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Paramount 100 Series Reaches the 1930s

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on April 9, 2014 - 12:00pm in [Paramount](#)



In anticipation of the The Paramount Theatre's 100th birthday next year, The Paramount and Stateside theaters are presenting the year-and-a-half-long "[Paramount 100: A Century of Cinema](#)" film series, which celebrates the history of movies from the silent film era to the present day. Movies have been screened in chronological order starting in January. This month marks a shift to the talking pictures of the 1930s.

Movies from the 1930s will screen this and next month as double features, showcasing the emergence of the gangster and monster genres, "while telling stories that range in upper-class highs to Great Depression lows":

April 14:

- ***Dracula***: Bela Lugosi's iconic performance as the Transylvanian nobleman, based on Bram Stoker's novel of the same name. The success of this film ushered in a golden age of Universal horror films and continues to define the look and feel of American horror movies.
- ***Frankenstein***: This equally iconic monster, played by Boris Karloff, may be darker and more controversial than Lugosi's.

April 30:

- ***Blonde Venus***: German actress Marlene Dietrich stars alongside Cary Grant in this drama about a cabaret singer who shacks up with a millionaire to help pay for her sick husband's operation. Notable for Dietrich's "Hot Voodoo" number, which opens with her wearing a gorilla costume, and a daring skinny-dipping scene (obviously, this is pre-Code).
- ***She Done Him Wrong***: This film pairs Cary Grant and Mae West as an undercover Federal agent and a saloon singer who fall in love.

May 5:

- ***Grand Illusion***: Jean Renoir's classic drama is about two French aviators shot down in German territory during WWI and placed in a POW camp.
- ***L'Atalante***: Newlyweds Jean and Juliette set off together on his barge, only to be separated and forced to find each other once more. French filmmaker Jean Vigo's only feature-length movie (and his last film) is truly gorgeous and memorable.

May 14:

- ***The Thin Man***: A former detective and his socialite wife investigate a murder. (Our contributor Elizabeth Stoddard freely admits she's watched this more than a dozen times, and she's certainly not the only one.)
- ***Top Hat***: The legendary Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire star in this romantic musical about mistaken identities. Edward Everett Horton, Helen Broderick and Eric Blore support them during the thin storyline -- obviously you watch Astaire-Rogers movies for the dance numbers, like "Cheek to Cheek."

May 18:

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- ***Little Women***: Katherine Hepburn plays Jo in this screen adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's beloved novel, directed by George Cukor. The cast also includes Joan Bennett and Edna May Oliver.
- ***Captains Courageous***: A spoiled child of a careless father accidentally ends up overboard a transatlantic ship and picked up by a fishing boat heading out for the season. The stellar cast includes Spencer Tracy, Lionel Barrymore and Melvyn Douglas.

May 20:

- ***Make Way For Tomorrow***: An elderly couple loses their home during the Great Depression and must separate when none of their five children will take both of them in. This film was nearly impossible to see for years despite its influence on Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, who remade it as *Tokyo Story*. Criterion released a DVD in 2010 and this is a rare chance to catch the classic melodrama in a theater.
- ***My Man Godfrey***: A flighty socialite hires a homeless man as her family's butler. Carole Lombard is at her finest here, romping with William Powell, with supporting performances by top character actors of the time including Eugene Pallette and Mischa Auer. Directed by Gregory La Cava, with some stunning art direction and set pieces.

To mark the end of the 1930s (and the beginning of summer), a 75th anniversary screening of ***The Wizard of Oz*** will take place on May 22 as part of the Paramount's Summer Classic Film Series. An encore screening of the classic fantasy adventure screens the following night and children 12 and under will be admitted for free. Other movies from 1939 will be celebrated later that week with screenings of ***The Women***, ***Destry Rides Again*** and ***Wuthering Heights***, among others. The Paramount 100 film series continues twice a week during the summer.