

First film in our Spencer Tracy Season

The Last Hurrah

Eden Court Cinema, 22nd August 2017, 7.15pm

(based on the novel by Edwin O'Connor 'The Last Hurrah' 1956)

Director: John Ford; starring: Spencer Tracy, Jeffrey Hunter, Dianne Foster, John Carradine, Basil Rathbone, Willis Bouchee; cinematographer: Charles Lawton, Jr. 1958, USA, 121mins, B&W.

Film notes sourced and compiled by Ann MacInnes, InFiFa.



Tuesday 22nd August at 7.15 pm at Eden Court Cinema, Film Notes compiled by Ann MacInnes (InFiFa)

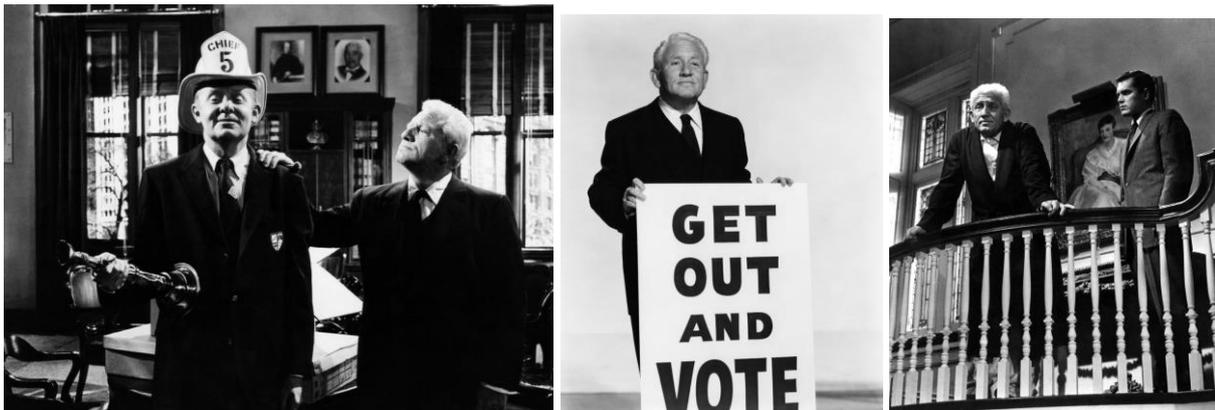
Synopsis: Spencer Tracy stars in John Ford's sentimental adaptation of Edwin O'Connor's novel about the final campaign of a big city mayor, loosely based upon the life of Boston politician James Curley. Tracy is Frank Skeffington, the political boss of an Eastern city dominated by Irish-Americans. Skeffington tries to assist the people of the city and avoids cutting political deals with the power elite. But despite his concern for the people, Skeffington has no friends, just flunkies. The Mayor is greatly admired by his idealistic nephew Adam Caulfield (Jeffrey Hunter) who writes for an opposition newspaper run by Amos Force (John Carradine). When Skeffington needs money for a loan, he asks the powerful banker Norman Cass (Basil Rathbone), but Cass steadfastly refuses. In retaliation, Skeffington appoints Cass's retarded son as an interim fire commissioner. To prevent his son from disgracing the family, Cass agrees to the bank loan. But Cass uses his deep pockets to finance the opposition's candidate for mayor.

Paul Brenner: www.allmovie.com/movie/v28339

Review: John Ford certainly does capture the spirit of how James Michael Curley would like to have been remembered. It's how he wrote his memoirs and how Edwin O'Connor wrote that brilliant piece of fiction.

Curley was a demagogue par excellence. He played ethnic politics to the hilt. He served one term as governor of Massachusetts and that term was noted for an outrageous scandal in which pardons were sold to prisoners who could cough up the money. And he was always the victim of those nasty Yankee patriachs.

Spencer Tracy does a great job in cleaning up the Curley image and the rest of the cast is fine. I would like to call attention to two actors who typified the cultural divide that James Michael Curley never attempted to bridge in his lifetime, unlike in this film.



Willis Bouchey playing Roger Sugrue, disparagingly referred to as the Papal Knight, is this rabidly bigoted Roman Catholic who is forever finding fault with the rest of humanity and criticizing those of his fellow Catholics who are not as good as he. He nearly has a stroke after seeing a Monsignor played by Ken Curtis on TV playing golf with a rabbi. No wonder Donald Crisp playing the Cardinal refers to him as "that horrible man, Roger Sugrue."



And the other side of the coin is John Carradine playing Amos Force the descendant of old line Puritans who is as bigoted in his way as Roger Sugrue is in his. It's alluded to that back in the 1920s Carradine was in the Ku Klux Klan and you can believe it from Carradine's portrayal.

Bouchey and Carradine are the two best in a cast that is saturated with John Ford favorites. As a lesson in respect for diversity, The Last Hurrah has a lot to say. History it's not though.

From: IMDB, 2004

Spencer Tracy



Spencer Tracy: One of Hollywood's most loved actors, Spencer Tracy died 50 years ago leaving a wonderful legacy of memorable performances in some of Hollywood's most loved films. A versatile actor who excelled in a number of genres, Tracy was nominated nine times for the best actor Oscar, a record matched only by Laurence Olivier.

Tracy played down his considerable achievements – his advice to fellow actors was “know your lines and don't bump into the furniture” but he was the ultimate actor's actor, the model to which many of his peers aspired, proving that it was possible to be a major film star and a great actor at the same time.

In fact, many critics consider Spencer Tracy the greatest movie actor of them all. Modern day audiences would find many of his films rather outdated but for those of a certain vintage, Spencer Tracy represents simpler, more innocent times when there were a mere three television channels and Sunday wasn't just another day of the week. A Spencer Tracy film was the perfect weekend afternoon movie, one the whole family could watch together.

On screen, Tracy represented honesty and integrity, the kind of guy you would be proud to call a friend, a father-figure full of sage advice with a shoulder always there to cry on, but nobody's pushover.

Excerpt from: Graeme Ross, Independent, 7 June 2017

Our next screening..... Father of the Bride

The second film in our..... Spencer Tracy Season



Eden
Court
Cinema

5th Sept
2017 at
7.15 pm

Spencer Tracy received an Oscar nomination (one of nine!) for his performance in the classic comedy Father of the Bride.

In this comedy, Stanley Banks' (Tracy) well-ordered life is thrown into chaos when his beloved daughter Kay (Elizabeth Taylor) announces her engagement. The story is told via flashback and chronicles the many travails, financial and emotional, suffered by Stanley as he tries to give Kay a wedding to remember.

Inverness Film Fans (InFiFa) meet fortnightly at Eden Court Cinema for screenings and post film discussions. To join us for free and for more info go to:

www.invernessfilmfans.org

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