

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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JOHN BARRYMORE: A CENTENARY TRIBUTE

This year marks the centenary of the birth of John Barrymore, one of the most admired stage and screen actors of his day. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Academy Foundation, in cooperation with The Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art, will pay tribute to "The Great Profile" in a gala commemorative program at the recently restored Beacon Theater. The event will take place on Tuesday, July 6 at 8:00 p.m.

Writer-director Garson Kanin, who directed Barrymore's last starring film role in The Great Man Votes (1939), will act as host and moderator for the program. Film clips from both the silent and sound eras of Barrymore's career will be featured, including Don Juan, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Grand Hotel, A Bill of Divorcement, Dinner at Eight, Topaze, The Great Man Votes, and many more. Commentary by a panel of special guests who knew and worked with Barrymore, including Myrna Loy, Ruth Gordon, and Elaine Barrymore, will follow, and the evening will conclude with the screening of Howard Hawks' 1934 Twentieth Century, starring Barrymore and Carole Lombard. The 35-mm preservation print was struck by the American Film Institute.

The Beacon Theater's Mighty Wurlitzer, considered to be one of the finest theater pipe organs extant, will be played by veteran accompanist Lee Erwin during the silent portion of the film clips and during intermission.

John Barrymore was the youngest of the "Fabulous Barrymores" -- the prodigious acting family which included sister Ethel, brother Lionel, father Maurice and mother Georgiana Drew. Already established as a stage idol, Barrymore made his film debut in 1913, and remained active in both theater and movies till his death in 1942.

"In silent films, he was a romantic, bravura leading man," comments Adrienne Mancina, Curator of Film Exhibitions at MoMA. "When sound came in, his sardonic pose and somewhat self-mocking persona lent lustre

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to sophisticated comedy."

Working opposite great female stars such as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Carole Lombard, Katharine Hepburn, Myrna Loy and Claudette Colbert, Barrymore's forceful performing style continues to work screen magic for succeeding generations of moviegoers.

JOHN BARRYMORE: A CENTENARY TRIBUTE will be staged in the historic Beacon Theater at Broadway and 74th Street. A registered landmark, the theater was built in 1929 as a smaller replica of the original Roxy Theater, and its Wurlitzer was installed in 1930. The Beacon has undergone extensive renovation, due to be completed late this year, and its lavish interior ornamentation echoes the era of Barrymore's screen triumphs.

Admission to the Barrymore program will be \$5.00 to the general public, with tickets available at the Beacon Theater only on the day of the event. Museum of Modern Art members may order discount tickets from the museum in advance; Academy members may order free tickets from the Academy in advance.

A special limited edition poster will be published by the Academy and the Academy Foundation to commemorate the tribute, and will be on sale at MoMA and at the Beacon Theater on the night of the show.

Another tribute to the Barrymores will be unveiled in June when the U.S. Postal Service issues its commemorative Barrymore stamp, featuring John, Ethel and Lionel in profile.

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For information the public may call The Museum of Modern Art: 708-9500.

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For further information, the press may contact Alicia Springer, Film Press Representative, (212) 708-9752, or Deborah Greenberg, Dept. of Public Information, (212) 708-9758, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019.

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