

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## FIRST TIME AMERICAN MUSICAL FILM RETROSPECTIVE FEATURES EARLY MUSICALS NOT SHOWN IN FORTY YEARS

Forty musical films, twenty of which have not been seen here in four decades, are part of a major retrospective, titled "The Roots of the American Musical Film (1927-1932)," to be presented over a seven week period, starting Thursday, June 17, at The Museum of Modern Art.

Covering the first five years of sound movies, the retrospective, which is the first of its kind, includes such classic film musicals as "Whoopee," starring Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson in "The Jazz Singer," the four Marx Brothers in "The Cocoanuts" and "Rio Rita," starring Bebe Daniels and John Boles, with the famous comedy team Bert Wheeler and Robert Wooley. The music for these films, many of them originally Broadway plays, was provided by Irving Berlin, Sigmund Romberg, De Sylva, Brown and Henderson, Jerome Kern and George Gershwin among other famous composers.

This unique series was conceived and assembled by Miles Kreuger, theatre and film historian, author of an 800 page volume "The American Musical Film," to be published by E. P. Dutton this fall. Mr. Kreuger, who has one of the world's largest research collections on American musical plays and films, will be present on the opening night to discuss the growth of this indigenous type of American film art "from the technical experimentation of 'The Jazz Singer' in 1927 to the exquisite sophistication and flamboyant artistry of Rouben Mamoulian's 'Love Me Tonight,' produced only five years later."

Burrowing into film vaults from Hollywood to Europe, the Museum has unearthed an original Technicolor print of Marilyn Miller in "Sally;" and from Czechoslovakia has come the all-Technicolor print of Sam Goldwyn's "Whoopee," featuring almost all the principals of the Flo Ziegfeld stage production. This legendary musical marks the screen debut of dance director Busby Berkeley, whose show girls include Betty Grable and Virginia Bruce.

The American Film Institute provided Romberg's "The Desert Song," the earliest stage operetta filmed with sound, and "The Dance of Life," a film version of the play "Burlesque," with Nancy Carroll and its original Broadway star Hal Skelly.

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M. G. M. has loaned the original print of Marion Davies' first talkie "Marianne," a charming love story of soldiers in occupied France during World War I. This film has been unseen since its original release in 1929.

The vaults of 20th Century-Fox were the source of many "lost treasures," among them "Sunnyside Up" and "High Society Blues," both starring the team of Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell; "Song O' My Heart," featuring the celebrated tenor John McCormack; and the virtually unknown Bea Lillie farce, "Are You There." Mr. Kreuger describes "Are You There" as "a wildly screwball farce with such outrageous humor that it resembles the Beatles' 'Help!' far more than its 1930 contemporaries." He believes it is a forgotten masterpiece and that the Museum's showing will be its world premiere.

The mood of the retrospective ranges from the madcap comedy of Fanny Brice in "Be Yourself" to lavish operettas like "Sweet Kitty Bellairs" and "Golden Dawn," the latter starring Noah Beery, known for his dramatic roles. Other outstanding samples of the musical genre are the backstage stories, like "On With the Show," with Betty Compson, Joe E. Brown and Ethel Waters, who sings "Am I Blue?" There are, too, the all-star revues: "The Show of Shows" with 70 stars, including John Barrymore, Beatrice Lillie, Myrna Loy and Rin-Tin-Tin. In the same year "The Hollywood Revue of 1929" was produced, boasting a mere 50 stars, among them Joan Crawford, John Gilbert, Norma Shearer, Marie Dressler and Buster Keaton. "King of Jazz," with Paul Whiteman and The Rhythm Boys (one of whom is Bing Crosby) was released the following year. This was the era of stars.

Of particular social interest, however, is the rediscovery of the first all-Negro talkie, "Hearts in Dixie," which Mr. Kreuger refers to as "a beautifully acted and photographed depiction of plantation life in the Old South." He feels that the rediscovery of this film will cause its complete re-evaluation in cinema history since it has often been maligned by critics who know it "only by hearsay." Furthermore, "Hearts in Dixie," he points out, led to the production of the familiar King Vidor film "Hallelujah;" and both films are scheduled for consecutive days to invite comparison, although this will be the first public showing of "Hearts in Dixie" in forty-two years.

Other outstanding films in this unique retrospective are: "Applause," directed by

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Rouben Mamoulian, with Helen Morgan, and Cecil B. DeMille's only musical "Madam Satan," in which Reginald Denny, Kay Johnson, Lillian Roth and Roland Young appear.

One of the choice morsels of the retrospective is De Sylva, Brown and Henderson's "Just Imagine," fondly remembered as a tongue-in-cheek science-fiction musical about the world of 1980, fifty years in the future.

The schedule of films follows:

Thursday June 17 (8:00) WHOOPÉE (1930). Directed by Thornton Freeland. Dances staged by Busby Berkeley. With Eddie Cantor, Ethel Shutta. Songs by Walter Donaldson and Gus Kahn. Courtesy Czech Film Archive. ca. 80 min. In Technicolor.

Friday, June 18 (2:00, 5:30) THE JAZZ SINGER (1927). Directed by Alan Crosland. With Al Jolson, May McAvoy, Warner Oland. Courtesy of UA. 88 min.

Saturday, June 19 (3:00, 5:30) WHOOPÉE (see June 17).

Sunday, June 20 (2:00, 5:30) THE BROADWAY MELODY (1929). Directed by Harry Beaumont. With Charles King, Anita Page, Bessie Love. Songs by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown. Courtesy Films, Inc.

Monday, June 21 (1:00) THE SINGING FOOL (1928). Directed by Lloyd Bacon. With Al Jolson, Betty Bronson. Songs include "Sonny Boy." Courtesy of UA.

Tuesday, June 22 (2:00) THE SINGING FOOL (see June 21).

Wednesday, June 23 (2:00, 5:30) THE COCOANUTS (1929). Directed by Joseph Santley, Robert Florey. With the Four Marx Brothers, Oscar Shaw, Mary Eaton. Songs by Irving Berlin. Courtesy Universal-MCA.

Friday, June 25 (2:00, 5:30) BROADWAY (1929). Directed by Paul Fejos. With Glenn Tryon, Evelyn Brent, Merna Kennedy. Courtesy of American Film Institute Collection, Universal-MCA.

Saturday, June 26 (3:00, 5:30) ON WITH THE SHOW (1929). Directed by Alan Crosland. With Betty Compson, Sally O'Neil, Joe E. Brown, Ethel Waters. Courtesy of UA.

Sunday, June 27 (2:00, 5:30) THE DESERT SONG (1929). Directed by Roy del Ruth. With John Boles, Louise Fazenda, Myrna Loy, Carlotta King. Songs by Sigmund Romberg. Courtesy of American Film Institute Collection, UA.

Monday, June 28 (1:00) THE DESERT SONG (see June 27).

Tuesday, June 29 (2:00) THE HOLLYWOOD REVUE OF 1929 (1929). Directed by Charles Reisner. With over 50 MGM stars including Joan Crawford, John Gilbert, Norma Shearer, Marie Dressler, Buster Keaton, Marion Davies. Courtesy Films, Inc.

Wednesday, June 30 (2:00, 5:30) THE HOLLYWOOD REVUE OF 1929 (see June 29).

Thursday, July 1 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) HEARTS IN DIXIE (1929). Directed by Paul Sloane. With Clarence Muse, Eugene Jackson, Stepin Fetchit, Gertrude Howard. The first all-Negro talking picture. Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox.

(Schedule continued on back)

- Friday, July 2 (2:00, 5:30) HALLELUJAH (1929). Directed by King Vidor. With Daniel L. Haynes, Nina Mae McKinney, Victoria Spivey. Songs by Irving Berlin.
- Saturday, July 3 (5:30) SUNNYSIDE UP (1929). Directed by David Butler. With Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell, El Brendel. Songs by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson.
- Sunday, July 4 (2:00, 5:30) RIO RITA (1929). Directed by Luther Reed. With Bebe Daniels, John Boles, Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey. Songs by Harry Tierney and Joseph McCarthy. Courtesy of MGM. Scenes in Technicolor.
- Monday, July 5 (1:00) RIO RITA (see July 4).
- Tuesday, July 6 (2:00) APPLAUSE (1929). Directed by Rouben Mamoulian. With Helen Morgan, Joan Peers, Fuller Mellish Jr. Courtesy Pacific Film Archive, Universal-MCA.
- Wednesday, July 7 (2:00, 5:30) MARIANNE (1929). Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. With Marion Davies, Cliff Edwards, Lawrence Gray, Benny Rubin. Courtesy of MGM.
- Thursday, July 8 (2:00) APPLAUSE (see July 6).
- Thursday, July 8 (5:30, 8:00) DEVIL MAY CARE (1929). Directed by Sidney Franklin. With Ramon Novarro, Dorothy Jordon, Marion Harris. Courtesy MGM. 90 min.
- Friday, July 9 (2:00, 5:30) THE LOVE PARADE (1929). Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. With Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald, Lupino Lane, Lillian Roth. Songs by Victor Schertzinger and Clifford Grey. 110 min.
- Saturday, July 10 (3:00, 5:30) THE SHOW OF SHOWS (1929). Directed by John Adolphi. With over 70 stars including John Barrymore, Beatrice Lillie, Myrna Loy, Nick Lucas, Rin-Tin-Tin. Courtesy of UA.
- Sunday, July 11 (2:00, 5:30) SALLY (1929). Directed by John Francis Dillon. With Marilyn Miller, Alexander Gray, Joe E. Brown, Pert Kelton. Songs by Jerome Kern. Courtesy of UA In Technicolor.
- Monday, July 12 (1:00) SALLY (see July 11).
- Tuesday, July 13 (2:00) LORD BYRON OF BROADWAY. (1930). Directed by William Nigh, Harr Beaumont. With Charles Kaley, Cliff Edwards. Courtesy of MGM. 78 min.
- Wednesday, July 14 (2:00, 5:30) CHASING RAINBOWS. (1930). Directed by Charles Reisner. With Jack Benny, Marie Dressler, Charles King Bessie Love. Courtesy of MGM. 96 min.
- Thursday, July 15 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) THE VAGABOND KING (1930). Directed by Ludwig Berger. With Dennis King, Jeanette MacDonald, O. P. Heggie, Lillian Roth. Songs by Rudolf Friml. Courtesy Universal-MCA. 104 min.
- Friday, July 16 (2:00, 5:30) SONG O' MY HEART (1930). Directed by Frank Borzage. With John McCormack, Alice Joyce, Maureen O'Sullivan. Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox, American Film Institute Collection, The John McCormack Association of Greater Kansas City, Inc. 85 min.
- Saturday, July 17 (3:00, 5:30) PARAMOUNT ON PARADE (1930). Eleven directors including Ernst Lubitsch, Victor Schertzinger. With almost 100 stars including Maurice Chevalier, Helen Kane, Nancy Carroll, Clara Bow, Ruth Chatterton. Courtesy Universal-MCA. 102 min.
- Sunday, July 18 (2:00, 5:30) KING OF JAZZ (1930). Directed by John Murray Anderson. With Paul Whiteman and almost 50 stars including John Boles, Bing Crosby, Laura La Plante. Score includes Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Courtesy of American Film Institute Collection, Library of Congress, Universal-MCA. 105 min. In Technicolor.

Monday, July 19 (1:00) HIGH SOCIETY BLUES (1930). Directed by David Butler. With Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell, Louise Fadenza. Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox. 102 min.

Tuesday, July 20 (2:00) HIGH SOCIETY BLUES (see July 19).

Wednesday, July 21 (2:00, 5:30) SHOW GIRL IN HOLLYWOOD (1930). Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. With Alice White, Jack Mulhall, Ford Sterling. Guests: Al Jolson, Ruby Keeler, Loretta Young, Noah Beery. Courtesy of Herbert Graff. 80 min.

Thursday, July 22 (2:00, 5:30) GOLDEN DAWN (1930). Directed by Roy Enright. With Walter Woolf, Vivienne Segal, Noah Beery, Alice Gentle. Songs by Emmerich Kalman, Oscar Hammerstein II, Otto Harbach. Courtesy of UA. 82 min.

Friday, July 23 (2:00, 5:30) MOVIE TONE FOLLIES OF 1930 (1930). Directed by Benjamin Stoloff. With El Brendel, Marjorie White, Frank Richardson. Courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox. 83 min.

Saturday, July 24 (3:00, 5:30) GOOD NEWS (1930). Directed by Nick Grinde, Edgar J. MacGregor. With Bessie Love, Mary Lawlor, Cliff Edwards, Stanley Smith. Songs by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson. Courtesy of MGM. ca. 77 min.

Sunday, July 25 (2:00, 5:30) MADAM SATAN (1930). Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. With Kay Johnson, Reginald Denny, Lillian Roth, Roland Young. Courtesy of Films, Inc. 80 min.

Monday, July 26 (1:00) MONTE CARLO (1930). Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. With Jack Buchanan, Jeanette MacDonald, ZaSu Pitts. Songs by Richard A. Whiting. Courtesy Universal-MCA. 90 min.

Tuesday, July 27 (2:00) MONTE CARLO (see July 26).

Wednesday, July 28 (2:00, 5:30) SWEET KITTY BELLAIRS (1930). Directed by Alfred E. Green. With Ernest Torrence, Walter Pidgeon, Claudia Dell, June Collyer. Courtesy of UA. 72 min.

Thursday, July 29 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) BE YOURSELF (1930). Directed by Thornton Freeland. With Fanny Brice, Robert Armstrong, Harry Green. With selected musical excerpts. Courtesy of Paul Killiam. ca. 100 min.

Friday, July 30 (2:00, 5:30) THE DANCE OF LIFE (1929). Directed by John Cromwell, A. Edward Sutherland. With Hal Skelly, Nancy Carroll, Oscar Levant. Courtesy of American Film Institute Collection. Scenes in Technicolor.

Saturday, July 31 (3:00, 5:30) JUST IMAGINE (1930). Directed by David Butler. With El Brendel, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Garrick. Songs by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson.

Sunday, August 1 (2:00, 5:30) ARE YOU THERE (1930). Directed by Hamilton MacFadden. With Beatrice Lillie, John Garrick, Olga Baclanova. Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox.

Monday, August 2 (1:00) THE BIG BROADCAST (1932). Directed by Frank Tuttle. With Stuart Erwin, Bing Crosby, Leila Hyams, Burns and Allen and over a dozen radio stars including Arthur Tracy, Kate Smith, Mills Brothers, Boswell Sisters. Courtesy Universal-MCA. 78 min.

Tuesday, August 3 (2:00) THE BIG BROADCAST (see August 2).

Wednesday, August 4 (2:00, 5:30) LOVE ME TONIGHT (1932). Directed by Rouben Mamoulian. With Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald. Songs by Rogers & Hart. Courtesy Universal-MCA.

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Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53, New York 10019. Tel (212) 956-7296.