

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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FRANK CAPRA: THE EARLY YEARS AT COLUMBIA, 1928-34

A retrospective honoring Frank Capra, one of the American screen's legendary directors, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on May 6. Organized by Stephen Harvey, assistant curator in the Department of Film, FRANK CAPRA: THE EARLY YEARS AT COLUMBIA, 1928-34, focuses on six critical years in Capra's development as a major artist.

While a few of Capra's films from the late twenties are lost, this is the most comprehensive program ever mounted of the director's early Columbia years. Many of the silent films in the series have seldom if ever been screened in this country since the time of their initial release; several new prints have been prepared especially for this retrospective.

When Capra joined Columbia Pictures, it was essentially a B-Movie studio and he was a director of modest, energetic comedies. Over the next few years, as he made the transition from silent to sound pictures, his artistic ambitions grew. He began to tackle such unusual subjects as civil war in Nicaragua (Flight, 1929), corrupt evangelism (Miracle Woman, 1931), economic panic in the Depression (American Madness, 1932), and interracial love (The Bitter Tea of General Yen, 1933). A series of four films featuring a promising young actress named Barbara Stanwyck demonstrated his gift for working with performers. The landmark comedy It Happened One Night (1934) signaled his emergence as one of Hollywood's most distinctive filmmakers and of Columbia as a major force in Hollywood.

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Continuing through May 31, this program was made possible by the cooperation of Columbia Pictures, with particular thanks to Dennis Doph and Jim Jenji of the Non-Theatrical Division, and to Frank Capra Jr. and Alan Twyman Films. Tickets are included in the price of Museum admission and are available the day of the film at the information desk. Call 212/708-9490 for daily film listings.

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For additional press information, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.