben Ryan. With Lyle Talbot, Toshia Mori, Leslie Fenton. A virtual encyclopedia of dated notions of the exotic Orient, this spirited programmer features Lyle Talbot as a detective turned tour guide drawn into political intrigue in San Francisco's Chinatown. Much of this atmospheric thriller was filmed on location by director Murray Roth, whose last film this proved to be. (He died two years later at the age of 44, depriving Hollywood of a promising talent.) Among the few Asians in the cast is the remarkable Toshia Mori, a Japanese-born beauty who danced for Theodore Kosloff and played Barbara Stanwyck's rival in *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*.

The Museum of Modern Art

Department of Communications

Saturday, May 13, 6:00 p.m., T1

Tuesday, May 16, 7:00 p.m., T2