

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 03 • NUMBER 03 • MAY/JUNE 2009

MARY PICKFORD ON TOUR!

The Library of Congress (LOC) is celebrating the 100th anniversary of legendary actress Mary Pickford's screen debut with a traveling film series highlighting some of her greatest movies. One of the upcoming screenings will be held on **Sunday, May 31st at 2pm** at the Mount Pony Theater in Culpepper, VA with two pictures restored by LOC; the 1926 feature *Sparrows* and the 1909 short *They Will Elope*.

The tour began on April 25th in Detroit, MI at the historic Redford Theater. Neither the economic downturn nor the evening's stormy weather could dampen the enthusiasm of the 437 people who turned out to see Pickford in one of her earliest films from 1909 and her last silent feature, 1927's *My Best Girl*. Pickford,

a theater actress since early childhood, took a job at New York's Biograph Studio in April 1909 and, in the words of film scholar Benjamin Hampton, "became a focal point for an entire industry." She was a talented performer and a savvy business

woman who became Hollywood's first movie star and a powerful behind-the-scenes player. In 1919, she co-founded the film studio **United Artists** with Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith. Pickford's career lasted a remarkable twenty-four years, nearly the entire span of the silent era, and she appeared in an estimated 205 films.

The LOC is home to the world's largest collection of Pickford films, including her personal collection

which she donated to the Library in 1946. In 1983, LOC named the Madison building's film theater in her honor. Future film tour stops hosted by Christel Schmidt of the LOC's publishing office include the Alex Theater in Glendale, CA on **July 12th**, the

Toronto International Film Festival on **September 19th**, the La Paloma Theater in Encinitas, CA **November 6th-8th**, and the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center on **November 20th** – feature and short subjects are TBD. (Info & image courtesy LOC)



Raoul Walsh

A RIBBON OF DREAMS: MINISERIES IN DEVELOPMENT

David Chase, multi-award-winning creator of "The Sopranos," is returning to HBO to develop a miniseries about the invention of cinema and subsequent growth of the Hollywood film industry.

Entitled **A RIBBON OF DREAMS**, the miniseries will begin in 1913 and follow two men, one a college-educated mechanical engineer, the other a cowboy with a violent past, who form an unlikely producing partnership and together become pioneers and then powers for a time in motion pictures.

Chase will write and executive produce the miniseries, as well as direct the initial episodes. Paramount Pictures chairman and CEO Brad Grey, who executive produced the landmark HBO series "The Sopranos" with Chase, will also serve as an executive producer on the miniseries.

The miniseries will follow the two main characters as they begin as employees of D.W. Griffith, and then cross career paths with John Ford, John Wayne, Raoul Walsh, Bette

Davis, Billy Wilder and others who gave shape to Hollywood as it grew from the age of rough-hewn silent Westerns, to the golden era of talkies and the studio system, to the auteur movement, to television, and finally to the present day. A RIBBON OF DREAMS takes its name from Orson Welles' description, "A film is a ribbon of dreams." (Excerpted press release 3/16/09, www.timewarner.com/corp/newsroom)

MOVIES & MUSIC ON THE LAWN Baton Rouge, LA

One of Baton Rouge Gallery's most beloved programs, *Movies and Music on the Lawn*, will kick off this year's series on **Saturday, May 30th at 8:00 p.m.** The year's theme, *Familiar Faces*, will focus on beloved and well-known stories in silent film versions not as well known.



Everyone knows the famous 1939 *Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland, but Movies & Music on the Lawn won't be showing that film. Instead, a comedy version of *The Wizard of Oz* from 1925 is scheduled and it depicts the famous story of a Kansas girl in an enchanted world of wonder.

The film has a completely different plot, set in the magical Land

of Oz that focuses mainly on the character of the Scarecrow, played by the films director, Larry Seimon. Young Dorothy is played by Dorothy Dawn, but Dawn's version of the farm girl is an 18 year old caught in a love triangle between the Scarecrow and the Tin Man, played by a youthful Oliver Hardy.

With an intriguing story and stunning special effects, this version of the classic tale will delight viewers of all ages. As always with Movies & Music on the Lawn, live musicians will accompany the silent film with both rehearsed and improvisational material sure to enhance the experience. This evening will feature the musical style of *The Zeelanders Group*. Admission is \$5 to all non-gallery members and includes free popcorn, but those with a gallery membership will pay nothing!

Other upcoming films featuring "Familiar Faces" include *The Mark of Zorro* (June 27th), *Peter Pan* (July 25th), *The Phantom of the Opera* (August 29th), *Tarzan* (September 26th), and *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (October 31st). (www.batonrougegallery.org)

"THE WHITE SISTER" U.S. BROADCAST PREMIERE ON TCM

Director Henry King's epic production of *The White Sister* will have its premiere broadcast on TCM North America on **Sunday, May 31st at 12:00 AM EST.** The first American movie to be filmed entirely overseas will also debut a new musical score composed by Garth Neustadter who earned first prize honors in the 2007 TCM Young Film Composers Competition. The Warner Brothers digital restoration team responsible for making *The White Sister* avail-

able for broadcast originally wanted a piano score for the 134 minute feature, but gave Neustadter the option to add additional instrumentation. It was an offer that was quickly accepted and Neustadter rounded up the musical talents of nearly 20 faculty and students at the Lawrence University conservatory to contribute to the composition.



The film stars Lillian Gish as Angela Chiaromonte, an heir to a vast Italian estate, who is left penniless and homeless when her father dies and her half-sister destroys the will dividing the property between the two daughters. Angela's fiancé, Giovanni Severini, played by the dashing Ronald Colman, heads off to war in Africa but promises marriage upon his return. When reports of his death arrive, Angela joins a convent only to later discover the news was in error. Severini instead was taken prisoner and after escaping from captivity, returns to Italy to persuade Angela to renounce her vows. (Info per <http://blogs.lawrence.edu/news/2008> and www.tcm.com)



Hearst Compound Transforms Into Community Beach House

By Martha Groves (excerpted article)

SANTA MONICA, CA. With its stately colonnade and sweeping staircases, the three-story U-shaped beach mansion owned by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst exuded grandeur. Hearst lived there

philanthropist whose Annenberg Foundation provided \$27.5 million of the nearly \$35-million cost to build and furnish the attraction.

In 1926, the married Hearst assembled 15 beach lots to create a compound for his beloved Davies,



in style with his mistress, silent-film star Marion Davies, and in the 1920s and '30s they entertained such bright lights as Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Cary Grant & Gloria Swanson.

On Saturday, April 25th 2009, where entertainment royalty once cavorted during Hollywood's Golden Age, commoners turned out in force for the opening of the **Annenberg Community Beach House** that features volleyball courts, rooms for community and private events, a playground, and the same elaborately tiled swimming pool where Davies splashed with Charlie Chaplin.

"I remember having great days as a girl at the beach when it was the Sand & Sea Club," said Wallis Annenberg, the TV Guide heiress and

whom he had met 11 years earlier when she was a chorus girl on Broadway. In 1928, they moved into their Georgian Revival main house, at what is now 415 Pacific Coast Highway. Four other houses were occupied by Davies' family, long-term guests and more than 30 full-time servants. All told, the complex included 110 bedrooms and 55 bathrooms – but by 1945, after 17 years of memorable merrymaking, Davies became embroiled in a property tax dispute and sold the compound to investors for \$600,000.

Hearst died in 1951 and Davies a decade later. By then, the property had gone through many iterations and in April 1957, pieces of the main house were put up for sale. Soon af-

ter, the house was demolished. The state bought the land in 1959 and leased it to the city of Santa Monica, which in turn leased it to the private Sand & Sea Club from 1960 to 1990. During the 1994 Northridge earthquake, a brick chimney crashed through the roof of the northernmost house, known as the Guest House, the sole remaining structure from the Davies era.

Restoring the heavily damaged pool tiles and rehabilitating that mothballed house, were just two of the tasks facing Frederick Fisher & Partners. "A strong idea came to me early on, to create a ghost of a mansion," Fisher said. In front of the pool he placed a colonnade of 16 white concrete columns to stand in for the main house, and the rehabilitated Guest House, will offer interactive exhibits about Davies, Hearst and Hollywood, with a soundtrack of laughter and tinkling champagne glasses. (Full article at www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-beach-house19-2009apr19,0,793374.story?track=rss)

CINÉCONCERTS

May 19th – June 5th 2009

BORDEAUX, FRANCE. The Cinéconcerts return once again to revive motion picture masterpieces heralding back to the beginning of cinema. For this ninth edition, the **Jean Vigo Centre** will present D.W. Griffith's herculean *Intolerance*, a few humorous Buster Keaton pictures, and lesser known films like Fritz Lang's wonderful *Der müde Tod* from 1921, and Raymond Bernard's outstanding *Miracle des loups* (Miracle of the Wolves) from 1924. From the vigorous rock n' roll of the SLEEPERS, to the energizing gypsy swing of POUM TCHACK, these

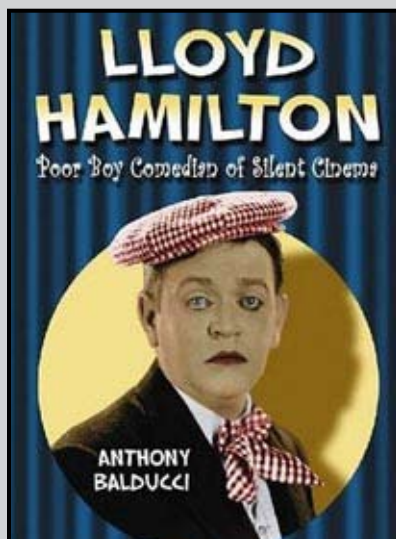
artists play with a sublime passion that fuses music and images into pure magic. To view the entire film and concert schedule, please visit www.jeanvigo.com.

BOOK CORNER

LLOYD HAMILTON: POOR BOY COMEDIAN OF SILENT CINEMA

By Anthony Balducci

At first glance, Lloyd Hamilton was simply a large, baby-faced comic who wore a checkered cap and walked like a duck. Beyond the surface, however, Hamilton had much more to offer than an iconic look and persona. In his performances, Hamilton demonstrated keen timing and an inventive mind, providing humor rich in both emotion and self-observation for a career that spanned over 20 years. But perhaps most importantly, Hamilton was greatly admired by his fellow comics as a true "comedian's comedian," receiving overwhelming praise from no less than Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and other comic greats.



This book explores Hamilton's life and work, beginning with his conservative middle-class childhood, which set him apart from most early slapstick comedy stars who came from theatrical backgrounds with broken or poor immigrant families. The story travels through the comic's early entry into show business as a theatre extra, his most memorable role as the stocky, crass half of silent comedy's "Ham and Bud" duo, his first feature film *The Darker Self*, and many other career benchmarks.

Author Anthony Balducci also examines Hamilton's troublesome private life and his descent into alcoholism, evaluating how the decline of Hamilton's health and career led to his death at the age of 43. (www.mcfarlandpub.com)

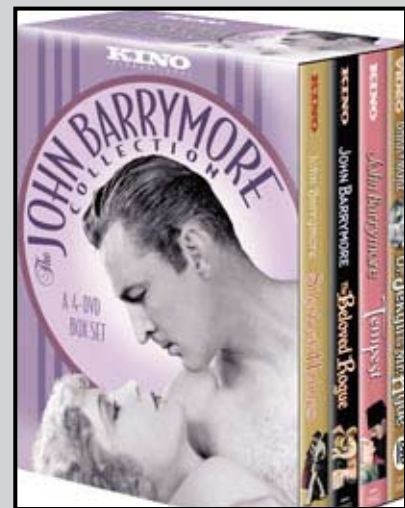
ON DVD

JOHN BARRYMORE COLLECTION

Headlining the upcoming John Barrymore Collection is the first time release of *Sherlock Holmes* (1922), a feature-length adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's famous adventures. *Sherlock Holmes* was believed to be lost, surviving only in the form of a few stills, until a battered and incomplete print surfaced in the mid 1970s. However, it wasn't until recently that a viewable version was meticulously restored at the George Eastman House Motion Picture Department in Rochester, N.Y. This DVD was mastered from the GEH restoration and arrives with a new score by silent-film composer Ben Model performed on the Miditzer Virtual Theatre Organ.

Completing the box set are the

Kino releases of the United Artists productions *The Beloved Rogue* (1927), also starring German silent master Conrad Veidt, and *Tempest* (1928), a lavishly produced romance set in Russia during the final days of the Tsarist autocracy. The fourth silent production in this set is the previously released *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (1920), also headlined by John Barrymore. The newly assembled collection will be available for pre-order on June 9th with a street date set for **July 7th, 2009**. (www.kino.com)



MOMENTS IN SILENCE

June 1, 1913 – D.W. Griffith begins filming *Judith of Bethulia*.

June 16, 1916 – Famous-Players-Lasky Corporation established.

July 1, 1919 – Mary Miles Minter signs contract with Paramount.

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