

RECOVERED TREASURES: GREAT FILMS FROM WORLD ARCHIVES

January 15–February 20, 2011

THE MAYOR OF HELL

Sunday, January 30, 7:00 p.m.

1933, 90 mins., Warner Bros. Restored 35mm print from the Library of Congress. Directed by Archie Mayo. Written by Edward Chodorov, story by Islin Auster. Photographed by Barney McGill. Edited by Jack Killifer. Production design by Esdras Hartley. Gowns by Orry-Kelly. Principal cast: James Cagney (as Patsy), Madge Evans (Dorothy), Arthur Byron (Judge Gilbert), Allen Jenkins (Mike), Dudley Digges (Thompson), Frankie Darro (Jimmy), Sheila Terry (The girl), Robert Barrat (Mr. Smith).

Note by Michael Mashon, head of the Moving Image section, The Library of Congress:

With all due respect to Edward G Robinson, James Cagney was the pre-eminent gangster for Warner Bros, the pre-eminent gangster film studio of the 1930s. And before the Dead End Kids, Frankie Darro was the studio's resident juvenile delinquent. It's somewhat surprising, then, that *The Mayor of Hell* is the only film in which these tough guys co-starred, but it's certainly a treat to watch them sneer at each other. The story is pretty routine: syndicate bagman (Cagney) is awarded a political job overseeing a reform school, but finds kinship with the student-inmates who

share his disadvantaged upbringing. Still, the film bristles with the kind of taut energy for which Warner Bros. was known during this period, including a rousing finale of barely controlled mayhem. Never a studio to let a good plot go to waste, Warners recycled *The Mayor of Hell* in 1938 as *Crime School*, starring Humphrey Bogart in the Cagney role and the Dead End Kids as the delinquents. Another welcome nugget from its rich pre-Code collection, the film was preserved and restored from the original camera negatives by the Library of Congress Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Virginia.

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